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INDO-PAKISTAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP AND THE KARGIL CRISIS

Abstract

The traumatic birth of India and Pakistan in August 1947 decisively influenced the security relationship between them in the subsequent periods. An attempt is made in the article to deal with the Indo-Pakistan security relationship with a focus on the nuclearisation and the Kargil crisis. It has been argued that the Kargil crisis has painfully revealed that while nuclearisation has added a more dangerous dimension to Indo-Pakistan security relationship that the two countries will have to deal with, it has not changed the traditional security relationship for the better. One of its consequences is the continuation of the arms race between the two countries - both nuclear as well as conventional - and consequential persistence of the threat of war between the two.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traumatic birth of India and Pakistan in August 1947 decisively influenced, at times, even determined the relations between them in the subsequent periods. They never have had a mutual relationship that could be regarded as being correct. Instead, their relations have constantly been characterised by deep-rooted mistrust and hostility. They have fought three full-scale wars and numerous border skirmishes. Some of these border skirmishes lasted for days or even weeks and were about to develop into full-blown wars. As a consequence, a

kind of relationship that persisted between India and Pakistan for the last over five decades appeared to be one of perpetual enmity.

Even in the post-Cold War era that marked a decisive shift away from conflict to co-operation and from military-strategic issues to economic ones, Indo-Pakistan relations did not undergo any change for the better. Instead, over the last couple of years, India and Pakistan were being more and more entrenched into acrimonious relationship. All publicised efforts by the two countries aimed at finding out a *modus vivendi* went in vein. In a stark contrast to prevailing trends in the contemporary world, India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in May 1998. Year later, Indian and Pakistani soldiers came to fight in the Kargil area in the Kashmir Valley that put the whole world on sharp alert because of the danger inherent in a war between two nuclear powers. While the crisis over Kargil has been defused, the relations between India and Pakistan remain highly volatile and conflict prone.

In the circumstances, Indo-Pakistan security relationship, particularly in the environment of nuclearisation as well as the emergence of crisis situation like the one over Kargil is of more than academic interest. An attempt is, therefore, made below to deal with the Indo-Pakistan security relationship with a focus on the nuclearisation and the Kargil crisis. The paper begins with a discussion on the formation and the nature of security relationship between the two countries. Part 2 deals with the nuclearisation and consequential attempts by the two countries to manage their security relationship. Part 3 reviews the impact of nuclearisation on security relationship while Part 4 is designed to assess the Kargil crisis. Finally, an attempt is made to shed some light on the direction of events.

2. INDO-PAKISTAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

Conflict and rivalry between India and Pakistan are rooted in the partition of British India along the religious line in 1947, its aftermath and the socio-economic and politico-cultural developments under colonial rule that led to the partition. Their birth was accompanied by a communal holocaust with some 800,000 casualties.¹ Thus, both the countries inherited deep-seated suspicion, distrust and hostility towards each other that were further strengthened by the communal and/or ideological orientation of these two countries. As a Western analyst observed, "The organising principle of Pakistan threatens India with secessionism, while that of India threatens Pakistan with either dismemberment or absorption".² Pakistani claim to Kashmir based on the religious ground and India's attempt to retain that territory on the ground of secularism coupled with a host of other disputes interpreted almost exclusively in the light of historical antagonism crystallised their adversary relationship to the extent that they came to consider each other as the enemy number one. In the circumstances, the security relationship that came to persist between the two countries constantly remained an acrimonious one.

The main characteristic feature of Indo-Pakistan security relationship is that historical antagonism revived in a politically relevant form has bred not only mutual contempt, but also fear and loathing, particularly in the Pakistani mind, eventuating in differences with India being made to fit the

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1. Bharat Karnad, "Key to Peace in South Asia: Fostering 'social' links between the Armies of India and Pakistan". *The Round Table*, (No.338, April 1996), p.206.
 2. Barry Buzan, "A Framework for Regional Security Analysis". in Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi (eds.), *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers*. (London: Macmillan, 1986). p.15.

hoary Hindu-Muslim social interaction paradigm. This has prompted an Indian General to describe wars in South Asia as "communal riots with tanks".³ This may be an overstatement. However, all the three full-scale wars that the two countries have fought have had a religious undertone, particularly as seen through the eyes of Pakistan. It is despite the fact that the War of 1971 was a secular venture, and as such it was viewed by the people of Bangladesh and, at least officially, also by India.

While the security relationship between India and Pakistan includes a broad spectrum of issues, it also could be encapsulated into two key issues. These are:

- i. Kashmir Dispute; and
- ii. Arms Race.

i. Kashmir Dispute

The dispute owes its origin to the partition of British India into Pakistan and modern India in 1947, which left the status of the princely states, including Kashmir, open as the rulers (the Maharajas) were given the option to remain independent or to accede to either India or Pakistan. The geopolitical circumstances of the time virtually excluded the possibility of Kashmir remaining independent. In view of the prevailing communal acrimony in South Asia, India was in a rather advantageous position to court the Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir, as he was highly fearful of his Muslim subjects. These coupled with a Pakistan-sponsored rebellion in Kashmir led the Maharaja to accede to India in October 1947 which was challenged by Pakistan on the ground that the act was against the will of the people of Kashmir. Pakistan and India

3. Bharat Karnad. *op. cit.*, p.206.

fought a war in 1947-48, which led to the division of Kashmir between the two countries with India retaining control over approximately two-thirds of the land and Pakistan over about one-third.

While a UN-mediated cease-fire was achieved and a *de facto* border came to exist on the actual Line of Control (LoC), Kashmir appeared in the United Nations agenda as an unresolved dispute. On April 21, 1948, the UN Security Council with the consent of both the belligerents adopted a resolution, which envisaged that Kashmir's fate would be decided by a plebiscite.⁴ The proposed plebiscite, however, was not held as Pakistan and India could never come to an agreement on how and under what circumstances a free and fair plebiscite could take place.

Subsequently India and Pakistan fought another war in 1965 over Kashmir, which ended in a UN-mediated cease-fire with no territorial gain for either side. Moreover, under the Soviet-mediated Tashkent Agreement, both the countries agreed to settle the dispute peacefully. Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, however, brought a change in the LoC in Kashmir with India occupying 500 square miles of the Pakistani part of Kashmir and Pakistan occupying 52 square miles of the Indian part of Kashmir and that was formalised in the Simla agreement between the two countries.⁵

4. Shah Alam, "Right to self-determination for the Kashmiri People: The Historical and Legal Aspects", *BISS Journal*, (Vol.16, No.2, 1995), p.209.

5. Imtiaz H. Bukhari and Thomas Perry Thornton, *The 1972 Simla Agreement: An Asymmetrical Negotiation*. FPI Case Studies No.11. (Foreign Policy Institute, School of Advanced Internal Studies. The Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., 1988), pp.5 and 33.

Arguments, emotions, and the professed principles of either side over the Kashmir issue seem to have become irrevocable, and appear to make accommodation almost impossible.⁶ New Delhi considers the accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 as 'final and irrevocable'. It also does not recognise the validity of the UN Security Council resolution with regard to plebiscite any more.⁷ Considering the religious basis of partition, Pakistan continues to view the Kashmir issue as 'unfinished partition'. Thus, it insists that the future of Kashmir issue must be resolved in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution calling for plebiscite. The third option, Kashmir to acquire an independent status, is, however, rejected by both the countries.⁸

Since the creation of the cease-fire line in 1949, tension between India and Pakistan fluctuated between quietude and violent conflict. However, the incidents of violence have become considerably more common since the 1965 war between the two countries fought on Kashmir. In 1967, the two armies discussed and agreed to a series of confidence-building measures (CBMs) under the auspices of their governments and the good offices of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The provisions relevant to contemporary conditions are:

- i. Avoidance of misunderstandings concerning intentions by exchanging information about military exercises; and

6. See, Prof. Khalid Mahmud, "Pakistan-India Relations: Quest for a Meaningful Dialogue". *Regional Studies*. (Vol.XVII, No.1, Winter 1998-99), pp.7-8.

7. Raju G. C. Thomas. *South Asian Security in the 1990s. Adelphi Papers*. (No. 278. July 1993). p.30.

8. *Ibid.*

- ii. Preventing "avoidable incidents" through "local commanders resorting to the agreed method of solving disputes/ disagreement by holding joint meetings at various levels through the good offices of the UN observers".⁹

Observance of the measures has been highly problematic. Nonetheless, while "routine" exchanges of firing continued along the LoC, peace could be preserved until the War of 1971. Thereafter, mutual accords served to reduce tension considerably for the next seventeen years, until the insurgency in the Kashmir Valley introduced violence of a new and different kind. However, the situation that prevailed in no way could be characterised as being 'all-quiet in the Kashmir front'. In addition to 'routine firing' that have taken place from time to time, Pakistan initiated fierce military encounters in the Siachen region in 1983, and particularly in 1987 during the Operation Brasstacks'.¹⁰

However, a highly complex process of conflict, confrontation and occasional crises in Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly along the LoC in Kashmir, has also been accompanied by the efforts on the part of the two countries at crisis prevention and conflict management. In this regard, collective efforts at devising confidence-building measures (CBMs) occupied a prominent position. CBMs concerning high-level military contact, exercises and air movement have been translated into wider agreements with regard to the international border between India and Pakistan.¹¹ As it could be guessed, the implementation of the CBMs has constantly remained problematic.

9. Brian Cloughley, "Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures in Kashmir", in *Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures in Southern Asia*, The Henry L Stimson Center Report No. 26, (November 1998), p.59.

10. Jasjit Singh, "Pakistan's Fourth War", *Strategic Analysis*, (Vol.XXIII, No.5, August 1999), p.692.

11. Brian Cloughley. *op. cit.*, p.59.

Since 1989, the situation in and around Kashmir was deteriorating more and more due to the ongoing war between the Indian security forces on the one hand, and the Kashmiri militants represented by the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), and the pro-Pakistan *Hizbul Mujahideen* and the *Ikhwan-ul-Muslemeen*, on the other. Until the Kargil crisis that would be discussed later, Pakistan cautiously refrained from sending armed 'volunteers' or its troops to Kashmir. Instead, it confined its support to the militants in providing training, weapons and safe sanctuary from which to carry out their operations.

The war in Kashmir resulted in the strengthening of military confrontation as well as the increase in violent incidences along the LoC. Prior to the Kargil crisis, there were some 90,000 troops in the Pakistani part of Kashmir. Opposing them were about 170,000 Indian troops. India had a further 250,000 paramilitary troops in and around the Kashmir Valley, most involved in internal security duties. Both the sides are capable of moving large number of reinforcements to the area within hours.¹² There were large quantities of heavy weapons, from 81mm mortars to 155mm medium guns; many were positioned close to the LoC.

Reinforced military confrontation in the backdrop of war in Kashmir also significantly increased the number and ferocity of clashes along the LoC that included prolonged heavy mortar and artillery bombardments. The process, however, witnessed ups and downs. During 1991-92, India and Pakistan signed a number of military CBMs.¹³ In practice as well, heavy firing along the LoC ceased almost entirely during the summer of

12. *Ibid.*, pp.51-52.

13. Moonis Ahmar, in *Confidence-Building Measures Project*. The Henry L Stimson Center. <http://www.stimson.org/cbm/saif/kargil/htm>.

1992, signifying that higher direction had been given to this effect. For six years after the pause in firing of 1992, incidents of firing across the LoC varied in number and type and, although serious, did not often reach the level of prolonged (six hours and over) or heavy (involving more than six artillery pieces) on either side.¹⁴

Following the explosion of nuclear devices by India and Pakistan in May 1998, the number and level of exchanges of firing increased remarkably. The situation deteriorated to the extent that the US Ambassador to India, Richard Celeste, stated in mid-1998 that "there is firing almost daily on the LoC in Kashmir," given rise to concern that the countries were "closer to a war than the Soviet Union and the United States ever were."¹⁵ Thus, already by the end of 1998, the fact that Kashmir remains the single-most vibrant source of large-scale war between India and Pakistan and the greatest threat to peace in South Asia was, once again, brought to the sharp focus.

ii. Arms Race

The corner stone of Pakistan's strategic thinking with regard to its rivalry with India was its desire to achieve parity in terms of military might *vis-à-vis* New Delhi. This was also designed to resolve the Kashmir dispute in its favour. Pakistan's all endeavours were centred on this objective. Thus, since the early days of its existence, Pakistan made persistent and, at times, forceful attempts to achieve parity with India in terms of military might. Constrained by its comparatively small size and modest resources, Pakistan sought to achieve this

14. Brian Cloughley. *op. cit.*, p.60.

15. *Indian Express*. August 1, 1998.

objective through the cultivation of extra-regional linkages. It allied with the US in the Cold War by forging bilateral security linkages with the latter as well as by joining US-sponsored military alliances, Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). The US contribution to Pakistan's armament programme was, however, limited and very cautious. Being a potentially significant ally of the former Soviet Union in South Asia, India was deemed by the US too important to alienate and push deeper into Moscow's embrace. While China has been more liberal in arms and military technology transfer, its ability to change the correlation of forces in South Asia was limited. As a consequence, notwithstanding Pakistan's alliance relationship with the US and China, its objective of achieving parity with India in terms of military might remained far from being fulfilled.

Meanwhile, the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 has decisively changed the correlation forces in the region in favour of India increasing Pakistan's traditional sense of insecurity. Pakistan could have no hope of counterbalancing India's conventional military might. The test of a nuclear device by India in 1974 further reinforced Pakistan's sense of insecurity *vis-à-vis* New Delhi. More than that, Indian superiority in terms of conventional military might generated a siege mentality in Pakistan. India's conventional military superiority, as expressed by the former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Agha Shahi, hangs over Pakistan like a permanent "Sword of Damocles".¹⁶ Thus, in search of an alternative to counterbalance India's unchallenged conventional military might and its growing nuclear programme, Pakistani strategic

16. Quoted in Jasjit Singh. "Pakistan's Fourth War". *Strategic Analysis*. (Vol.XXIII. No.5, August 1999). p.691.

elite – principally upper echelons of the military and civil services – finally came to see the nuclear weapons as the only credible means to deter India and to rely on oneself for security.¹⁷

The *raison d'être* behind India's nuclear programme is rather complicated. Because of its overwhelming preponderance in South Asia, India wants to see itself as the custodian of peace and security in the region. While it is an important factor and so is India's rivalry with Pakistan, the regional security scenario is not the central consideration that boosted India's nuclear programme. Even the formal argument that it faces security challenges or threats from nuclear China may be a crucial factor but not the only one. India also aspires to play a role in the big club and that is vividly manifested in her efforts aimed at securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

However, New Delhi remains far from being an economic power capable of extending long-standing and meaningful influence over the regional countries, not to speak about the international system. It is also certain to remain the same during the decades to come. It is in this backdrop that India had to rely significantly on military might as a means of achieving its strategic objective *vis-à-vis* the region as well as the world at large. And its nuclear programme remains a crucial component of its defence build-up. Indian analysts, Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, however, considers the hardening of India's nuclear posture as a result of changing self-perceptions. Implicit in this has been the idea that such a self-image has not been based on the realistic calculation of India's strength. They have also asserted that India's motives

17. Bharat Karnad, *op. cit.*, p.214.

for going nuclear have been similar to those of France and Britain who went nuclear "for reasons much more strongly connected to considerations of nationalist grandeur and delusionary self-importance".¹⁸

Whether India's self-image is real or delusionary is a matter of opinion. But the fact remains that India set the pace of the development of nuclear programmes in South Asia and a nuclear arms race gradually took shape in the region. One specific characteristic of this race has been the fact that while both the countries acquired the status of *de facto* nuclear powers by the 1980s, none of them formally made such a claim until May 11 and 13, 1998 when India tested the nuclear weapons again in Pokhran and Pakistan followed the suit on the 28th and 30th of the same month in Chagai.

3. NUCLEARISATION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

i. Nuclear Tests by India and Pakistan

As discussed, both the countries acquired the status of *de facto* nuclear powers by the 1980s. The question is why India decided to change the *status quo* on the nuclear issue and Pakistan to follow the suit.

One of the most discussed factors is the pressure to sign the CTBT. By 1995, it became clear that India is determined not to sign the CTBT, as it would be tantamount to disclaiming its *de facto* nuclear power status. Facing isolation in international arena on the issue and mounting pressure to sign the CTBT, Indians decided to join the CTBT regime as a

18. See, Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, "Is Nuclear Disarmament Still a Mirage?", *development dialogue* (Sweden). 1998:1, pp.29-30.

nuclear power. The argument is, however, of questionable validity, as the CTBT did not leave room for any new member in the nuclear club.

It is in this backdrop that more attention is being focussed on the domestic political scenario in India and particularly the nature of the ruling regime. In this regard, a number of interpretations are already being discussed.

One explanation suggests that the nuclear test has been designed to cultivate public support for BJP with a view to ensuring the stability of a fragile coalition. Even if the coalition headed by BJP fails to survive, this would result in popular mandate in favour of BJP.

Another explanation considers the nuclear test as a BJP phenomenon – a result of the BJP perception of demonstrating Indian power with Hindutva flavour. This view suggests that the BJP has shown its real face. While developing its nuclear programme, India, like its regional counterpart Pakistan, did every thing rather quietly, outside the public view. This policy worked and also could work in the years to come and India was being considered a nuclear power even without formal announcement. India, as it appeared, was satisfied with its status of an undeclared nuclear power.

BJP opponents, over the years, have demonstrated remarkable failure in running the country, particularly the economy. Chronic political instability, large-scale economic deprivation of the common people, loss of relative autonomy as enjoyed by India in international affairs, gradual submission to external pressure and so on resulted in considerable loss of self-esteem by the Indian elite.¹⁹ There was

19. A detailed analysis on the issue is done in A. K. M. Abdus Sabur, *Challenges of Governance in India: Fundamentals under Threat*. BISS

no hope that anything would change easily or within a short time. When BJP decided to display something to be proud of, the opponents of BJP just lacked moral strength to protest. An important point in this regard, what was displayed in Pokhran is indeed the creation of successive Congress governments. Why should it disown the glory? In the circumstances, while the BJP would continue to be blamed for conducting the test, the question on whether the test would have been conducted if either of the two alternative forces had been in power in New Delhi would remain an open question.

Pakistan was under multiple pressure following the nuclear tests by India. Domestic pressures have been manifold and tremendous for conducting the test, despite caution expressed by the business circles. International pressure, on the other hand, has been very strong for not conducting the test.

Following factors have been the most crucial in Pakistan's cost benefit analysis of either of the options.

- i. Perceived security challenge posed to Pakistan by the Indian nuclear tests. In this regard, a crucial issue was its impact on Pakistani mind and resultant jingoist wave that was sweeping the country;
- ii. Pakistan's ability to sustain a publicised nuclear arms race with India;
- iii. The impact of Western sanctions on India;
- iv. The package of Western assistance to Pakistan for not conducting the test; and
- v. Possible Western sanctions in case it conducted the test.

As it is evident, Pakistan was aware of the possible impact of Western sanctions against the country.²⁰ Nonetheless, it opted for the nuclear test. In this regard, a single objective – recovering from the moral and psychological disarray as generated in Pakistan by the Indian nuclear test and averting its potentially devastating consequences – determined the Pakistani decision.

The central question is whether and how far the nuclear tests have worsened the security situation in the region. Despite the fact that the development has set contradictory processes in motion, so far, the idea that the nuclearisation may have any positive contribution to the prevailing security scenario in the region remains controversial at best. One may argue with some justification that the nuclearisation has compelled India and Pakistan to own up their nuclear capabilities, to think hard about nuclear deployment and to talk to each other about ways to reduce the risk of war. On the other hand, nuclear deterrents are designed not for hopes of peace but for threats of war, however remote. In a crisis, the risk that nuclear weapons will be used depends as much on the minutiae of methods of deployment, intelligence capabilities and command-and-control system as on the wisdom of political leadership.²¹

This involves a very high degree of risk, particularly in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations. When one considers the context of a nuclear war, even a very slim possibility generates

20. For details, see, Munim Kumar Barai, "Economic Impact of Nuclearisation: Challenges for Bangladesh", in A. K. M. Abdus Sabur (ed.) *Nuclearisation of South Asia: Challenges and Options for Bangladesh*. BIISS Papers (Monograph Series), No.17. (Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka, July 1998), pp.97-100.

21. "India and Pakistan Survey". *The Economist*, (May 22, 1999), p.5.

the horror of the destruction of unimaginable magnitude. This makes the risk of a nuclear war unacceptable to all – the common people, the national leadership as well as the military strategists. While a powerful jingoist wave, for the time being, overshadowed rational thinking in India and Pakistan, rest of the region and the world at large were alarmed by the introduction of the nuclear dimension to Indo-Pakistan rivalry. Reasons are obvious. Even those analysts who exclude the risk of a "Indo-Pak nuclear exchange" as "the result of deliberate strategic planning", concede that the risk of such an exchange "as a result of miscalculations and accident is highly convincing".²² It is in this backdrop that virtually the whole world was alarmed at the nuclearisation of South Asia.

Meanwhile, neither India nor Pakistan has yet weaponised their nuclear capabilities. However, in a statement on December 15, 1998, Indian Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee indicated that India would go for weaponisation.²³ In that event, Pakistan is destined to follow the suit. This, in turn, would inevitably lead to the intensification of the already ongoing costly nuclear arms race. After Kargil, and particularly in view of some powerful circles in India assuming a hawkish approach, the danger of a nuclear arms race is further heightened.

ii. The Lahore Summit

Amidst euphoria and ecstasy in India and Pakistan that followed the nuclear tests, both the countries were confronted

22. Shahedul Anam Khan, "Introductory Remarks", in A. K. M. Abdus Sabur (ed.), *op cit* . p.9.

23. Arun Kumar Banerji, "Pokhran and Kargil: Peace Wanted, not An Arms Race". *The Statesman*. June 5, 1999.

by a host of difficult economic, politico-diplomatic and military-strategic predicaments. Pakistan's economic problems have already been an issue of international concern largely, but not exclusively, due to the poor macro-economic performance. With stable macro-economic performance, India was witnessing a severe shortfall of some essential commodities like, onion, potato and others. While apparently it seemed to be a minor issue, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) suffered a humiliating defeat to its arch-rival Congress in the Assembly elections in three Indian states viz., Rajstan, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh that took place on November 25, 1998. It was, once again, painfully revealed that the people do not view the solution of their problems in gaining or strengthening the nuclear capabilities by their countries. Thus, with the waning of domestic euphoria over being nuclear powers, both Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were finding themselves politically weak.

Meanwhile, in the wake of the nuclear tests, the West came to view South Asia as the potentially most hazardous flash point in the world. India and Pakistan found themselves in severe diplomatic isolation. Most of the Western countries headed by the US imposed economic sanctions against India and Pakistan. Both the countries were bound to suffer economically, politically and socially, though the extent of damage, in comparative terms, was certain to be more for Pakistan because of its greater external dependence.²⁴

India took the initiative with a view to breaking the diplomatic isolation as the West held New Delhi responsible more for initiating the new spiral of arms race. A series of

24. For details, see. Munim Kumar Barai. *op. cit.*, pp.91-100.

announcements by Prime Minister Vajpayee committing India to a no use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states and "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons against nuclear states, a unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests, adherence to the basic missile technology and control regime obligations, a readiness to enter into negotiation on CTBT, a prospective fissile materials cut-off Treaty (FMCT)²⁵ paved the way for a dialogue with the US, the harshest critic of nuclear tests by India. A series of talks led not only to the improvement in the climate in negotiations but also to a better understanding by the US of "India's security concerns", though fundamental differences between the two continued to persist.²⁶

One of the important factors why the world opinion was vehemently against the nuclearisation of South Asia has been a state of permanent tension between India and Pakistan and consequential danger of war between them. More importantly, there prevailed a tremendous lack of trust on the part of the developed countries in South Asian nuclear powers with regard to their ability to handle the nuclear weapons.²⁷

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the nuclearisation, Pakistan-India relations took a nosedive. There was mounting pressure on the part of the international community, particularly the developed countries, on India and Pakistan, to initiate a process of the easing of tension in the region. As assessed by Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, the then High Commissioner of Pakistan in New Delhi, two issues were of crucial

25. Arun Kumar Banerji, *op. cit.*, and Shahedul Anam Khan, *op. cit.*, pp.9-10.

26. Arun Kumar Banerji, *ibid.*

27. See, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, "India-Pakistan Relations in the New Era". *Frontline*. (July 31, 1998), p.119-20.

importance in facing the challenges thrown by the nuclearisation. Firstly, to address the consequences, concerns, implications, risks and so on, that stem from the nuclearisation. Secondly, to address the Kashmir dispute.²⁸ The Indians seem to have taken the idea seriously.

It is in this backdrop that India and Pakistan decided to resume their bilateral dialogue. Talks at the official level were held in Islamabad and New Delhi in December 1998. In Islamabad the two sides emphasised on the maintenance of peace and security and the normalisation of relations through confidence building measures. In New Delhi, the talks focused on the whole gamut of issues affecting India-Pakistan relations.²⁹ The dialogue between the two parties continued and the Lahore Summit has been a logical outcome of the process.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee flew to the border city of Amritsar in Indian Punjab and then joined a convoy of buses to cross travel 37 kilometres to reach the border where Sharif received him. The Summit Meeting between the two leaders took place during February 20-21, 1999 in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. During the Summit, the two leaders were cautious enough to demonstrate the sense of responsibility as expected from nuclear powers.

The Summit produced three documents the most important being the Lahore Declaration. Other two are a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Joint Statement. All were signed on February 21, 1999 at the concluding day of the Summit.³⁰ The Lahore Declaration signed by the

28. *Ibid.*, p.119-20.

29. Arun Kumar Banerji, *op. cit.*

30. All the three documents signed at Lahore were published in *The Daily Star*, February 26, 1999.

two Prime Ministers outlined the basic principles that the two countries would be abided by in their mutual relationship in the aftermath of nuclearisation. The Declaration recognised that "the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict between the two countries". It also reaffirmed the commitment of the two countries to Simla Agreement and the resolution of all disputes including the Kashmir problem. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan outlined a host of specific measures to be undertaken by the two countries with a view to managing the nuclear dimension of their relationship including appropriate confidence building measures. In more concrete terms, the two sides agreed to:

- i. engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts and nuclear doctrines with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields aimed at avoidance of conflict;
- ii, provide each other with advance notification in respect of missile tests;
- iii, undertake national measures with a view to reducing the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons; and
- iv. upgrade and improve the existing communication links between the two armies.

The Lahore Summit's central outcome lies in the fact that it could work out a host of fundamental rules for the management of military-strategic relations between the two countries after they demonstrated their nuclear capabilities. These have been a *sine qua non* for evolving a workable mechanism for the management of relations, including conflicts, between two nuclear powers. These were essential but not

enough. Further moves were required and expected. In all likelihood both the countries were aware of their collective predicaments as well as tasks.

Following the eruption of Kargil crisis, some powerful circles in India came to argue that the Lahore Declaration and everything that goes with it have been a camouflage for Pakistan to prepare for the unexpected intrusion into the Indian side of the LoC in Kashmir. It is a highly simplistic view. After acquiring nuclear capabilities, Pakistan can not remain oblivious of the danger of a nuclear exchange and the need for devising some ways and means of managing the post-nuclear phase of relationship between the two countries. At the same time, politically and also emotionally, Pakistan remained as obsessed with the Kashmir issue as ever. Its nuclear capability has been perceived by the ruling elite, particularly the policy makers, as contributing to a favourable settlement of the Kashmir issue. Thus, however paradoxical it may appear to the Indians, Lahore Declaration and the Kargil are the ideas that have been simultaneously prevalent in the mind of Pakistani elite a discussion on which would follow.

4. THE KARGIL CRISIS

i. Strategic Misperception and the Emergence of Kargil Crisis

The Kargil crisis is the outcome of a series of strategic misperceptions on the part of India and Pakistan with regard to the significance of the nuclearisation and the process of dialogue that led to the Lahore Summit. First of all, Indian leadership grossly miscalculated the significance of the country's newly acquired status of a nuclear power in relation to New Delhi's long-standing rivalry with Islamabad, parti-

cularly with regard to the Kashmir dispute. In more concrete terms, Indian leaders thought that Pokhran tests have changed the correlation forces between the two countries to the extent that Pakistan would never dare to make a fresh bid, particularly a military one, for the resolution of Kashmir issue in Islamabad's favour.

Soon after the Pokhran, on May 18, 1998, Union Home Minister L. K. Advani argued that India's "decisive step to become a nuclear weapon state has brought about a qualitative new state in India-Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem. Islamabad has to realise the change in the geo-strategic situation in the region and in the world" as a consequence of the Pokhran tests. Although "we adhere to no-first-strike principle", Advani continued, "India is resolved to deal with Pakistan's hostile activities".³¹ The idea that nuclearisation made Indo-Pakistan relations more predictable and stable has also been embraced by Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee. On March 15, 1999, he claimed in the Lok Sabha that "the nuclear weapon...is the kind of weapon that helps in preserving the peace".³² It is in this light that the Indian leadership evaluated also the significance of the Lahore Summit.

As discussed earlier, at the centre of Indo-Pakistan conflict remains the dispute over Kashmir. The single-most important motive for engaging itself into an arms race with India and its fierce drive for achieving a parity with India in terms of military might has been Pakistan's objective of resolving the Kashmir issue to its favour. As a matter of fact, Pakistan's whole policy

31. See, Praveen Swami, "The Bungle in Kargil", *Frontline*, (July 2, 1999), pp.4-5.

32. *Frontline*, (July 2, 1999), p.8.

towards India has been determined by its historical obsession with the Kashmir issue. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Pakistani elite came to perceive its nuclear capability as contributing to a favourable settlement of the Kashmir issue. As seen from Islamabad, its nuclear capability was to act as a deterrent, as a lever, that would neutralise India's conventional superiority. This line of thinking generated a confidence in Pakistani mind that it could afford to initiate and conduct a low-intensity conflict in Kashmir with a view to internationalising the Kashmir dispute or, if possible, to put the issue back on the international agenda.

Thus, a prominent Pakistani analyst came to assert seriously that following the nuclearisation, Islamabad came to enjoy "a favourable international climate for addressing the Kashmir dispute, and solicit UN intervention, or other forms of third-party mediation".³³ It is in this backdrop that Pakistan planned its Kargil operation, notwithstanding the fact that Islamabad as well remained aware of the danger of nuclear conflagration. In this regard, like India, Pakistan as well failed to evaluate properly the significance of their newly acquired status of a nuclear power in relation to the Indo-Pakistan conflict, particularly with regard to the Kashmir problem. More painful, however, has been the failure of Pakistan to predict the possible response of the international community to Pakistani attempt to internationalise the Kashmir dispute through a low-intensity conflict in the Kashmir Valley.

The area of operation is over a 140-kilometer stretch of mountain ridges 4,500 metre high near the strategic Indian garrison town of Kargil. During the winter, the area is isolated from the rest of India by heavy snow. At the first sign of spring both the armies move into reoccupy the heights they aban-

33. Prof. Khalid Mahmud. *op. cit.*, p.11.

done during the winter freeze. This year was different. A mixture of regular Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri militants had occupied positions previously held by the Indian army. Indian forces were taken by surprise by the incursion.³⁴ According to Bharat Karnad, a strategy analyst, the Indian army was "lulled into a certain complacency after the Lahore Summit".³⁵ Suffice it to mention that despite a number of credible pointers Indian intelligence failed to read the changing Pakistani mindset in the wake of nuclearisation and grasp the significance of Pakistani troop movement along the LoC, and thus, predict the emergence of Kargil crisis.³⁶ Indian leadership as well has been far from realising the magnitude of the challenge thrown by the Pakistan-backed incursion across the LoC in Kashmir. In an early statement, Defence Minister George Fernandes, for instance, assured Indian people that "Pakistani occupation would be vacated within 48 hours".³⁷

However, soon the Indians realised that it was "an orchestrated and well-organised operation by the Pakistan army".³⁸ The incursion wreaked havoc on Indian defence positions in the valley's below and threatened to cut off India's main highway linking Srinagar with the strategically important city of Leh. It was impossible for the Indian army to dislodge the intruders by frontal assault up steep ravines. Indian army was also unprepared for combat in such extreme conditions.³⁹

34. Kuldip Nayar, "Cost of Kargil War", *Dhaka Courier*, (June 25, 1999), p.25.

35. "India and Pakistan Survey", *The Economist*, (May 22, 1999), p.17.

36. Ranjit Bhushan, "Given a Raw Deal", *Outlook*, (June 21, 1999), pp.30-31.

37. Praveen Swami, "War in Kargil", *Frontline*, (June 18, 1999), p.4.

38. "India and Pakistan Survey", *The Economist*, (May 22, 1999), p.17.

39. *Asiaweek*, (July 9, 1999), p.20.

Initially, the two sides concentrated efforts aimed at finding out a diplomatic solution to the problem, though Pakistan continued to deny the involvement of its forces in the Kargil. After two rounds of conversation over telephone between Vajpayee and Sharif failed to resolve the issue, India began its military operation aimed at pushing back some 600 to 2000 intruders from the Indian side of the LoC in Kashmir.⁴⁰ Thus, a crisis situation in relations between India and Pakistan took shape. It became the first major confrontation between the two countries since 1971.

ii. Response of the International Community

Kargil crisis put the international community on a sharp alert, particularly due to the prospects for nuclear conflagration. Fearing that the situation could spin out of control, Western governments, the UN, Japan and Russia urged caution and appealed to the two sides to pull back. International concern focussed on protecting the fledgling confidence-building measures, which were set up in Lahore Summit to deal with the two countries' new status as nuclear powers.⁴¹ The most remarkable feature of international response towards Kargil crisis was the fact that virtually the whole world blamed Pakistan for creating the mess. Initially, the US has been even-handed publicly, though privately Washington put the onus squarely on Pakistan and asked the latter to pull out its men. The European Union also sent a similar message to Islamabad. Russia – a long time ally of India – embraced New Delhi's view without any hesitation.⁴²

40. "India and Pakistan Survey", *The Economist*, (May 22, 1999), p.17; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (June 17, 1999), p.26; and *Newsweek*, (July 19, 1999), 10-11.

41. "India and Pakistan Survey", *The Economist*, (May 22, 1999), p.17.

42. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (June 17, 1999), p.26.

Even a staunch ally like China has distanced itself from Pakistan. Sharif, who went to Beijing in a six-day visit on June 28 with great expectations, had to come back empty-handed on June 29. The Chinese leaders urged both the sides to settle the Kashmir dispute and as Premier Zhu Rongji told Sharif, it can "only be resolved by peaceful means".⁴³ Sharif has cut his visit short after being surprised by the pattern of behaviour as displayed by the Chinese leadership. But to many analysts, there was nothing to be surprised. The relations between the US and China are already strained and the prospects for their further deterioration are quite plausible. Washington has already displayed visible intention of projecting India as a counterbalance against China. In the circumstances, it would be highly imprudent for the Chinese leadership to alienate India by supporting Pakistan.

The Kargil adventure, or rather misadventure, made Pakistan quite friendless in international arena. India, on the other hand, has earned a high degree of sympathy on the part of international community, primarily because of the fact that Pakistan initiated the crisis. Furthermore, India also gained remarkable confidence of the international community through assuaging the fear of nuclear conflagration as it prudently restricted its military operation against the intruders to its side of the LoC in Kashmir.

iii. Efforts at Mediation – the US Plays the Crucial Role

Efforts at defusing the crisis were initiated soon after the outbreak of the crisis. India initially rejected holding talks with Pakistan, then agreed to receive Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz on June 12, but stipulated that there was only one item to

43. *Asiaweek*. (July 9, 1999), p.17.

discuss – the withdrawal of the infiltrators from the Kargil heights.⁴⁴ The talks failed and Indian military operation continued. In the circumstances, the most important question was whether there was a possibility of Kargil developing into a full-blown war between India and Pakistan. Such a possibility hardly existed. First of all, Pakistan could not and did not design its operation to evolve a military solution to the Kashmir dispute. Its objective was to internationalise the Kashmir dispute with a view to involving the international community in the process of its resolution. India, with firm international support behind it, was determined to recapture its territory. Going beyond that would have served no purpose and involved high politico-diplomatic and military costs as well as a very high degree of risk in the environment of nuclearisation. Indians were clearly aware of all these.

A renowned Indian strategist and a member of the National Security Council, K. Subramanyam, articulated the situation as follows: "Pakistan wants to take the Kashmir issue to the UN. India wants to rectify the intrusions. Neither side has any objective that warrants full-scale war".⁴⁵ It is in this backdrop that side by side with fierce fighting in the Kashmir Valley intense diplomatic efforts aimed at defusing the crisis continued unabated. Despite the failure of Sartaj Aziz's visit to India, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Niaz Naik, visited India during the end of June as a special envoy of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and India welcomed the Pakistani envoy. Among others, Niaz Naik, also meet Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. While the visit was devoid of any concrete outcome, both the countries could, once again,

44. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (June 17, 1999), p.26.

45. *Asiaweek*, (July 9, 1999), p.19.

explain their positions to each other and convey their desire to de-escalate the conflict.⁴⁶

In the face of the failure of the two countries to devise a *modus vivendi*, the US played a crucial role in defusing the crisis over Kargil. From the very onset of the crisis, the US has been determined to hold the ring between the two belligerents. As articulated by an eminent US South Asia Studies expert, Stephen Cohen, "the US has a specific role to play between the two sides – facilitator".⁴⁷ While the US has carefully avoided the term mediation, facilitation remains a well-recognised form of mediation.

Washington maintained regular contacts with the leadership of both the countries including at the highest level. Top US officials, both diplomatic and military, visited India and Pakistan with a view to bridging the differences between the two countries.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the US had to work under tremendous time constraint. The gains in the diplomatic front have been encouraging for India to show restraint, that is, refraining from crossing the LoC in Kashmir.

However, at least two factors, highly disproportionate casualty rate and the impending general elections, were pushing India to do some thing quickly that included, among others, the crossing of the LoC in Kashmir. As suggested by a former Chief of Staff of Indian Army, General Shankar Roy Chowdhuri, "From a military perspective, there are really no logical solutions that do not involve crossing the Line of

46. *Asiaweek*, (July 9, 1999), p.17; and *The Economist*, (July 3, 1999), p.23.

47. Quoted in Dr. Saleem Kidwai, "US Approach to Kargil: No Paradigm Shift in South Asia Policy", *Journal of Peace Studies*, (Vol.6, Issue, 3, May-June 1999), p.11.

48. *The Economist*, (July 3, 1999), p.23.

Control."⁴⁹ However, such an option could hardly be under consideration in New Delhi. Nonetheless, the US was alarmed at such a line of thinking. Because, that may result in a large-scale war between India and Pakistan with unpredictable consequences the avoidance of which is the central US objective in the region. Thus, the US decided to create a high degree of pressure on Pakistan to withdraw from the Indian part of Kashmir.

In an attempt to create pressure on Pakistan, the US dispatched General Anthony Zinni, head of the US Central Command, to "give an ultimatum to Sharif and Pakistan's powerful generals". Implicit in Zinni's warning was the threat that "the US would not bailout Pakistan if India decided to launch a major attack across the Line of Control".⁵⁰ The US also threatened to block a US\$100 million tranche of an IMF loan to be disbursed to Pakistan soon.⁵¹ The G-8 countries sent even a tougher private message to Sharif threatening to suspend all multilateral and bilateral aid to Pakistan.⁵² Along with their desire to avoid a war between the two South Asian nuclear powers, the developed countries also have been motivated by their concern for the economic interests at stake in the region, particularly in India. Ultimately, the pressures worked. Sharif decided to go to Washington with a view to finalising the ways and means of defusing the crisis.

iv. Clinton-Sharif Summit and the Resolution of Kargil Crisis

The Summit meeting between US President Bill Clinton and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif took place in

49. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (July 8, 1999), p.11.

50. *Ibid.*, p.10.

51. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (July 15, 1999), p.18.

52. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (July 8, 1999), pp.10-11.

Washington on July 4, 1999. The meeting lasted for about three hours. Following the meeting, the two leaders issued a joint statement that signalled the end of Kargil crisis. The statement, a carefully worded one, included an agreement between the two leaders on the following issues:

- i. Respect for the LoC in Kashmir by India and Pakistan in accordance with the Simla Agreement;
- ii. Withdrawal of infiltrators from the Indian part of Kashmir without any pre-condition; and
- iii. The bilateral framework for future negotiations between India and Pakistan.⁵³

The Clinton-Sharif statement accommodated all the demands made by India. In practice as well, Pakistan undertook appropriate measures with a view to withdrawing the forces backed by Islamabad from the Indian side of the LoC in Kashmir. A meeting to this effect was held between the director generals of military operations of both the countries. The meeting worked out modalities of withdrawal.⁵⁴ Some of the militant groups made attempts to resist the Pakistani move, but in vein. By the end of July, Indian army was able to recapture the territory it lost in May. Thus, the Kargil crisis came to an end.

Given Pakistan's difficult predicaments at the battlefield, diplomatic isolation, precarious economic situation and its excessive dependence on the US and its allies for economic and military assistance, Islamabad's susceptibility to US pressure is easily understandable. However, the acquiescence

53. See, *The Daily Star*, July 5, 1999; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (July 15, 1999), p.18; *Time*, (July 19, 1999), p.28; and *Newsweek*, (July 19, 1999), pp.10-11.

54. *The Independent*, July 12, 1999.

of India to a crucial role played by the US in defusing the Kargil crisis has initially been surprising. But the Indian motives were not devoid of rationale.

From the very beginning of the Kargil crisis, the US has taken a clear position that the current crisis over Kargil was essentially due to Pakistani infiltrators crossing the LoC in Kashmir.⁵⁵ Initially privately and then publicly the US made it clear that Washington held Pakistan responsible for the whole mess. With regard to a resolution of the crisis, President Clinton's Advisor on South Asia in the National Security Council, Bruce Riedel, made it clear that "those who infiltrated from the Pakistani side to Indian (side) must go back".⁵⁶ The US also indicated that if Pakistan continues to display intransigence, Washington might be forced to accept a possible Indian retaliation across the LoC in Kashmir.⁵⁷ Another important factor as indicated by the Clinton Administration, Washington is firmly opposed to the internationalisation of the Kashmir question and will not support Pakistan's attempts to bring it before the United Nations Security Council.⁵⁸

Thus, the US position on the Kargil issue coincided with that of India. Washington was also ready to work for a solution that would satisfy all the Indian demands. In the circumstances, for India it became a matter of convenience to allow the US to play the crucial role in defusing the crisis and

55. Prakash Nanda, "Hidden Role of the US in Kargil", *The Independent*, June 11, 1999.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Asiaweek*, (July 9, 1999), p.17.

58. Prakash Nanda, *op. cit.*

the BJP government did it. However, the policy did not enjoy unanimous support. Certain circles in India criticised the government for allowing the US to play a role in resolving the Kargil crisis as it was against the long- professed Indian policy of resolving conflicts with the neighbours bilaterally without third-party intervention.⁵⁹

5. INDO-PAKISTAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP AFTER KARGIL: AN ASSESSMENT

With the withdrawal of Pakistan-backed militants from the Indian part of Kashmir, the Kargil crisis came to an end and Indo-Pakistan relations came to its normal course that is marked by perennial mistrust, numerous conflicts and occasional crises. To a certain extent, the situation has turned from bad to worse.

The Kargil crisis has painfully revealed that while nuclearisation has added a more dangerous dimension to Indo-Pakistan security relationship that the two countries will have to deal with, it has not changed the traditional security relationship for the better. In other words, even in the environment of nuclearisation, the threat of conventional war between India and Pakistan continues to persist as ever. One of its consequences is the continuation of the arms race between the two countries – both nuclear as well as conventional.

In defending Kashmir from a possible Pakistani onslaught, India had an option of opening other fronts along Punjab and Sindh borders, as the terrain in Kashmir is more unfavourable

59. See, Kuldip Nayar, "The USA, a court of appeal?", *Dhaka Courier*, (July 16, 1999), pp.26-27.

60. Praveen Swami, "Strategic Follies", *Frontline*, (July 2, 1999), p.14.

to India than Pakistan.⁶⁰ No less important, this strategy was also designed to divide the Pakistan army, numerically smaller than the Indian one, into several fronts. India tried this option in the past. In the backdrop of nuclearisation and particularly, Pakistan maintaining an ambiguity on the first use, this option became a too dangerous one. In addition to Western pressure, this remains the main reason why India refrained from opening a second front in the plains during the Kargil crisis. It is in this backdrop that pressure is mounting on India for preparing its forces in Kashmir for effectively dealing with any possible Pakistani onslaught.⁶¹ If the preparation of Indian forces in Kashmir increases, Pakistan will have to respond if it wants to stick to its current strategy towards Kashmir. In the event, arms race in its conventional form would be inevitable.

Meanwhile, following Kargil, Indo-Pakistan arms race seems to be assuming a quite different connotation. A highly authoritative Indian strategist, K. Subrahmanyam, is already advocating for bankrupting Pakistan by announcing a sharp rise in defence spending which Islamabad would feel obliged to match. His argument is rather seducing to the Indian audience, "The perfect war is subjugation of the enemy without going to battle".⁶² The strategy appears to be an Indian version of US strategy towards the former Soviet Union during President Ronald Reagan. In this regard, the success of the US strategy *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union may encourage the Indians to embark upon such a strategy, though the strategy also could be quite dangerous for India itself. Meanwhile, Prime

61. See, *Ibid.*, and Gurmeet Kanwal, "Pakistan's Strategic Blunder in Kargil" *Strategic Analysis*. (Vol.XXIII. No.5), August 1999, p.841.

62. *The Daily Star*, July 15, 1999.

Minister Vajpayee and External Affairs Minister J. Singh's talk about India's need for a credible "minimum" deterrence is being seen by the analysts as hint at a second strike capability and the missile programme aimed at that.⁶³ In the circumstances, the Kargil crisis has further increased the danger of an expensive arms race, now extended to nuclear weapons.

The Kargil episode has left a deep imprint on Indo-Pakistan relations. India has already developed a sense of being betrayed by Pakistan.⁶⁴ In view of the understanding reached in Lahore, New Delhi has already characterised the Pakistan-backed intrusion across the LoC in Kashmir as a "betrayal of trust" by Pakistan.⁶⁵ Restoring Indian trust on Pakistani leadership would be difficult and time consuming. Initiating a process of dialogue between the two countries, particularly a meaningful one, would continue to remain a difficult undertaking for some time to come. At the moment, it is on nobody's agenda.

Pakistan has developed a sense of being severely humiliated. The Kargil episode that initially appeared to be a victory ultimately came to be seen in Pakistan as "an ill-thought-out adventure".⁶⁶ The Pakistanis consider the withdrawal humiliating for Pakistan though Nawaz Sharif was trying his best to play down the consequences of the blunder.⁶⁷ His assertion that Pakistan had succeeded in internationalising the Kashmir issue is far from impressing the populace.⁶⁸ Khalid Qayyum, the chief reporter of *The Nation*

63. Arun Kumar Banerji. *op. cit.*

64. *The Economist*, (July 3, 1999), p.24.

65. *The Economist*, (July 17, 1999), p.23.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Asiaweek*, (July 23, 1999), p.22.

newspaper, assessed the outcome of Kargil episode as "Pakistan's worst-ever defeat on the diplomatic, political and media fronts".⁶⁹ Fundamentalist forces in Pakistan are trying to portray Sharif as having betrayed Kashmir and develop a Pakistani sense of being defeated by India.⁷⁰ Public ire is so hot in Pakistan that Sharif may face a battle for his political survival. In the circumstances, the situation in both the countries are working, at least for the time being, against the resumption of any meaningful dialogue between the two countries on the issues of mutual discord.

By compelling India to fight a battle on Pakistan's terms, in a place and at a time chosen by Pakistan, Islamabad has severely embarrassed the Indian army in Kargil and the government before the people. According to Indian sources about 400 soldiers have died in the Kargil episode.⁷¹ Western defence experts put the figure at more than 1,000.⁷² Whatever may be the real figure, it remains the bloodiest encounter between India and Pakistan since 1971. Capitalising on these factors, certain circles in India are trying to mobilise public opinion and articulate a hawkish policy towards Pakistan. All these are having a deep influence over the shaping of long-standing popular approach in India as well as its practical policy towards Pakistan.

With the end of the Kargil crisis, Pakistan's problems have just begun. Being viewed globally as an aggressor, isolated in international arena, humiliated in the Kargil, and more importantly, with ever worsening domestic political and

69. *Time*, (July 19, 1999), p.28.

70. *Ibid*.

71. *The Daily Star*, July 15, 1999.

72. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, (July 8, 1999), p.11.

economic crises, Pakistan may undergo a difficult process of development with unpredictable consequences.

The resolution of Kashmir problem – the central issue in Indo-Pakistan conflict – would continue to remain as illusive as ever. No possible combination of forces in power in New Delhi could afford to satisfy Pakistani claim on Kashmir. Even a humble Pakistan – defeated in 1971 – did not accept the Indian version of the resolution to the Kashmir issue: final division of the state between India and Pakistan along the LoC. Thus, the Kashmir problem is certain to persist for long time to come. As indicated earlier, Lahore Declaration and the Kargil are the ideas that have been simultaneously prevalent in the mind of Pakistani elite. Notwithstanding the humiliation suffered by Pakistan as a consequence of its Kargil misadventure, the situation is likely to remain the same. The elite in Pakistan is quite candid about this. Even in the wake of Kargil debacle, Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz asserted without any hesitation that, "if Kashmir is not resolved, there will be many more Kargils".⁷³ In the circumstances, the security relationship between India and Pakistan would continue to remain as conflict prone and unpredictable as ever with only difference being the recent addition of the nuclear dimension to it.

73. *Asiaweek*, (July 23, 1999), p.23.