

Seminar Report

20 YEARS AFTER KARGIL CONFLICT

July 13, 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Opening Address by Lieutenant General (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, VSM (Retd), Director, CLAWS**

Lieutenant General (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia brought out that six Northern Light Infantry battalions were tasked to intrude across the Line of Control (LoC) and cover various areas in the Kargil region as part of an official military operation launched by the Pakistan Army in 1999.

By July 13, 1999, India was successful in recapturing most of the areas. The Speaker explained that the genesis of the intrusion lay in the sequence of events that started with the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 and pre-emption of the occupation of the Siachen Glacier by the Indian Army. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, however, led to Pakistan thinking that despite India's conventional superiority, Pakistan could get away with a military misadventure.

Keynote Address by General Bipin Rawat, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC

General Bipin Rawat, the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) began his address by bringing out that India achieved a resounding victory owing to the synergy amongst the three services and the role played by the media.

The COAS stated that two broad themes need discussion. These are changing the character of warfare and the transformation of the Indian Army, 20 years post-Kargil. While the character and conduct of warfare have changed, equally important has been the technological advancement in cyber and space domains.

The importance of the human factor in conflict will remain undiminished. Surgical strikes post-Uri and the Balakot actions have demonstrated our political and Military resolve against terror. But, no single component of Military power that is, land, air, and water

can win wars alone. Hence, all the services are coordinating with each other for the desired results.

Special Address by General VP Malik (Ex-Chief of the Army Staff) During Operation VIJAY

The Speaker gave an account of the challenges faced during the War especially owing to the failure of surveillance. There were large gaps between own defences on the LoC in Kargil owing to the earlier decisions where troops were pulled out from the LoC into CI Operations. These decisions contributed to the enemy occupying these heights unnoticed in 1999. The climate in the Region was also an obstacle in maintaining foolproof surveillance.

Special Address by General NC Vij (Ex-Chief of the Army Staff and Ex Director General of Military Operations During Operation VIJAY)

General NC Vij brought out that the most important lessons that emerged from the War were the requirement of always having an alternate plan while paying attention to operational planning and training of the troops. Further, serviceability of equipment must be maintained at a high level as also that, even if border areas are glaciated and offer a limited threat of any enemy action, they need to be guarded and own forces must be prepared to react there.

Special Address by Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri, PVSM, UYSM (Ex General Officer Commanding Kargil Division During Operation VIJAY)

Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri described how in the Kargil War the soldiers shed blood, displayed guts, and brought glory to their regiments, the Indian Army, and the nation.

The Speaker spoke about the tactical warfare that 8 Mountain Division was involved in to restore the LoC after the Division shifted from counter-insurgency role to conventional operations.

Session I. Operation VIJAY: Overview and Role of Strategy, Diplomacy, Media, and Other Elements of National Power

The Chair highlighted the different Pakistani assumptions before engaging in their incursions across the LoC. The Pakistanis had sought to deceive the international community by stating that the heights captured in Kargil were disputed areas along the LoC. The Ambassador showed that Pakistan had miscalculated these perceptions.

Sub Theme One. Kargil Heights: The Battleground (Major General Ravin Khosla, SM, VSM)

The Speaker provided an introduction and a historical background to the Region and gave a perspective on Kargil. The Silk Road passed through the Region and therefore the Region had been the centre of fierce battles from earlier times.

Sub Theme Two. Tiger Hill and Tololing (Brigadier Khushal Chand Thakur, YSM [Retd])

Brig Khushal Chand Thakur mentioned that all battalions did exceptionally well at Kargil. He talked about the operations that were carried in Kargil by his battalion, namely, the Operation of Tiger Hill and the Operation of Tololing.

The Speaker explained how important it is to keep in mind the lessons learnt from such battles. Unit Camaraderie was the most important facet for the infantry. Leadership needs to be developed among the officers.

Sub Theme Three. The Build-Up and Provision of Firepower Support (Lieutenant General K Ravi Prasad, VSM)

Lieutenant General K Ravi Prasad discussed the build-up and provisions of firepower support for Kargil Operations. The Speaker revealed that the main challenge was the repositioning of available firepower which was needed to be carried out before the infantry could launch a physical assault to capture the objectives during Kargil conflict.

***Sub Theme Four. The Role of Media and Battles of Perceptions
(Nitin Gokhale)***

The Speaker underlined that the Kargil War was the first conflict which occurred after the advent of full-time private 24x7 television. The Speaker also spoke about mistakes and shortcomings in the coverage and reporting by the media personnel.

**Session II. From Strategic Surprise to Rousing Victory
(Chairperson, Lieutenant General YK Joshi, AVSM, VrC, SM)**

The Chair began by discussing his involvement with the Kargil War where he was asked to assume the role of Commanding Officer of his unit. Through the proceeding, he discussed his personal experiences and illustrated some of the ground realities the soldiers deployed in Kargil had to face, including the high casualty numbers alongside the sudden impetus of War being thrust on them.

***Sub Theme One. War of Small Things (Brigadier Amul Asthana
[Retd])***

The Speaker highlighted the offensive operations of the infantry in the rugged and high mountains during Operation Vijay at Batalik Sector in Kargil 1999. The Speaker brought out the difficulties faced by his Battalion by suddenly moving for operations while in the process of deinduction and having handing over stores including winter clothing, Battalion support weapons, sector maps, and even the medical staff who had moved out.

***Sub Theme Two. Revisiting Air War in Kargil (Air Marshal Anil
Chopra PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM [Retd])***

The Speaker at the onset brought out that the Government had to be asked for permission to get the Indian Air Force (IAF) inducted. During the meetings it was decided that owing to the risks involved in the Conflict, the consensus was not to involve the IAF. On May, 23 finally the Prime Minister (PM) cleared the use of fighter planes but with the condition that the LoC was not to be crossed.

Sub Theme Three. Powerful Punch: Special Forces (Major General Ashok K Dhingra, SM)

Major General Ashok K Dhingra began by describing the challenges of acclimatising, adjusting to new terrain conditions, and reorienting to super-high altitude conditions as the preparation time available was very little. As Special Forces operate in small teams, there was a need to hastily reorient themselves to undertake conventional missions.

The Speaker opined that there is a need to have the adaptability to transform quickly. Over the years, the junior leadership has withstood the test of time and has become fairly proficient in directing the artillery fire and looking after casualties.

Closing Remarks by Lieutenant General (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia (Retd), Director, CLAWS

The CLAWS Director highlighted that once General Musharraf had taken over as the Army Chief in Pakistan, the operational movement for crossing the LoC by the Pakistan Army started around mid-October of 1998. According to the diaries of Pakistan troops captured by the Indian Army, it suggested that Pakistan troops had started moving by the end of February 1999.

Looking back to the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee, some of them had been implemented but other major issues like integration, inter-service jointness, and the appointment of CDS continue to remain work-in-progress.



DETAILED REPORT¹

A national seminar on '20 Years After Kargil Conflict' was conducted on July 13, 2019 at Ashoka Hall, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment.

Aim

The Seminar aimed to briefly revisit the battles fought in Kargil, Dras, and Mushkoh and the lessons learnt as also to pay tribute to our brave hearts who fought gallantly and were martyred during the Conflict. The Seminar also planned to analyse the envisaged threats, our preparedness, and make recommendations to face the conflicts of the future.

Modalities of Conduct

The one-day Seminar was conducted at Ashoka Hall, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment on July 13, 2019. The participants were from the Armed Forces, strategic and diplomatic community, veterans, media, academia, and students. Nominated Army Officers from field formations also participated in the Seminar.

Chair

Session I	Ambassador G Parthasarathy	Ex-Ambassador to Pakistan during the Kargil Conflict
Session II	Lieutenant General YK Joshi, AVSM, VrC, SM	GOC 14 Corps and Ex Commanding Officer of 13 JAK RIF during Operation VIJAY

Speakers Session I

- Major General Ravin Khosla, SM, VSM

¹ The aspects enumerated as part of this Report are exclusively based on the deliberations by panellists. These do not necessarily conform to the views of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) or that of the Indian Army or the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

- Brigadier Khushal Chand Thakur, YSM (Retd), CO 18 GRENADIERS during Operation VIJAY
- Lieutenant General K Ravi Prasad, VSM, DG Artillery, and Battery Commander and Second-in-Command of 41 Field Regiment during Operation VIJAY
- Nitin Gokhale, Multimedia and Defence Reporter

Speakers Session II

- Brigadier Amul Asthana (Retd) was the 2IC and officiated as the CO 1/11 Gorkha Rifles during Operation VIJAY
- Air Marshal Anil Chopra, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd) Ex Head of IAF in J&K
- Major General Ashok K Dhingra, SM is presently raising the Armed Forces Special Forces Division

Opening Remarks by CLAWS Director

Lieutenant General (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia, PVSM, AVSM**, YSM, VSM (Retd), Director, CLAWS brought out that six Northern Light Infantry battalions of Pakistan were tasked to intrude across the LoC and cover various areas in the Kargil Region as part of an official military operation launched by Pakistan during late 1998 and early 1999.

The Speaker underlined that various Indian vantage points overlooking NH-1A (later renamed as NH 1D) were occupied by enemy intruders including Tiger Hill, Tololing, Khalubar, Batalik, and Haneef Sector. By July 13, 1999, India was successful in recapturing many areas like Mashkoh, Dras, the entire Tololing complex, Tiger Hill, and Batra Top complex. Jubar, Khalubar, Kukarhang, and Munto Dhalo, where heights ranging from 15,000 feet to 18,000 feet existed in the Batalik sector, were also successfully recaptured by the Indian Army.

The Speaker explained that the genesis of the intrusion lay in the sequence of events that started with the humiliating defeat and dismemberment of the Pakistan in 1971. Another setback for Pakistan

happened when the Indian Army pre-empted the occupation of the Siachen Glacier on April 13, 1984. Nuclear tests were conducted by India and Pakistan and Pakistan drew political mileage out of it and undermined India's capabilities to attack despite its conventional superiority.

In 1998, Lieutenant General Aziz Khan, geo-political strategist of the then COAS, Jehangir Karamat, advocated the urgency to occupy the Kargil heights. But the plan was not accepted. After becoming the COAS on October 7, 1998, General Pervez Musharraf by mid-October approved the plan called Operation Koh-e-Paima (Call of the Mountains). However, it turned out to be a political, diplomatic, and military failure for Pakistan.

The Director, CLAWS opined that a three-pronged approach must be followed to celebrate 20 years of Kargil. First, gratitude must be paid to the brave hearts and martyrs and unflinching unity and resolve of the nation to punish the intruders should be celebrated. Second, lessons learnt from Kargil need to be revisited and gaps identified. There should be an analysis of whether the gaps and structural failures have been addressed over the last 20 years. Third, he concluded by stressing on the fact that character of conflict is changing due to growing technological advancement and changing geo-political scenarios. Hence, it is crucial that 'India looks at the rapidly growing threats and challenges not only on the horizon but also beyond the horizon'.

Keynote Address by Chief of the Army Staff (General Bipin Rawat, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC)

General Bipin Rawat, the COAS brought out that India achieved a resounding victory despite the arduous terrain and the countless bloody battles waged in the rugged mountains. This was achieved with the synergy amongst the three services and media's role in developing perceptions about 'India's first televised war'.

He pointed out that burdened by its governance inadequacies, and internal security challenges, Pakistan Army has time and again resorted to misadventures either through proxy wars, state-sponsored

terrorism, or intrusions into our country. To counter these, Indian Armed Forces stand resolute to defend our territorial integrity and any misadventure will be repelled with a punitive response.

The COAS underlined that two broad themes need discussion. These are the changing character of warfare and the transformation of the Indian Army post 20 years of the Kargil War. Character and conduct of warfare have changed with the growing use of terror and other irregular methods of fighting by non-State actors. Equally important has been the technological advancement in cyber and space domains. Therefore, while drawing lessons from the past, we must look at the impact of these changed realities on the future. Indian Armed Forces must be prepared for the future conflict with a changed character because these would be very violent and unpredictable.

The COAS opined that despite this, importance of human factor will remain undiminished. Soldiers will remain the primary assets. Battlespace will be contested and constrained by indeterminable factors. Recent conflicts have re-emphasised that unconventional and asymmetrical wars are gaining pre-eminence. In the future, even conventional wars are likely to have asymmetric component leading to 'hybrid wars'.

He also emphasised that cyberspace is likely to be fiercely contested in future wars with threats of cyber attacks to critical national infrastructure. Non-kinetic and non-contact warfare are likely to see more engagement. One of the key battle zones would be the information domain with constant battle of narratives attempting to shape perceptions across the world. Climate change is leading to mass migration and competition for natural resources. Ideologically driven radicalised proxies having footprints across nations are likely to enhance the operating space. A fusion of internal and external threats hence warrants a holistic capacity building. There is a need to reorient and optimise capabilities to effectively counter both military and non-military facets of asymmetric and sub-conventional threats emerging from within and outside the country.

The Indian Army needs to be prepared for multi-spectrum challenges. It must be ready to fight a conventional war, continue

deploying a large number of personnel at the multi-front borders, counter proxy-wars, fight insurgencies, and provide troops to the United Nations and other counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations.

Armed forces will need to be conscious of the dynamic and rapid technological advancements in space militarisation and increasing integration of space capabilities in future war fighting. Technology has become the key driver of future wars. Spectrums of future conflicts have been broadened and have brought all organs of State within the ambit of conflict. Hence, the response will have to be planned and integrated at the apex level.

As the nation envisions its future aspirations towards seeking a strong place in the global and regional power structure, need to protect the security interests will increase and hence we will require commensurate capabilities. Indian Armed Forces are on the path of transformation mainly in the defence space agency, defence cyber agency, and the special operations division. Improvements in war fighting doctrines, strategy and concept have been enunciated and are being revised continuously. Required infrastructure for future possible operations and robust logistics are being closely monitored. These efforts are a step towards achieving a strong and responsible military force as well as jointness and integration.

We cannot be import-dependent throughout, therefore we need to upgrade our defence production technology by revitalising the defence public sector units, participating in private sector units, and an impetus to research and development. To this end, the first ordnance factory is being set-up with help from Russia and 'Make in India' is being given priority and several new departments and directorates have been set-up under the structure of the Indian Army.

Surgical strikes post-Uri and Balakot have demonstrated our political and military resolve against terror and that any act of terror will not remain unpunished. Today, no single component of military power—land, air, and water can win wars alone. Hence, integration is a strategic and operational imperative today. Hence, all the services are coordinating with each other for the desired results. Political

will, proactive diplomacy, and responsible media along with a well-prepared, well-equipped, and synergised armed forces will work towards ensuring national security.

Special Address by General VP Malik, Ex Chief of Army Staff

Besides giving the reasons for celebrating 20 years of Kargil, he gave an account of the challenges faced by the military during the event. First, failure of surveillance to detect the infiltration for a number of days as the forces had their focus on Siachen and the troop deployment in the Kargil, Dras, and Mushkoh region was sparse and there were large gaps between defences. He referred to one specific incident of the 1990s where 28 Infantry Brigade was pulled out of the LoC grid into Counter-Insurgency Operations (CI Ops) that may have contributed to the enemy slipping in unnoticed. He went on to highlight the problem of inadequate surveillance equipment and the disproportional reliance on foot patrols. The climate was an obstacle to maintaining foolproof surveillance in the Region. He also mentioned that there was the inability of the Intelligence to foretell the infiltration and the lack of knowledge that it was indeed the Pakistani Army and not Mujahideen as it was initially thought to be. The tactics that were employed by own troops were therefore anti-militancy and not tactics employed in conventional warfare.

He spoke of the lack of knowledge the Army had about the terrain, which was wrongly believed to be like that of Siachen. The Army, he said lacked the specialist equipment that was necessary to fight at such altitudes, which was further complicated by the fact that Pakistanis had occupied heights overlooking the highway, severely affecting the supply chain of the Indian Army. He reiterated that shortage of equipment was a serious issue as equipment had to be rotated between battalions. He recalled an incident where regular battalions had to give away their equipment to facilitate the battle. Shortage of winter clothing was another obstacle that the Army had to overcome. He mentioned that India's standing in the international community at that time was not favourable and therefore equipment could not be sourced from abroad.

Another important challenge, he mentioned was that the political establishment had mandated that the LoC had to be respected and not crossed. Having provided details of the challenges that faced them, he went on to mention as to how the Army overcame these. He mentioned that it was the blend of a determined political and military leadership as well as our diplomats that was crucial in ensuring a victory. He lauded the courage, determination, and grit of the soldiers deployed at forward posts, that helped turn an adverse situation into a Military victory.

Further explaining the Military strategy, he highlighted tactics employed by the Armed Forces. Military posture was such that so as to prevent Pakistan from reinforcing forces opposite Kargil. He mentioned that the idea was to threaten and maintain pressure on Pakistan through the land, air, and water. He elaborated further that jointmanship was present at the higher levels, even though it may have seemed otherwise. He recalled anecdotes with the Prime Minister and the Air Force Chief, where it was decided that attacks would be carried across the LoC if required. It was also decided that the borders with China and Bangladesh would be strongly guarded to prevent any misadventure.

General VP Malik stated that the lessons from the essay 'Theory of Power' must be remembered and that the propensity for war remains, despite attempts to prevent it. Nation's that do not imbibe the lessons of this dictum may face Military surprise as well as eventual Military defeat. The ability to ascertain the kind of conflict a nation will face remains limited. However, despite this ambiguity, a nation must be prepared for all kinds of conflict. It must be noted here, that there were a low chance for a full-scale war with the other nation, specifically due to the nuclear weapons conundrum. However, when there are disputed territories between nations, proxy wars and limited wars is an imminent threat. In fact, a proxy war can facilitate a limited war. To avoid the situation where the Army maintained a stagnant position in the face of enemy attacks there is a need for an offensive posture in dealing with an adversary like Pakistan, supported by credible strategic intelligence and surveillance that is regularly updated. Here, according to him a successful outcome

will also depend on the ability to respond rapidly. This ability is possible only with a fast decision-making process that facilitates rapid deployment of forces. He stressed upon the importance of the synergy between the different forces responding to the enemy action. All units should work well together.

The General emphasised the importance of a comprehensive media strategy for effective communication management, to maintain a higher moral ground over the enemy. He commented that the present system is inadequate and has to be revamped. He placed emphasis on the need for constant interaction between the political, military, and diplomatic establishment for ensured success. He concluded his remarks by hailing the courage and valour of the forward troops that fought against all odds to retain the heights of Kargil.

Special Address by General NC Vij, Ex Chief of the Army Staff and Ex Director General of Military Operations

General NC Vij started his address by paying tribute to those brave soldiers and the commanders who laid their lives and served in very challenging circumstances at that time. He focussed his talk on strategy and other important issues. He underlined the requirement of always having an alternate plan, paying full attention to operational planning, and on training of the troops whose orientation is to be changed from insurgency mode to operational and conventional operations. Also that serviceability of equipments was a big challenge.

The Speaker recalled that on joining the Military Operations (MO) Directorate in February 1999 he went on to a familiarisation trip and the first visit was to Leh. The Brigade Commanders gave a detailed briefing and spoke in detail about the insurgency, proxy war, and wars which had been earlier fought close to Dras. However, the recent incidents of patrols encountering insurgents in the Batalik area was brushed aside as a minor incident. In hindsight, if the same was shared as it was first encountered, our reaction would have started even earlier. The lesson which can be drawn is that it is good to share information even if you are not very sure of it. After aerial confirmation of the presence of small tents, a brigade with its two

battalions was tasked to take over the Batalik sector. The point is that it is good to act on any information which you get because it is better to be erring on the positive side than wasting too much time on deciding. These small things saved a day for us at that time.

On May 17, reconnaissance sorties brought a lot of information and one thing was clear that something big was going on. On that day, the Reserve Division was ordered to start moving forward and also a brigade which was in the Valley was told to be prepared to move. The COAS arrived from a foreign trip on May 21 and three major things were done. First, CCS clearance was obtained for the use of the IAF and on May 26, IAF launched sorties. Second, a proper intelligence acquisition grid was planned and set-up to get a clear picture of enemy. Third, the IAF was told to go after enemy's logistics dumps. The air operations were important as the moment Air Force is applied, the enemy gets the clear message that we are not going to leave this place. DG RR was also moved to Valley to oversee counter-insurgency operations and also 15-18 CRPF battalions were moved to the areas in the Valley vacated by the Army.

Lack of intelligence was a very big restriction as a clear picture of the areas across the LoC was unavailable because Air Force movement was restricted to the Indian side of the LoC. Also, there was limited availability of Artillery. Before the War started, there were 10 fire units available that were subsequently built to 57 fire units by the time the War started. Also a major change in tactics was done by employment of Artillery in direct firing role using the Bofors guns.

During the initial application of the Air Power, some helicopters and MIGs were shot down. Later when the Air Force started bombing from heights of 20,000 feet and above they were safe and effective. Total synergy and jointmanship of all the three services are very important and a major lesson of the operations. Our training for conventional war is also very important. Troops came from insurgency mode and suddenly needed to be reoriented for conventional battle.

The Speaker recounted that there were DGMO level talks every week between India and Pakistan. He remembered the conversation on May 26, with his Pakistan counterpart. The Speaker asked him

about his absence the previous week. He replied that he was busy with his guests. At that time General Musharraf was also away in China and had a telephonic conversation with his Chief of General Staff. He asked him about the DGMO talks and enquired whether India was interested in Prime Minister or Chief Minister level talks. This was because he was thinking that Indians will buckle and ask them for having talks and resolving the matter which perhaps will be advantageous to Pakistan.

The Speaker also brought out that the soldiers or so-called terrorist from Pakistan side, who died in various battles were given proper burials, just like our soldiers.

He also spoke in glowing terms of the gallant young officers who were indeed the cutting edge and that no operation can succeed unless there are a proper plan and leadership at the mid and senior level. He opined that even after 20 years of Kargil War as far as the relations with Pakistan and China are concerned nothing had changed and the problems may have only got more difficult.

The aspect of restructuring of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the aspect of appointing a CDS have all remained unfulfilled. The defence budget was about 1.43 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and did not allow all services to modernise. This was leading to a situation where some services are having equipment of the Second Generation vintage and some others having equipment in the Fourth and the Fifth generation vintage, whereas there was the need for all services to modernise at the same pace.

The Speaker opined that despite the policy of having a lean and mean Army, the kind of borders that exist in our country cannot be guarded without troops, for which the troops being saved are recommending to be used to raise the strike corps which was planned in 2004 and was approved by the then government.

He further opined that we have a very good nuclear strategy policy in place. However, the case of a tactical nuclear weapon use by the adversary needs to be dealt with and hence, planned for. The Speaker felt that first, there was a need to develop tactic nuclear

weapons, as it doesn't cost much and the technology also existed. Second, we need to reframe our stated nuclear policy in the context of the tactical nuclear bomb use by our adversary. This is owing to the problem that even if we have a massive retaliation capability against the enemy in case it starts a nuclear war, it has been agreed by everyone that Pakistan has a second-strike capability and so we will suffer two strikes, i.e. they strike first, then we respond and then again they retaliate. Hence, we should reserve the right to strike first.

Special Address by Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri, Ex-General Officer Commanding Kargil Division During Operation VIJAY and Ex Deputy Chief of the Army Staff

Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri started his address themed 'Blood, Guts, and Glory' and described how in the Kargil War the soldiers 'shed blood, displayed guts, and brought glory' to their regiment, the Indian Army, and the nation.

He talked about the tactical warfare that 8 Mountain Division was involved in. His Division was deployed in Sharifabad on June 1, 1999 in a counter-insurgency role and then was tasked to restore the LoC in Dras and Mushkoh sectors. The major problem that the Division faced was the shift from counter-insurgency role to conventional operations role.

Another problem was the lack of intelligence. The Division had no information about the location of the enemy and their numbers. It took almost a week to get the information through air photographs and patrols.

Movement of troops and logistics on a single axis was also a big handicap. The infiltrators had closed the NH in the daytime and the movement of vehicles was possible in the night only and that too in small batches. The terrain became a major problem for the mobilisation of troops. It was inhospitable and at heights of 14,000-19,000 feet, breathing also became difficult. It was such that if the soldiers took two steps forward they had to take one step backward. Sub-zero temperatures made the advance more difficult. All of this took a heavy toll on men and material. In the starting days, there

were criticalities of clothing, equipment, and weapons but as the operation progressed, these were made up.

He mentioned two of his officers General YK Joshi and Brigadier Kushal Thakur who along with other officers displayed utmost courage, determination, and leadership qualities. These officers turned the tide in Kargil and gave victory which we rightly deserved. He paid his tributes to the brave officers and men who went beyond the call of duty and laid their lives for the nation. He also paid his tributes to the families of the martyred officers and men who have since then lived with pride and dignity. He ended his address with motivating students to join the Armed Forces and to be good citizens in whatever profession they are in so that the defence forces are proud to defend them.

SESSION I.

Operation VIJAY: Overview and Role of Strategy, Diplomacy, Media, and Other Elements of National Power

Opening Remarks by Chairperson: Ambassador G. Parthasarathy

The Chair began by highlighting the different Pakistani assumptions before engaging in their incursions across the LoC. This included the Pakistani view that India, bogged down by 20 years of counter-insurgency operations, would have no energy to re-capture the heights occupied by the Pakistan Army. In addition to this, Pakistan also sought to deceive the international community by stating that the points which they had captured in Kargil were disputed areas of the LoC, granting them the right to occupy them. The Ambassador then went on to show that Pakistan had miscalculated on both these perceptions. The audacious frontal assaults by the Indian Army against the imposing heights showcased India's resolve to expel the Pakistani intruders. On the second count, India furnished maps agreed to by Pakistan as well, to the international community, showcasing that the points captured by the Pakistan Army belonged to India.

The Speaker commented on the nature of Pakistan society during the Kargil War. He noted how the Army had overwhelming control

over the operational details of the Kargil conflict. Other service branches of the Pakistan Armed Forces and even civilian authorities were not informed of the developments taking place in the Kargil region. Such an overwhelming degree of Army control is a pervasive aspect of the Pakistani polity even in present days and times. The current ruling party has well-publicised links with the Pakistani Army and Imran Khan's selection as Pakistan's Prime Minister was based on the whims of the Pakistani Army. In dealing with such an adversary, it is important to maintain a strong face, not showing the Pakistani adversary any sign of weakness.

The Speaker concluded his speech with reference to the nature of the Pakistani nuclear command. He complimented the streamlined nature of the Pakistani nuclear command structure. However, he also stated that Pakistan's threat of nuclear retaliation if provoked by Indian actions was an exaggeration. In actuality they are not prepared to engage in an all-out nuclear strike against India. He opined that 'the Pakistani Army is adventurist, not suicidal.'

Sub Theme One. Kargil Heights: The Battleground (Major General Ravin Khosla, SM, VSM)

The Speaker aimed at providing an introduction and a historical background to the Region where the operation was conducted. He stated about the patriotic fervour the term 'Kargil War' instills in the uniformed community. He further gave a perspective on the position of Kargil and highlighted that the Region is equidistant from Gilgit in the North, Ladakh in the East, Srinagar in the West, and Patan in the South. Historically, the Silk Road passed through the Region and therefore the Region had been the centre of fierce battles. Every single war post-India's Independence has been fought in the Ladakh region. Further, explaining the territorial significance of the Region the Speaker brought out that the Gilgit-Baltistan region lies across Kargil. He shed light on the deprivation the Region currently faces, whose residents are treated as 'second class citizens', as the only Shia region in Pakistan, due to sheer apathy by the Military and the civilian government.

The Region is bound by the Himalayas in the West and the Karakoram ranges in the East. The valley floor is at approximate 9,000 feet, while the average altitude is 12,000 feet and going as high as 18,000 feet. The Dras region is the second coldest permanently inhabited region on the planet. The Terrain is barren with steep gradients which compounds the degree of difficulty for the troops. Low levels of oxygen and low density of air not only degrades performance of the human body but also has implications on the accuracy of weapons. The flip side to it is that it offers a relief to the gunners, as the artillery functions better. The river that flows in the Region is the Indus, which originates at Mount Kailash, Dras and Suru, which flow through Gilgit Baltistan and then southwards to Pakistan. He also mentioned that NH1 is the main source of transportation for civilian as well as military supplies and personnel.

The Speaker stated that in 1999, one Infantry brigade looked after an area currently occupied by three brigades. He explained that the forward posts were vacated in the winters due to heavy snowfall and were reoccupied once the snow melted after the winters. He explained that the move by the Pakistanis was retaliation to the pre-emption of such a move in Siachen in 1984. Detailing the incursion, he said that heights overlooking the NH were occupied by enemy troops before own forces could be re-deployed for the summer. However, he stated that the Pakistanis were taken aback not just by the response of the Indian Army, which they had not contemplated, but also by the speed and the ferocity of the response. He also highlighted how Pakistan's lies about the identity of the intruders were exposed through this. He also complimented the Indian Army's ability to mobilise artillery and the infantry as also the Air Force's valuable contribution to the War.

Given the nature of the attack, the rule book had to be thrown away and basic rules by-passed for quick retaliation. He mentioned three rules. These are basics of acclimatisation, recycling of troops, and issue of reconnaissance that were sidestepped.

Reflecting over why an intrusion took place, to begin with, the Speaker opined that the forward posts remain inaccessible during

the ‘road cut off’ period in the winter; therefore, restricting the working season. Some of the obstacles faced by troops in such harsh conditions are lack of habitat due to the inability of cement to set at such low temperatures and inadequate winter clothing which led to more casualties. All this necessitated that the forward posts were evacuated in the winter months.

Today, the Indian Army is well capable of securing the Region. New bunkers have been built, the best available clothing has been supplied to the troops as also special rations have been provided. Special emphasis on casualty evacuation measures has been placed, where helipads have been built to facilitate evacuation and acts as a great source of motivation to troops deployed there. Other aspects of welfare such as communication and recreation have also been set up for the benefit of the troops.

The Speaker concluded by reiterating the Army’s capability to hold the heights against intruders or Pakistani troops. He commended the grit and determination of the Army and the troops for waging a war at an altitude where even walking is difficult. He applauded the Army leadership for ensuring that the troops were fully provided for and for motivating the troops by their presence.

Sub Theme Two. Tiger Hill and Tololing (Brigadier Khushal Chand Thakur, YSM, Retd)

The Speaker spoke that the Army and all battalions did exceptionally well in Kargil with special mention to the Air Force. He talked about the operations that were carried out in Kargil by his battalions, namely, The Operation of Tiger Hill and The Operation of Tololing. His address was divided into four parts—Terrain, Intrusion, Battle of Tololing and Tiger Hill and lastly, the lessons learnt.

Terrain

The Dras sector is like a bowl with the NH 1A, dominating ridges like the Tiger Hill and Tololing, and some Nalas like Tingle, Sando, and Bimbat Nala flowing through. Due to the presence of these geographical aspects, it was important for Pakistan to capture Dras.

Intrusions

The battalions were informed about Mujahideen having captured features like Point 5140, Point 4597, Point 4590 (Tololing), Three Pimples (close to Sando Nala) and Point 4875 of the Dras sector. The major battles were fought amongst these features. Point 5140 and Tololing were held by approximately a company strength of troops, Point 4700—Three Pimple held by approximately a company, Tiger Hill—Western ridge too was held by approximately a company, and Point 4875 was held by approximately a company strength. The battles in Dras sector were fought under the then Colonel YK Joshi who was commanding 13 JAKRIF. At Point 5140, Battle of Tololing was fought by 2nd RAJRIF and 18 GRENADIERS. At Point 4700 and three Pimple Area the battle was fought by 2 RAJRIF and 18 GARHWAL. At Tiger Hill 8 SIKH and 18 GRENADIERS and at Point 4875, 13 JAKRIF, 2 NAGA, and 17 JAT fought.

The Battle of Tololing was one of the most important battles. This was the deepest penetration into the Dras sector and closest to NH 1A. The Battalion was informed of the presence of four to five Mujahideens which the unit estimated that the Ghatak platoon would be able to handle. The Speaker recounted that his Battalion was instructed to move to Dras sector from Ganderbal on May 17, 1999 where they were carrying out CI operations. However, to launch operations against the incursions there wasn't adequate information, artillery support, maps or proper clothing.

As operations progressed two companies were launched from the western ridge and continued to move forward on May 22, 23, and 24. Various ways and combinations were used to make progress but the Battalion couldn't achieve much success as it was pinned down 300 metre from the Tololing Top. On May 26/27, casualties were also pouring in and this was the time when the Air Force came to the rescue with Gunship helicopters firing on Tololing and the surrounding areas. However, on May 28, one of the Gunship helicopters was shot down by a stinger missile. Later it was decided to make a final push and all the companies were pressed into the attack.

The Speaker spoke about the bravery of one of the officers, Major Rajesh Adhikari who was awarded the Mahavir Chakra for his actions. He was tasked to capture Point 4590 but there was a Medium Machine Gun (MMG) bunker located there that made the assault impossible. Ghataks from the eastern side and Charlie and Delta Company from the western side gave a push but all measures were unfruitful because the enemy was located on the top. Further, the weather was unfavourable as it was snowing and severely cold. Major Rajesh Adhikari and his operator were among many other brave soldiers who got martyred that day.

Even after so many casualties, the Unit decided to go for one final attack as also to retrieve the body of Major Rajesh Adhikari for which a large number of ammunitions was ferried to the hill top along with rocket launchers, grenades, etc. On the night of June 02/03, the Unit readied to attack with their Ghataks and all companies. However, the final push was very dreadful and a lot of casualties were suffered including that of Lieutenant Colonel R Vishwanathan, the unit Second in Command, some Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs), and jawans. The next day, 2 RAJRIF launched an attack and on June 13, Tololing was successfully captured. For this brave and successful operation many gallantry awards were won by 18 GRENADIERS including one Maha Vir Chakra, four Vir Chakra, and ten Sena Medals. 2 RAJRIF was awarded two Mahavir Chakra, three Vir Chakra, and four Sena Medals.

For the capture of the huge feature of Tiger Hill, a multi-directional attack was planned with the deployment of the Unit Ghataks for which the operation started on July 3, 1999. Foothold was secured by the Ghataks because companies coming from the front could be seen by the enemy. 10 Ghataks were involved in this attack wherein nine casualties took place and the only Ghatak who survived was Rifleman Yogendra Yadav who was subsequently awarded the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) for his courageous act. Reaching and holding the objective was very tough as two local counter attacks were conducted by the enemy. There was a possibility of attack from the western ridge as the message had gone around that Tiger Hill was captured. However, 8 SIKH took a position in the area of Helmet and India

Gate and interposed between the company and the enemy and carried out a brave action that saved the day.

Many gallantry awards were awarded to 18 GRENADIERS including a Param Vir Chakra, a Maha Vir Chakra, two Vir Chakras, and five Sena Medals and to 8 SIKH who were awarded one Vir Chakra and seven Sena Medals.

The Speaker explained how important it is to keep in mind the lessons learnt from such battles. The importance of Unit Camaraderie for the infantry units came out as a very lesson. Leadership skills must be developed among the officers. Similar leadership roles were showcased by the brave hearts Major Rajesh Adhikari and Lieutenant Colonel R Vishwanathan, both of whom laid down their lives. We need to nurture this spirit and tactics shown during these battles which could be seen. Another important lesson was about the battle of the last 100 metre short of the objective when artillery support is not available. Troops need to be prepared and trained for phase of the battle. The Ghataks should be especially trained for last 100 metre battle as they act as force multipliers in this phase. Young leadership is also extremely important and needs to be nurtured.

Sub Theme Three. The Build-Up and Provision of Firepower Support (Lieutenant General K Ravi Prasad, VSM)

Build-of Artillery Firepower

The Speaker participated in Operation VIJAY as a Battery Commander of an Artillery Regiment. He expressed his pride in being part of the team that prepared and executed the fire plan for the capture of the Tiger Hill.

The Speaker discussed the build-up and provisions of firepower support for Kargil Operations. He also mentioned about the bravery of Gunners in the Battle of Kargil which proved that the artillery power was the most significant and a major contributing factor in the outcome of all battles.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The main challenge was that the repositioning of available firepower would have to be carried out before infantry could launch a physical assault to capture the objectives during Kargil Conflict. All Commanders in Kargil rightly emphasised the necessity of destroying the enemy's prepared defensive positions through coordinated preparatory bombardment, provision of covering fire for reducing the combat potential of the post, and break the enemy's will to fight before the infantry launched its assaults.

The Speaker provided a comparison between Destruction and Neutralisation. After the initial few days of the Kargil Operations, it was realised that the quantity of artillery firepower available was insufficient for achieving the desired destruction of the targets.

The artillery in the Kargil theatre was then built-up by inducting additional Regiments including Bofors regiments and Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRF) fire units. It was the buildup of artillery and exponential increase in the delivery of devastating firepower on the targets that turned the tide of operations in India's favour. It soon became clear that only sustained firepower could destroy the *Sangars* and systematically break the will to fight and this led to the employment of the '100 Gun Concept' for the first time during the Battle of Tololing and then many times thereafter. This marked the beginning of the innovative application of the firepower. The success achieved by this kind of firepower thus became the norm rather than exception.

All the attacks thereafter were preceded by sustained fire assault. The artillery bombardment on the objectives prevented the enemy from interfering with own infantry assault till the fire was lifted on safety considerations. Long after the indirect fire was lifted the direct firing guns continued to shoot in the infantry which allowed the infantry to close up to the last 50 metre of the objective or until the Company Commander asked the forward observation officer to stop the artillery fire.

The direct firing 'Bofors' became the buzzword for victory. The kind of firepower delivered in the important battles and the ferocity

of firepower of the Battle of Tololing can be gauged by the fact that a total of 26,000 shells containing 95 tons of TNT and 527 tons of steel were delivered on the feature. On the day of the capture of Tiger Hill which became the national objective owing to media attention, 100 guns rained down death and destruction on the intruders by firing over 1,200 shells in a span of just 5 minutes. With over 60,800 rounds fired on the Tiger Hill delivering approximately 23 tons of TNT and 500 tons of steel, the Artillery ensured the victory of the Tiger Hill. In a similar application of firepower in direct firing role, Artillery fire was brought down on the enemy at Point 4875 which broke the impasse and ensured capture of the feature.

In the entire conflict, about 5,000 Artillery shells and rockets were fired daily from 300 guns, mortars, and launchers. Almost one shell being fired every minute for 17 long days. Artillery fire guns thus caused 80 percent of the enemy casualties.

Moreover in the entire Kargil War, approximately 2,43,000 rounds of Artillery ammunition were fired in a span of less than 90 days and numbers unprecedented in the Indian Artillery history. In recognition of gunners' contribution to ultimate victory, Point 4875 complex was renamed 'Gun Hill', an immense honour bestowed on the gunners. The Hill was later renamed as Batra Top, in the honour of the Kargil Hero Captain Vikram Batra.

The Speaker also emphasised the fact that the success of the gunners has not been easy. NH 1A was the only major road access available for the movement and deployment of guns. In addition to this, selection of Gun Areas not under direct observation of the enemy was a bigger challenge as a major part of the road access was under the direct observation of the enemy.

Man packing of 120 millimetre motors over the hill slopes was the only way to overcome the challenges of the limited ranges. Batteries were also split into two troops. Overhead firing which is prohibited in peacetime became a norm.

Another challenge was the presence of hard rocks as the digging of a command post, gun pits, and defence of gun areas was a challenge. The dynamic observation grid demanded much longer

operations, which required repeated recycling of some officers as forward observation officers with assaulting battalion.

He also credited the Air Force for their bravery and willingness to go into the assault of three to four objectives in succession.

Numerous important lessons emerged out from the battles during the Conflict. The Speaker underlined the lack of surveillance and target acquisition resources. Not holding, weapon locating radars was a major weakness. Despite these challenges faced by the gunners, if the regiment of artillery achieved the success that they did, the gunners' ability to improvise and find tactical solutions to peculiar military problems deserves to be unreservedly lauded.

The Indian Field Guns (IFGs) has limited lethality due to comparatively less weight of the shell and reduced effect on *Sangers*. The limited ranges of the equipment did not lend itself to cover the entire brigade defended sectors. 120 millimetre mortars, though suitable for the mountains, suffered from limited ranges and were forced to be deployed close to the objective thus being susceptible to enemy counter-bombardment. Fire assaults on objectives with 100 guns at the rapid rate paid handsome dividends.

The utilisation of 155 millimetre Bofors guns in direct firing role at ranges up to 12 kilometre was found to be a very effective method for engaging targets, especially bunkers. As the rate of advance of the infantry and progress of battle could not be anticipated, 'time on-call' fire plans proved very effective which were flexible and lent themselves to modifications.

Besides COAS citations, eight Artillery Regiments earned the battle honour. Along with that, gallant acts of various gunners and battery commanders during the Battle of Tololing and the assaults were also seen.

The Kargil Conflict triggered a revolution in Military affairs for the entire Indian Army. The Speaker credited the higher leadership for the modernisation of artillery being on track. The modern gun systems like an ultra-light howitzer, K-9 Vajra, indigenous Dhanush,

Advanced Towed artillery gun system, and towed gun systems are in the advanced stages of induction.

The Army's might is directly proportional to the lethality and quantity of artillery shells; it can deliver with speed and accuracy. A mix of lethality, precision, leadership, and battle transparency will be the decisive factors for the Army in future wars.

Sub Theme Four. The Role of Media and Battles of Perceptions (Nitin Gokhale)

The Speaker gave a recap about what had happened 20 years ago during the Kargil Conflict. Kargil War was the first conflict which occurred after the advent of full-time private 24*7 television or broadcast media started in India, which was started by Zee TV. Print media was till then the staple diet for information which had changed with the rise of the television media. The Speaker claimed that Kargil War is described as the 'first televised war' of South Asia.

The Speaker, talking about his reporting days at Kargil admitted mistakes and shortcomings in the coverage and reporting by the media personnel. The average age of a media person who went to cover the War was around 35 years, with a maximum of 10 years experience. They were over-enthusiastic and had not seen conflict before, unlike the Speaker who had in the past seen conflict in the North-East.

The Speaker mentioned about the other problems which the media had faced which resulted in inaccurate presentation of facts. Primarily they had lack of information about the War as they were not exposed to first-hand information. Another important factor was the lack of communication facilities as mobile phones did not exist then and only a few journalists had satellite phones. The Speaker himself had to go to Srinagar or Leh to fax news reports to his media headquarters. Another problem was the lack of centralised information distribution as no one was present to brief the media. At that time media briefings was not part of the agenda of the Armed Forces.

The Speaker personally feels that none of the media persons had seen firsthand combat in Kargil and the reports were made from

statements of soldiers arriving at the base from the battlefield. They had only witnessed the casualties arriving, the evacuation being done, and the rising and dipping of the morale of the Armed Forces.

The synergy between the military and media was praised by many during and after the Kargil War and was claimed to be one of the best. Though the Speaker accepted this at the national level due to work done by the media spokesperson of the Ministry and Armed Forces, he differed in opinion at the ground level. At Kargil, Batalik and Dras, there was no synergy as no single point media briefing was given by the Army. As compared to the 1971 War, the communication strategy for the media was well-articulated due to the availability of time for planning before the war started, unlike during the Kargil War. Also in the 1971 War, there was a deliberate attempt by all arms of the government who facilitated the western reporters and commentators to go to East Pakistan to show that Pakistan Army was carrying out genocide in East Pakistan and bring that to light so that it justified India's going to war against Pakistan.

In Kargil, the media landed up without a plan due to the sudden escalation of tension. First reports were sent from information gathered from whatever possible source like the jawans and junior officers. The Speaker admitted that these reports, when relooked now, look very naive. There was only limited visibility of the battlefield to a reporter back then.

Though the media's intentions were never wrong but many inaccuracies were present in the reports. There were instances when senior editors like late Vinod Mehta stopped the printing of critical reports about the Army till the end of the War. When the national effort is on, the media held back from doing critical reports, but it is the job of the media to question once the War is over. Media's job is to ask critical questions to the Military as well as to the political and national leadership and to bring about transparency and accountability. Hence, the Army needs to think about bringing a platform for media engagement for future battles.

The Speaker pointed out that there was a need for a single point communication source from the Military to the media. During the Kargil War, the Dras Brigade headquarters became the unofficial

briefing point for the media. The Deputy Commander of the Brigade became the unofficial spokesperson. The situation of the media has changed today and if a war happens today, up to 1,000 journalists will be present at the battlefield, unlike 60-70 journalists who were present in Kargil. Hence, an official planned media strategy is needed.

The communication means, access to information, technology, and the hunger for information has also increased today. Hence, there is a need for a group of military officers who are well-versed with media technology and aware as to how to fight the battle of narratives. In a war, it is not the strongest side which wins, but the one who has a better story to tell. The winner today is always the side who wins the battle of narratives. To counter that we need well-trained, well-informed, and well-connected officers.

The Defence Forces have now expanded and changed its structure to deal with the media. Still, there is a need for a proper structure to interact with media. When we prepare for war, the strategy is to 'sweat hard in peace to bleed less in war'. Hence, the Government and the Military needs to sweat hard on developing a media strategy now so that they don't suffer and fall victims of the battle of the narratives.

The Speaker concluded by reminding that mistakes can happen but to correct it is the important thing and that is the lesson to be learned. Hence, we need to prepare the Armed Forces for the future challenges in terms of communication and information warfare that may arise.

SESSION II.

From Strategic Surprise to Rousing Victory

Opening Remarks by Chairperson. Lieutenant General YK Joshi, AVSM, VrC, SM

The Chair began by discussing his involvement with the Kargil War. He regaled the audience with stories of his service during the War, where he was suddenly asked to assume the role of Commanding Officer of his unit. He discussed his personal experience and illustrated some

of the ground realities that the soldiers deployed in Kargil faced, including the high casualty numbers alongside the sudden impetus of War being thrust onto them. After discussing some of these matters, he introduced the different subjects being discussed in the panel, which included, the equipment of soldiers fighting in Kargil, the Air Force and its synergy with the Army during operations at Kargil, and finally the deployment of Special Forces in the Region.

Sub Theme One. War of Small Things (Brigadier Amul Asthana, Retd)

The Speaker highlighted the offensive operations of the infantry in the rugged and high mountains during Operation Vijay at Batalik Sector in Kargil, 1999. He said that a lot of changes have taken place in the Army since then for the better, but there is still a long way to go. He appreciated the contribution of the Indian and Gorkha soldiers.

The Speaker brought out the difficulties of the Unit in suddenly moving for operations after being ordered for deinduction and having handing over winter clothing, Battalion support weapons, sector maps, and even medical staff.

The initial challenges faced during the battle included shortages of weapons and ammunitions, inadequate artillery fire support, limited manpower, maps, radio and telephone sets, food, water, medical support including casualty evacuation, high altitude, extreme cold and snow clothing.

The Speaker proposed the need for 'out-of-the-box' solutions to challenges like equipment reserves, pro-active delivery, clothing, maps, and logistics. The Speaker brought out the need for overcoming challenges in communication and discussed the need for light communication equipment with dry or re-chargeable batteries. The paramount importance of logistics as an essential factor in War was stressed upon.

The emphasis of manoeuvre and boldness in offensive operations in rugged mountains in a modern war was also stressed upon. He underlined that though mountains helps the defender, but experience

showed that in rocky terrain as was available in Kargil and Dras the attacker had every advantage and being perching on heights was a disadvantage that could be exploited.

The Speaker concluded by stressing the role of logistics in deciding the outcome of battles. A modern and powerful Army with aggressive logistics at the micro level will be undefeatable as though 'Big things are important, but the Small Things make Big Things work'.

Sub Theme Two. Revisiting Air War in Kargil (Air Marshal Anil Chopra PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM, Retd)

The Speaker at the very onset presented that the much-acclaimed laser-guided bombing conducted by the IAF was carried out for the first time with the then Air Chief Marshal Tipnis flying in formation.

On May 10, AOC J&K of the IAF was approached informally by the Army for two armed helicopters support. Later the IAF Chief was contacted by the Army Vice Chief on May 11 for the same. However, the Air Head Quarter requested that the government be asked for permission to get IAF inducted. Subsequently, during the Joint Chiefs Committee Meeting and when the Chiefs met the Principal Secretary, NSA and the PM, the risks involved in inducting the Air Force in the conflict were brought out and it was decided not to involve the IAF. However on May 23, finally the PM cleared the use of fighter planes but with the condition that the LoC will not be crossed.

The Speaker spoke about the Pakistani Armed Forces being well dug in and that the Pakistani Air Force was fully deployed, for whatever it is worth. Also, targets required to be engaged were at the heights of 16,000-18,000 feet where most of the aerial weapons didn't function properly. Further, fighter pilots were not trained to operate at such conditions and on-board computers could not provide aiming index at those levels. The rockets fired at those levels would disturb the airflow of the fighter planes and low air density had serious in-flight implications. The Indian Air Force had no firing ranges to practice firing at those levels. The target grid reference which the Army and the Air Force use was different and led to inaccuracies in target data sharing and hence, the Force had to rely on data from and

MiG 25s. The attack helicopters were also incapable of operating at those heights. To add to these issues, there was a restriction of aircrafts not crossing the LoC. The IAF moved the AOC J&K to HQ 15 Corps so that there could be close coordination with the Army for target acquisition and also to get better battle damage assessment.

The IAF started conducting ELINT and recce sorties around mid-May 1999 but on May 21, a Canberra was hit by a Chinese IR SAM, and it had to land back on a single-engine. On May 26, IAF began conducting full strikes initially with MiG 21s, MiG 23s, MiG 27s, Jaguars, and helicopters. However, on May 27, IAF lost a MiG 27 due to engine flameout when the pilot was firing rockets. The pilot was being escorted by a MiG 21 piloted by Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja who attempted to look for the downed aircraft but also got hit by a SAM. On May 28, there was rocket strike by four Mi 17s, out of which one was hit. It was later understood that the SAM's on those altitudes and air pressure were much more potent and capable. Therefore, there was a review of tactics to be employed and helicopters were withdrawn and high-altitude firing by MiG 21s and MiG 27s resorted to. Also, by May 30, Mirage 2000s were inducted after the aiming index was modified to drop 250-kilogram Spanish bombs.

On June 16, the Pakistani Army supply depot was moved to Muntho Dhalo and on June 17, Mirage 2000 aircraft destroyed the entire depot using a couple of dozen 1,000-pound bombs. On June 23, enemy logistical camp in Mashkoh Nala and Point 4388 were attacked by Mirage 2000s which had been modified to accommodate 1,000-pound US LGB bombs with Israeli Lighting Kits during the Kargil War.

The first of the nine LGB mission took place on June 24 and destroyed a bunker on Tiger Hill. The first night LGB was dropped on June 28 and that paved the way for the Army to capture Tiger Hill. There were a total of 7,821 sorties during the War, with 1,750 sorties by fighters, and 850 of them being airstrikes.

The Kargil Review Committee brought out certain observations including that the IAF was brought into battle late, need for forces to

be better integrated with the MoD and need for a chairman joint staff committee. Further, it was seen that there was a need for complete transparency between services as lack of jointness and mistakes led to casualties of three planes in the initial days. The IAF, after the Kargil War, transformed from a sub-continental tactical force to an inter-continental strategic Air Force. The War also led to new aircrafts being inducted and existing being upgraded.

Sub Theme Three. Powerful Punch: Special Forces (Major General Ashok K Dhingra, SM)

Major General Ashok K Dhingra began by bringing out that during the days of the Kargil Conflict the Special Forces were not the term used for Para Commandos. He described the challenges of acclimatising, troops having to quickly adjust to new terrain, reorienting from jungle warfare to super-high altitude area warfare, as the preparation time was short. As Special Forces operate in small teams they had to reorient themselves to undertake conventional missions. They also did not have battalion support weapons integral to standard infantry battalions.

The Speaker explained how the two strengths of the Special Forces, namely, 'surprise' and 'flexibility' were both with the enemy. Hence, his Forces tried to create localised avenues where they could maintain the surprise. They tried to adopt tactics for which the enemy was not prepared for. The initial operations were a setback but they learned quickly from those setbacks. The restriction that the LoC could not be crossed in turn put a lot of restrictions on their plans.

The absence of central command and control for Para Commandos at the time of War led to suboptimal use of this Force. The SF were sprinkled all over the theatre in different divisions and ended up in tactical plans of divisional commanders even though nine of the ten Parachute Battalions were deployed in Kargil and played a huge role in the entire operations.

The Speaker opined that there is a need to have the adaptability to transform quickly as these missions come up very abruptly and

they have to be prepared at any given point of time. Over the years the junior leadership has withstood the test of time and has become fairly proficient in directing the artillery fire, looking after casualties, and has developed a cross-terrain specialisation.

The Speaker concluded by saying that there is space for sub-conventional operation below the nuclear threshold and conventional weapons cannot deter unconventional warfare. That is where the importance of Special Forces comes in. Recent examples of taking crucial decisions like Surgical Strikes and Balakot operations have shown us that there is a window where these Forces can be very well utilised. It is up to us now to prepare ourselves and be ready to face challenges in the future.

Closing Remarks. By Lieutenant General (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia (Retd), Director, CLAWS

The CLAWS Director opined that the Seminar conducted by CLAWS had interesting and thought-provoking sessions. The Director brought out that in a book a Pakistani author claims that once General Musharraf took over as the Army Chief the operational movement started around mid-October and that Pakistan troops had started moving across the LoC by the end of October 1998. Although, according to the diaries captured by the Indian Army, it suggested that intruders had started moving only by the end of February 1999 and hence the logistical backup with the intruders was limited at the beginning of the battle.

Shuja Nawaz, brother of one of the Pakistan Army Chiefs, had written a book *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army and the Wars Within*, published in 2008 where he says that the Pakistan Army had started reinterpreting its previous defeats with India with the victory. This kind of vision led to Pakistan's Military failure. Also, post the Kargil War, the Command and Staff College of Pakistan changed their tactics and curriculum for strategy and is now trying to come out with a new strategy incorporating deception and surprise.

The Speaker stated that India being a strong nation, its diplomatic approach needs to be to militarily punish the intruders at multiple

levels first, before going out to the world appealing to retain the strategic balance.

The Speaker brought out that delays in decision-making, mobilisation, and application of Forces are thing of the past now. In the future era, all three aspects should be carried out together and dealt with swiftly, if we want to achieve success in the initial phase of the conflict itself. We have to ensure that unity of command leading to the unity of purpose becomes our mindset. Further, there is a need to remove a misconception that the terrain as seen in Kargil was easy or simple and as if Tiger Hill and Tololing seems like a table top. We must remember that the Terrain was extremely difficult, rugged, and with an altitude of approximately 18,000 feet.

It was also brought out that the Battle was fought in many areas besides Kargil like Dras and Batalik sector. Extremely tough battles were also fought at Turtuk, Jubar, Kukarhang, and Khalubar which were rarely discussed by anyone as it was not located on the NH. The Speaker also brought out that there is huge potential to carry out manoeuvre in the mountainous terrains by the infantry. The importance of 'flexibility and innovation' continues to remain the secret behind success in operations in the mountains where local resources are scarcely available even now. Looking back at the recommendations of Kargil Review Committee and Group of Ministers Report, some of the points had been implemented but other major issues like integration, jointness, and appointment of CDS continue to remain in a progressive state.

BOOK RELEASE REPORT

Surprise, Strategy & ‘VIJAY’: 20 Years After Kargil and Beyond

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies released the book (CLAWS) *Surprise, Strategy & ‘VIJAY’: 20 Years After Kargil and Beyond* on July 13, 2019 to commemorate 20 years of India’s first ‘televised war’: the Kargil War. The Book attempts to examine the minute details of what happened on and off the field, challenges encountered, and the unrelenting courage through which the Conflict was won by the Indian Army. The Conflict that left an enduring impact on India-Pakistan relations, the character of warfare, and India’s strategic thought have been revisited in this Book, which has been edited by Lieutenant General (Dr.) VK Ahluwalia (Retd) and Colonel Narjit Singh (Retd).

Starting with a Foreword by General NC Vij (Former COAS), the Book is divided into five parts with chapters written by both military officers and civilians. The First Part titled ‘Blood, Guts and Glory’ briefly discusses the actual battles fought in Dras, Mushkoh, Batalik, Kaksar, and Turtuk sub-sectors to evict the Pakistani intruders from the dominating heights of Kargil. The Second Part, ‘Synergy to Victory’, analyses the supporting forces which synergised the efforts to victory. The Third Part contains the ‘Perceptions and Opinions’ of Military Officers involved in the Conflict and the changes since then. The Fourth Part, ‘Motivation’, is a tribute to the courage and bravery of the Indian soldiers who fought an unrelenting battle. The Fifth Part focuses on the ‘Emerging Challenges and the Way Ahead’ and discusses the rapidly changing global-cum-regional scenario, the potential threats, India’s preparedness, and substantial recommendations for future conflicts.

In the backdrop of the changing nature of conflicts, many questions remain unanswered regarding India’s capabilities for future warfare. Some of these like India’s intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capacity on the ground; situational awareness at the operational and tactical levels; war fighting concepts; and

inter-formation coordination need to be addressed. While the Book revisits the lessons from Kargil at the national, strategic, tactical, and operational level, it looks at the emerging threats and challenges beyond the horizon and suggests the way forward.



CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

After the humiliating defeat in the Indo-Pak War of 1971, the Pakistani Army suffered yet another setback, when the Indian Army occupied Siachen Glacier in April 1984. Having not achieved much in the proxy war cum State-sponsored terrorism to destabilise India, it carried out intrusions at many places in the Kargil Sector and occupied the dominating ridgelines and heights with sinister plans in mind. The intrusions were carried out predominantly by Pakistan's regular Army personnel, spread over a large frontage and were deep enough to dominate the national highway (then NH1A) effectively. The intruding forces occupied unheld high altitude mountain peaks and ridgelines, ranging between 14,000 feet and 20,000 feet, in Dras, Mushkoh Valley, Kaksar, Batalik sub-sectors, and Turtuk sub-sector.

Operation VIJAY was launched in the Kargil Sector of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) during the Summers of 1999 to evict Pakistan regular Army and irregulars from the Indian territory. It saw the combined might of all instruments of national power ensuring that the defeat of the enemy who had occupied favourable positions on the heights.

Synergy in Application

The Indian government set the political guidelines for the conduct of the War. On display, during Operation VIJAY, was the unparalleled bravery and professionalism of the Army, complemented by the synergistic actions of the Air Force and the Navy, which launched Operation Safed Sagar and Operation Talwar, respectively. The nation witnessed the dedication, devotion to duty and valour of the three services, especially the Indian Army, which recaptured the fortified positions by physically assaulting each one of them. But victories were won through great sacrifice by soldiers, against great odds, and with bold and offensive frontal cum multi-directional attacks.

This was the first time that the Air Force conducted operations at heights above 15,000 feet and proved to be operationally effective. The Army and the Air Force modified their strategy and tactics to deliver a decisive blow to the intruders at the impregnable heights. As the Navy also mobilised themselves and carried out manoeuvres, it shook Pakistan's Navy and served as a viable deterrent. Although Operation VIJAY was a good example of synergy between and within the three Services, yet, many areas require improvement to better our operational preparedness. The diplomatic community and the media played their full part and helped in galvanising world opinion in favour of India by exposing the deceit of Pakistan.

Fundamental Questions

The nation, including all its intelligence agencies, foreign missions, and the Defence Forces was caught unaware of the enemy treachery and hostile plans in early May 1999. This led to a heroic, high-cost action by the Army to push back intruders by use of unconventional military tactics, heavy reliance on artillery, and use of the Air Force. Subsequent inquiries brought out the reasons for the intelligence failure as also gave several recommendations.

The probability of conventional threats combined with hybrid content would always remain high till we have unsettled border disputes with our adversaries. These disputed portions are predominantly in the mountainous cum extreme high altitude areas.

The rugged mountainous terrain offers numerous challenges to the deployment of forces which manifest in the form of difficulties in mobility and manoeuvre. Greater challenges are also anticipated in terms of stress on personnel and equipment, increasing non-combat losses, as well as magnified maintenance and repair requirements.

'20 Years After Kargil' allows us to look at the following facets:

1. The difficulties and challenges faced in the operations and the battle-winning solutions implemented.
2. The present on-ground status of the recommendations given

in the Kargil Review Committee Report and the Group of Ministers (GoM) Report.

3. Post 20 years of the Operation, the speakers' reflections of their participation in the actual operations and the role of media, diplomacy, and other elements of national power.
4. In light of the advancements in technology, are there any specific changes recommended in the doctrine, strategy, and war-fighting concepts.

Objectives

The objectives of this Seminar are as follows:

1. Briefly revisit the battles in Kargil and the lessons learnt.
2. Pay tribute to our brave hearts who fought gallantly and were martyred during the conflict.
3. Given the emerging world order, the revolutionary changes in technologies and changing characters of conflicts, the fundamental focus of the Indian Armed Forces is to be prepared to face the envisaged threats and challenges of the future.

Programme

The proposed programme and session details are attached separately.

Participants

The participants will be from the Indian Army, the strategic and diplomatic community, academia and veterans.

Venue

Ashoka Hall, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi

Seminar Coordinator

The Seminar is being coordinated by Colonel Sunil Gupta, a Senior Fellow at CLAWS. CLAWS can also be contacted at 011-25691308 and email: director.claws@gmail.com.

PROGRAMME

09:00 – 09:30h	Tea and Registration
09:30 – 09:35h	Screening of Short Video on Operation VIJAY
09:35 – 09:40h	Opening Address by Director, CLAWS
09:40 – 09:50h	Keynote Address by The COAS and Patron, CLAWS
09:50 – 10:05h	Special Address by General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)
10:05 – 10:15h	Special Address by General NC Vij, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM (Retd)
10:15 – 10:25h	Theme Address by Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri, PVSM, UYSM (Retd)
10:25 – 10:35h	Book Release: Surprise, Strategy & ‘VIJAY’: 20 Years After Kargil & Beyond
SESSION I: OPERATION VIJAY: OVERVIEW AND ROLE OF STRATEGY, DIPLOMACY, MEDIA AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER	
10:35 – 10:45h	Opening Remarks by Chair Ambassador G Parthasarathy
10:45 – 11:00h	Speaker 1: Major General Ravin Khosla, SM, VSM, Kargil Heights: The Battle Ground
11:00 – 11:15h	Speaker 2: Brigadier Khushal Chand Thakur, YSM (Retd), Tiger Hill and Tololing
11:15 – 11:30h	Speaker 3: Lieutenant General K Ravi Prasad, VSM, The Build-Up and Provision of Firepower Support
11:30 – 11:45h	Speaker 4: Nitin Gokhale, The Role of Media and Battles of Perceptions
11:45 – 12:05h	Interactive Session
12:05 – 12:30h	Tea
SESSION II: FROM STRATEGIC SURPRISE TO ROUSING VICTORY	
12:30 – 12:40h	Opening Remarks by Chair Lieutenant General YK Joshi, AVSM, VrC, SM
12:40 – 12:55h	Speaker 1: Brigadier Amul Asthana (Retd), War of Small Things
12:55 – 13:10h	Speaker 2: Air Marshal Anil Chopra, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd), Revisit Air War in Kargil
13:10 – 13:25h	Speaker 3: Major General Ashok K Dhingra, SM, Powerful Punch: Special Forces
13:25 – 13:50h	Interactive Session
13:50 – 14:00h	Concluding Remarks by Director, CLAWS
14:00h	Lunch and Dispersal