

Book Review

**Kargil: The Crisis and Its Implications
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The Nehru Memorial Museum Library has been conducting academic and intellectual exercises in a remarkable manner since its inception. It has been organising seminars and discussions on contemporary national issues on a regular basis. Recently, it has started a new series – “Current Debate” – which offers platform to eminent scholars to discuss and analyse the contemporary challenges. The volume under review contains six papers presented in one such series that focussed on the Kargil crisis. The presentations as well as discussions from the debate contained in the volume present a comprehensive account of this highly complex problem.

The Line of Control has attracted considerable attention of the international community after the Kargil conflict. The first paper captioned, “The Line of Control in India-Pakistan Relations” by eminent journalist Manoj Joshi throws light on the origin of the LoC. It makes it clear that while the LOC might have been mutually accepted by both the sides, it had never been accepted by Pakistan. Right from the outset, Pakistan has been concentrating on altering the LoC. For instance in Kargil, Pakistan forces occupied the heights overlooking Kargil town well after the first cease-fire in 1948. Likewise in 1965, Pakistan sent thousands of trained and armed guerillas across the cease-fire line in the hope of sparking off an uprising in the valley. Significantly, the Pakistani army continued the offensive well beyond the cease-fire line in the hope of sparking off an uprising in the valley. Significantly the Pakistani army continued the offensive well beyond the cease-fire of 22 September 1965. At the Shimla Conference in 1972, it was decided to convert the Cease-fire Line into Line of control. The change in the nomenclature was significant. While the former defined the border in military terms, the latter did so in purely factual manner. According to Joshi, an important dimension of the Pakistan’s Kargil game-plan was to demonstrate that the LoC was not clear and the intrusion was by the local militants and that the Indian response to the intrusion also amounted to the violation of the view that the best solution lies in a formalisation of the position of the state that took place on 1st January 1949, when the first cease fire took place. However, in view of the past record, one feels that even if India agrees to the conversion of the LoC into a permanent border, Pakistan is not likely to agree to this. It is worth pointing out that the Kashmir dispute is about the Kashmir Valley, which happens to be on the Indian side of the LoC.

The noted Pakistan expert, Professor Kalim Bahadur, in his thought-provoking presentation analyses Indo-Pak relations in the context of the Kargil conflict. He rightly holds that the Pakistan game plan in Kargil has put a question mark in India-Pakistan relations. No agreement will inspire the confidence of the people of India and peace will henceforth be an armed peace for a long time

to come. Kargil has made a qualitative transformation in Indo-Pak relations. He refutes the theory that Kashmir is the root cause of Indo-Pak conflict. In fact, he says, Kashmir is only a symptom of India-Pakistan animosity. The nature of Indo-Pak problem has very little to do with Kashmir. It is rooted in the nature of the Pakistani State. The roots of the conflict go back to the ideological dispute, which led to the partition. India and Pakistan represent two different ideologies and two separate world-views. If Kashmir had not been there Pakistan would have found some other contentious issue, which would have become the reason for the continued conflict. The conflict is going to persist because Pakistanis utilise confrontation with India for constructing their national identities. Even if Kashmir issue is resolved, Indo-Pak relations are not likely to become natural. It is Pakistan's basic insecurity and vulnerability against India that explains its relentless hostility to it. According to Kalim Bahadur, the political class in Pakistan as represented by the establishment, which includes the politicians, the bureaucracy and the military have a consensus. He rejects the contention that the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif was not taken into confidence in regard to Kargil crisis. On the contrary, it was a well thought out plan both militarily and politically in all its implications. Even the reports that the Prime Minister was not fully in picture about the Kargil affairs appear to be carefully pre-planned to provide an alibi to the political leadership.

What will be the impact of the India-Pakistan conflict in Kargil on the economies of the two countries? Can the two South Asian economies afford a bigger war? What policy initiatives should the Indian government take both at home and abroad, to deal with the economic challenges posed by the conflict with Pakistan? A leading economist, Professor Sanjaya Baru in his piece entitled 'The Economic Consequences of the Kargil Conflict for India and Pakistan', seeks to find answers to these and other similar questions. His analysis shows that the most important priority for India, on the economic front, in the wake of the Kargil crisis, is to continue to pursue the policies initiated in the 1990s. In other words, India should become a more open economy, for unless human security is ensured at home through the improvement of general well-being, human development and higher incomes of the people, national security cannot be assured merely through increased investment in defence and the security apparatus.

The well-known defence analyst K Subrahmanyam in his contribution 'Nuclearization of the subcontinent and the changing Defence Scenario' set the record straight by dismissing the view that nuclearization of the subcontinent was something India started and Pakistanis have only followed suit because they had no other option. He argues that Pakistan's nuclear programme is independent of the Indian programme. Subrahmanyam maintains that the subcontinent has not become a nuclear flashpoint. Because if one uses nuclear weapons, he does not know what the adversary is going to do with him. A nuclear weapon will invoke a nuclear response. A nuclear weapon country cannot be threatened beyond a particular point. Discussing the US role in the subcontinent, he states that the US is not going to permit another country in the world to use a nuclear weapon. It is not in their security interests to allow any nation in the world to deploy a nuclear weapon and to get away with it. The Americans have the means to find out what India or Pakistan does. The US has got necessary means of disarming any country in the world. He emphasizes that the nuclear weapons are not meant to be used. They are necessary because then only our soldiers will be able to fight with confidence against a nuclear-armed adversary.

The next article by Major General Afsir Karim (Retd.) makes interesting reading. According to him Pakistan's aggression in Kargil is not a new phenomenon but this time, the aggression was during peacetime. Pakistan opened a new trend here in its proxy war against India with the aim of seeking international intervention. Pakistan also wanted the Indian army to rush to Kargil from the valley to relieve the pressure on the insurgents and mercenaries there. The objective was also to question the validity of the Shimla Agreement. By questioning the alignment of the LoC, they wanted to claim new areas and reopen the Siachen question. Afsir Karim who happens to be an established authority on national security and terrorism warns that Pakistan's threat of many more Kargils have to be taken seriously by India. Time has come to fight this 'shadow war' in a more-organized manner, where army plays only a limited role. He suggests some options which would help in controlling insurgency in Kashmir, which include reorganisation of intelligence networks to anticipate Pakistan's designs, raising of armed volunteer groups to provide information on terrorists, psychological war to counter-mobilize local population and replacement of army by special police forces in urban centres. He regrets that the Kashmir dispute with India is being converted into a Jihad to obtain benefits of support from the fundamentalist organisation of the so-called Muslim world. He rightly terms it a misuse of religion for political gains. Such designs must be firmly opposed by India and exposed for what it is –gross misuse of the fair name of Islam for political terrorism.

In the last essay, the former Foreign Secretary, J.N. Dixit, lays stress on the need for a new outlook in managing India's foreign relations. Certain mindsets, which have been there for the last four decades, must be given up. Demography, size and civilizational values alone do not make nation great. They have to be backed up by political stability economic power and technological capabilities. There has to be an understanding of the changing chemistry of power, the changing equations and those changing equations are subject to sets of changing interests and the changing circumstances. The task of foreign policy is not to reflect impulsive reactions.

The papers included in the volume are all informative and thought provoking. They are brief enough for readers and scholars in a hurry. The contributors to the volume, coming from different spheres of life, enrich in their own ways the thematic relevance of the book. It should be an essential reading for all those interested in various aspects of the Kargil conflict. The summary of discussion given at the end adds to the value and worth of the study.