

The Kargil Adventure and Its Political Consequences

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Abstract

This paper studies the pre and post Kargil war events. It also elaborates the calculation and miscalculations of Kargil adventure from the top military brass and the Kargil clique. This paper also describes the question of civil military relations in Pakistan and actual corridor of the decision making. It also Provides Knowledge about the plan of Kargil war, doctrine of secrecy, the aftermath of that adventure, the big bang between the civil-military leadership, the failure of diplomacy, the impact of Kargil war on political system. This paper also highlighted the attempt to get Kargil at the rate of Kashmir. It is assessed that the kargil episode had some precious consequences related to the battlefield, warfare and the supremacy of army as an institution. This paper also showed the activities happened on the freeze heights of Kargil seriously affect, politics and civil-military relations in Pakistan.

Key Words

Kargil, Kashmir, Military, Civilian leadership, Siachen, Religious Parties, Party Politics

JEL Classification: IOK, LOC, COAS

Introduction

The Kargil complex generally consists of rugged and fragile hills. Its area is about 11,625 square Kilometers. The height of the mountains differ 8500 meters to 1500 meters. The parabolic sketch of the area is generally surrounded by Zojila Pass from the West, Shyok River from the East and line of control (LOC) from the North. Widely scattered villages like Sankro, Mulbek, Khalsi, and Partapur is situated on the south. The population of area is scattered and low cultivated by local people. This area is affected by heavy snowfalls, starting from end of September and ends up to April. During snowy season average temperature remains between minus 10 to 40 centigrade.

The whole area belonged to Pakistan; India occupied this area during the war of 1965. Pakistan restored that area under Tashkent accord after war in 1965. In 1984, By dint of force Kargil was again captured and retained by India. Drass Kargil, Dungal Leh highways are two main supply routes (MSR) to Siachen and are lifelines for India.

Objectives of the Article

Main objectives of this paper are

- Briefly explain Kargil war plan and its execution.
- Explain civil-military relations during Kargil war.
- Throw light on the weak political system of Pakistan.
- Explain how Kargil war and coup of 1999 damage political system of Pakistan.

Scope of the Study

This study will provide information regarding strategic area of Kargil, links between Kashmir and Kargil, role of disputed Kashmir, sowing and growing seed of war between two rival countries; It will also provide information about actual decision-makers and the dummy political leadership. The main focus of the study is the Kargil adventure and its long-lasting political effects on political system of Pakistan.

Review of the Related Literature

Kargil war totally changed the geopolitical situation of subcontinent. The two nuclear states are in front of each other with nuclear determinant. The role of diplomacy and response of international community, the aggression of Indian media provided a lot of literature, articles, and books.

- Owen John Bennett's book "Pakistan in the eye of storm" Provided very useful information about the Kargil episode especially the tale of the coup is explained event by event.
- Book of Dr. Aysha Sidiqa "Military INC" also provided some useful and valuable information about the political tactics and thinking of Parveez Musharraf. It also explains the Political corporate between seasonal politician and Parveez Musharraf.
- Pervez Musharraf's book "In the Line of Fire" also provides Musharraf's views about the causes and consequences of Kargil war. It also provides information about Musharraf's claim of victory.
- Saeed Shafqat's book "civil-military relations in Pakistan" provided valuable information about the supremacy of military in decision making and military control of the foreign policy of Pakistan.
- Sohail Warrich's book "Ghaddar Kaun" represents the Nawaz sharif's views about Kargil war and the blame of taking him in darkness.
- Book of Dr. Hassan Askari "Civil-military relations in contemporary Pakistan" is another source of real story of civil-military relations in Pakistan.
- Book of Syed Anwar Hassan "Pakistan in 1997 Nawaz Sharif's 2nd chance to govern" provided valuable information about the style of governance of Nawaz Sharif and his style of decision making.
- Clancy Tommy and Tommy Zini book "Battle ready" provides some significant information about the Washington Declaration. This book indicates the dilemma of meeting between the Nawaz Sharif and president Bill Clinton.
- JN Dixit's book "India and Pakistan in war and peace" Depicts the bilateral common views about the Kargil war.

Aysha Jalal's book "State of Martial rules, Book of Ian Talbot "Pakistan in 2002, terrorism and brinkmanship "and Many article form newspaper has been studies to complete this study.

Kashmir and Siachen Issue

It is a fact that India violated the line of control (LOC) and captured Siachin silently in 1984. Siachin is an important part of the northern areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. It was a serious threat for Pakistan with respect to the Indian conspiracy of sub-super power of region. The incident of Kargil war was more serious than Siachin in 1999, because it provided overlook to important road, to Srinagar, Siachin and Leh. Land of Kashmir is a major source of famous Indus river in that region, including Punjab's famous five rivers. Kashmir is a core issue between two rival countries India and Pakistan. Politicians, scholars, strategist have great affection with land of Kashmir because both nations are fighting against each other and their identities are varied against each other. Kashmir is a flashpoint between two countries, identities, imaginations, and histories. Kashmir is not a conflict of territory, resources, and people now; it is a war of national identity between two countries, competing strategies and warfares of different images of self and others. That is why India and Pakistan adventuring for Kashmir right from the separation history to-date. Kargil episode is an exemplary case in this perspective.

Week Political System

"It is a real fact that the political system of Pakistan has been suffering instability right from the emergence of Pakistan. Historically civil-military relations had always been remained disproportional, ceasing a constant transition of power between the military and political leadership. Since the creation of Pakistan, the power of military has been lasted very long, in the form of military rule or by controlling the political leadership behind the scene. Military has always been dominant and badly blamed from interfering in political scenario of the country." (Shafqat, 2000)

Military has always been proceed as well organized and disciplined institution that has real power of decision making and set ties of political system by selecting faces of their own choices to power corridors. Majority of political leaders blamed of seeking help from military establishment, to gain power. Critics called them products of Martial Law and outcomes of the GHQ. Army as an institution played very significant role in political scenario of Pakistan and this role has been increasing because of many factors. Political leadership is not trained and well organized; political parties and their organizations revolve around personalities having no internal democracy. Party leaders of political parties always tried to conceive the real sources of power, and paws of real power sources always towards the Army establishment. Every political leader wishes to have good relations with real kingmakers.

Historically army is well discipline institution which has systematic framework of decision making. Army has a systematic mechanism of application of their decision and planes on politicians.

It is a tragic fact that political governments are always willing to seek army help during governance and stabilizing their powers. Masood (2001) argued "Manifesto less [sic] parties, fragile party organization and pseudo political co-workers, forced the political leader either to subordinate, confront the military establishment for governance. The political scenario of Pakistan is true example of above said statement." (Mir, 2001)

Relations of Nawaz Sharif with military leadership have varied with passage of time. Relations between Nawaz Sharif and military establishment varied due to focusing on Zia's regime, civilian rules, Kargil issue, after the coup of Paveez Musharraf and then present situation. During all this Nawaz has changed as a political leader, from Pro-Military to Anti-establishment.

Nawaz Sharif's Style of Governance

Two-third majority win in election 1997, greatly effected political carrier and aptitudes of Nawaz Sharif. Nawaz Sharif got a heavy mandate and has minor opposition against him in the parliament. Now he is aiming to capture most of power in his hands, neglecting other members of the "Troika". For that Nawaz has made massive changes in the constitution, most important were 13th and 14th amendments. He had consulted Army chief Jahangir Karamat on passing these amendments. Army chief stays neutral during all that. (Amir, 2001)

Nawaz also took in confidence Army chief Karamat on resignation of Naval chief due to corruption charges. Army chief agreed and naval chief resigned. Nawaz Sharif remained careful, in maintaining and sustaining good relations with Army establishment. Nawaz has some specific steps in his mind. Army chief Jahangir Karamat made conflicting speech; during an address in Naval staff college Quetta and proposed setting up of National Security Council (NSC). Nawaz assumed that Army chief is interfering in politics. Nawaz asked Jahangir Karamat to resign in October 1998. Army Chief resigned before three months of his retirement. This incident spread great resentment and displeasure in Army and army personnel feel insulted. Army views this act of Nawaz Sharif against military sovereignty as an institution.

During the Kargil episode, Pakistan faced massive international pressure, for not respecting the international border. Nawaz and Musharraf have their own concern on Kargil event. Diplomatically international community pressurized Pakistan to take its troops out of valley. Nawaz Sharif wanted the solution of issue; he went Washington to negotiate ceasefire with President Bill Clinton. Unfortunately Nawaz Sharif forced to accept unconditional withdrawal instead of negotiation. Nawaz Sharif wanted Army chief to accept responsibility of the Kargil war and resign. Musharraf denied to resign and conveyed Nawaz Sharif message that "I am not Jahangir Karamat".

(Waraich, 2007, P-320)

As time passed Nawaz Sharif faces severe criticism from opponents. Again unpredicted Nawaz Sharif removed Musharraf as Army chief and appoints Lt. General Zia-ud-Din Butt as new Army chief promoting him as full General. As Musharraf was in the air, returning from Colombo, his close companion Gen. Mehmood took the charge of the Prime Minister House and Nawaz Sharif in his custody.

Plan and Battle of Kargil

Top army sources confirmed that Kargil operation planned and approved several months ago and kept top secret by Kargil clique, that was informed only few core commanders. Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Chief of General Staff Officer (CGS), Director General Military Operation (DGMO), general officer commanding (GOC) 10 core and General officer commanding Northern area Javeed Hussain was known about the operation. Much top brass of forces even majority of corps commanders, were not aware of the operation consequences. In principle Musharraf defended the secrecy of operation by saying that it was not necessary to inform all military officials due to the sensitivity of operation.

Pervez Musharraf and his trustee believed that Kargil operation will help in internationalizing the Kashmir issue, and India will take radical steps to resolve the dispute. Musharraf advocated the secrecy of operation by saying that, "Kargil is the revenge of 1971 war." Had the top brass Army, not been over asserted and, not planned the operation behind the closed door. It is amazing that even Air Chief had not known about that adventure, and had not taken into confidence, while during operation asked for air operation; he totally refused to take air action.

Blame Game of Responsibility

It was quite clear in Pakistan during early weeks of September that show-down between Nawaz and Musharraf is imminent. Rumors were floating in Islamabad, Kargil planners were on their way of survival. Although Shahbaz meddling, conflict and tried to make ties a bit better, but he was not so successive. It is very difficult to blame who is responsible for Kargil failure, Musharraf and his trustee or civil on Nawaz Sharif? Both Musharraf and Nawaz Sharif

were blaming each other, while religious parties hijacked the political scene led to coup. As Owen Bennett Jones(2000) argued in the first week of September corps commanders meeting “The generals decided that army could not move without clear justification, but if Nawaz tried to remove Musharraf, the corps commanders agreed, then they would react, loss of two army chiefs in the space of one year would be unacceptable.” (Bannet, 2000, P-39)

It is a million-dollar question did Pervez Musharraf informed Nawaz Sharif about Kargil. Had Musharraf took Nawaz Sharif in confidence before pulling his troops to captured Kargil heights? Was prime minister informed? If not, why not? If yes when and where? What was the reaction of Nawaz Sharif? Whether he approved or disapproved his plan and action? What are the truth and reality? Who has to blame?

In his biography “In the line of fire”, Musharraf rejected Nawaz Sharif claim that he did not take him in confidence on Kargil issue. Musharraf provided recorded evidence of Nawaz Sharif visit of Kel area in Kashmir in the south of Kargil. He was briefed by Army high command on February 5, 1999. A briefing was arranged in Sakardoo just one week before when PM Vajpayee visited Lahore. Lahore declaration was signed during his visit.

Musharraf explained again said, “Kargil War was a landmark in the history of Pakistan Army.” Despite this over-whelming military success, Musharraf stressed, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif crumbled under international pressure, and accept the withdrawal. He said, it is a mystery for me, why he was in a hurry? He further argued and demolished Nawaz’s claim that operation was planned without his knowledge. Kargil was a big military success, said Musharraf during an interview with the Dawn News on February 20, 2001. (Musharraf, 2006)

He claimed Nawaz Sharif had not visited US and accepts withdrawal; Pakistani troops should capture three hundred square miles of Indian. Musharraf defends his action to launch operation in Kargil. Musharraf denied allegation, of keeping another military high command in dark about Kargil operation. He stressed, “Telling everyone about it was not necessary at all.”

He claims, Nawaz lost political front which we had won militarily. He also claimed that primary requirement, for operation like Kargil is security and secrecy. So Army top brass had to decide who, is to be informed and when. He further said that as operation progressed and proper time arrived a briefing of the corps commanders was held. Musharraf defend military success and said, “It was a tactical action that had strategic importance in which no more than a few hundred persons were involved, but which engaged thousands of the Indian Troops. PM Sharif accused Musharraf In his biography “Ghaddar Kaun”, for misguiding the world and people of Pakistan during Kargil episode. He exposed facts about Kargil by saying “I have in my possession the audio of Musharraf May 26 and 29, 1999 telephonic conversation with General Aziz Khan which proved that Musharraf wanted to kept me in dark about the Kargil Operation.” (Waraich, 2004)

Lt. General(Rtd) Ali Kuli Khan, who was among the senior-most generals, and a candidate of upcoming Army chief left Army after the appointment of Musharraf as Army Chief in 1998 said that Kargil operation was flawed, in term of conception, strategies planning and execution. The Kargil adventure was a bigger tragedy for Pakistan than the civil war of Bangladesh leads to separation. He also said that Kargil episode damage the Kashmir Issue. He stressed that “The Kargil episode was an un-professional decision, by someone who had served in Pak Army for forty years.” (Amir, 2005)

Another example of responsibility of Kargil was narrated by the Lt. General (Rtd.) Jamshid Gulzhar during an interview with Geo TV and Dawn TV. He is close companion of Musharraf and was working as Major General in ISI at the time of Kargil episode. Kiani supported the secrecy of Kargil fiasco. Nawaz Sharif was only informed that it was a very sensitive operation, and Musharraf could not explain all the details to him.

In his exclusive Interview, Gen. (Rtd) Kiyani said, civilian Government of Nawaz Sharif, top brass military leadership, were not aware about the adventure. ISI kept all in dark about Kargil operation in 1999. It was fairly late when Sharif was briefed on the Kargil Issue. (Geo TV, 2008).

Retired General Zia-ud-Din Butt who was ISI Chief at the time of the coup, said in an interview to the media on Sunday night. He said, Nawaz Sharif was not properly briefed on Kargil Issue; Musharraf deceived Nawaz Sharif to start the Kargil War. He stressed that Pervez Musharraf, Lt. General Aziz Khan and Lt. General Mehmood hatched the whole plan with some other close companion of Musharraf in military.

Zia-Ud-Din appointed Chief of Army Staff in October 12, 1999 but he failed to get the charge of Army chief. After the coup Zia-ud-Din was arrested and jailed for two years, on charges of treason, but he was not Court Martial. “Instead of me, Musharraf and his close companion who affected the coup subjected to Court Martial” said Zia-ud-Din. He added more, Musharraf had the plan to take over from the very first day of his appointment. He never deserves to become the Army Chief on merit and used to bug the phone of presidency and PM besides spying on important meetings. (Geo TV, 2010)

Lt. General (Rtd.) Shahid Aziz accused Musharraf that he and his ugly fours keep other military commanders in dark about Kargil operation. Lt. General Hameed Gull blamed Musharraf for Kargil conspiracy, during a news

conference in Islamabad. He said, "The nation demanded the government in Islamabad to unmask the real culprit behind the Kargil misadventure that caused the death of 2500 army soldiers".

Senior American official, who had been dealing with General Musharaf at the time of Kargil, believed that he had planned the Kargil operation to shuttle the Pak-India peace process and the Lahore Declaration. They also insisted that Musharaf had himself compelled Nawaz to request President Clinton to intervene and stop the War. Some former American administrative including Bruce Riddle and PM Nawaz Sharif believed that the Kargil was mere debacle not only to shuttle Pak-India peace process Nawaz Sharif was compelled by Mushraf request to US to intervene in the conflict. Nawaz repeatedly claimed since 1999 that I have come to know about Kargil when I got a phone call from Indian PM Vajpayee. He inquired me, what have you done after I returned from Pakistan with good gesture of peace and harmony?

Nawaz Sharif said, he then called up Musharaf what Vajpayee had said, as events worsened in Kargil area, Musharaf asked me to contact President Clinton and ensure the end of War. Nawaz instantly got in touch with President Clinton and proceed to Washington to resolve the issue.

The Blair House Atmosphere

In his book, General Zinni "Battle Ready", which was published by the penguin group, General Zinni who was the commander of the American Central Command when Kargil War took place, he was sent as special envoy to Pakistan by US President. President Clinton has already refused Musharaf besides endorsing Nawaz Sharif assertion. "America intervened decisively in 1999 to end Kargil sentiments between Pakistan and India providing a face-saving exit to the Nawaz government, but Musharaf was the one who pushed Nawaz to go America and tried to withdraw the Pakistani forces from the Kargil.

General Anthony narrated his involvement in the Kargil conflict in these words "Both sides start to mobilize and deploy all their troops and it seems the start of large scale war, It was very critical situation for President Clinton, so he send a special mission to Pakistan to convince Nawaz Sharif and Musharaf to pull back their troops from the Kargil heights. I meet with Pakistani leadership on 24 and 25 July and present a simple proposal of forces withdrawal. He argued if Pakistan does not pull back his forces, then Pakistan is going to open a war of nuclear weapon in the region. General Zinni added "The problem for Pakistani leadership was the appraisal national loss of face, lacking down, pulling back to the lines of control (LOC) looked like political suicide. We needed to come with face saving way out of this massive event." (Mir, 2014)

Bruce Riddle who was senior official of white house said we are trying to arrange a meeting with President Clinton which will defuse the deadlock between two countries and settle the issue. But we shall arrange meeting only if Pakistan accepted the proposal of unconditional withdrawal .that move got the attention of Musharraf who was worried about losing situation in Kargil. General Zinni claimed that Musharaf motivates Nawaz Sharif to asked president Clinton to meddle in issue and convince both countries to stop war. But Nawaz's problem was face saving; Nawaz Sharif re-treated proposal of withdrawal before President Clinton meeting. After some hesitation, finally came around and he accepted withdrawal. (Jaswant, 1999)

Conclusion

In the beginning, of 1999 in, a precious atmosphere of "Amman" regaining two democratically elected governments Nawaz Sharif and Vajpayee. The operation plan was among the gang of four and some their confident, civilian establishment and most of the military establishment was not on the picture. The controversy over Kargil even seriously exposes the civil-military relations whereas India shows better coordination of civil and military tactic. Pakistan lost international support during Kargil war because its military and political leadership were not like a hand in glove. Too much secrecy within the military circles, unsuccessful diplomacy let Pakistan's failure. Kashmir is the basic objective behind Kargil.

Media reports were confusing and fractured due to the division of Urdu and English press. Indian media produced war phobia and reports of international press describing the other facts. Kargil event exposed real corridor of power in Pakistan. Musharaf and his close companion were going on their way without consultation. The civilian Nawaz Sharif was in a state of comma, one side he advocating the peace process, while the battle in Kargil area spreading. A sharp contrast of opinion clearly sought. Kargil clique was on their way of survival, they were more confident, they led a series of events and that incidents bring the coup of 1999.

Pre and post Kargil civil military relations expose the discomforts between the institutions. Due to doctrine of supremacy military establishment believed that civilian prime minister introduced ill-formed changes in Kashmir policy via Lahore Declaration. Military leadership disliked blame of war mishandling. Big bang between military and civilians exposed weakness of civilian institutions. Army proved his supremacy in decision making increased his role as a controlling agency

Musharaf accused Nawaz Sharif on the decision of withdrawal and claimed that civilian leadership lost the military victory on table of negotiation. Musharaf claimed again Kargil war is a land-mark in the history of Pakistani warfare. Many critics argued secrecy of operation and its conduct enhance the blame game after the war. Musharaf claiming, that Nawaz was crying over the misadventure of Musharaf. Nawaz Sharif said that he was come to know about Kargil from a telephone call. Some important high officials were not in the picture because of Musharaf's secrecy doctrine which is based on "telling everyone about Kargil was not necessary."

Pervez Musharraf wanted to become a political figure at national level in future, as a tactical move, Pervez Musharraf enhanced his ties with Benazir Bhutto by offering NRO, on his own conditions. He tried his best to restrict mainstream party leadership to continue their exile. But the time had passed; Benazir came back after the NRO and faced suicide attack. Benazir accused Pervez Musharraf of Karachi airport attack. The election campaign started throughout the country. Nawaz Sharif also allowed land in; Nawaz Sharif allowed taking part in election. Election fever spread throughout the country, but a tragic event is still waiting, that was the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Election postponed for two months, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the election. Musharraf resisted and tried to retain the presidency but forced to resign. Musharaf resigned and went on exile after receiving guard of honor. That was not the end of political Kargil of Pakistan.

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