

## Before Kargil

1996-97?

Pakistani military plans  
Kargil operation

May 11-13, 1998

India conducts 5 nuclear tests

May 26, 1998

Pakistan claims to carry out 6  
nuclear tests

February 1999

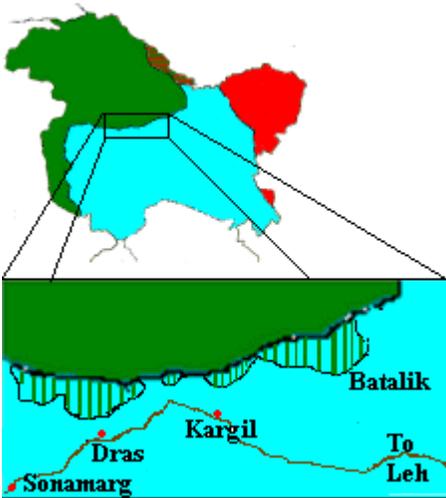
P.M Atal Behari Vajpayee  
travels to Lahore and sign  
Lahore Accord with Pakistani  
P.M Nazaw Sharif

## War in Kargil

### Events

In the year prior to the Kargil intrusion, India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons. This raised the fear, in the minds of many world leaders, of nuclear war over Kashmir. Tensions on the Indian subcontinent rose throughout the summer as tensions over Kashmir ran high, especially in light of the killing of minorities and increased acts of terror by Pakistani ISI and Army backed mujahedeen. In February 1999, the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, met his counter part Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistani Prime Minister, in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. This was seen as a de-escalation of the tensions in the region and increased hopes of peace. As these developments took place there was a further increase in the wave of terrorism and artillery bombardment of the villages on the Indian side of the LOC. Despite this provocation, the leaders of the two countries signed the Lahore Declaration, which built upon the Shimla Accord in 1972. The gist of the declaration was to have a peaceful and bilateral resolution of the Kashmir issue.

However, it is now learned that around the time of the Lahore Declaration and even a few months before, the Pakistani Army had other plans. Namely these plans were to intrude across the well defined LOC, to occupy the heights and increase tensions even further. It is estimated that the planning of the operation may have occurred about a few years ago and that preparation for the invasion may have occurred as early as the autumn of 1998. All of this was in blatant opposition to the "Spirit of Lahore" and hopes of peace echoed by Prime Ministers Vajpayee and Sharif.

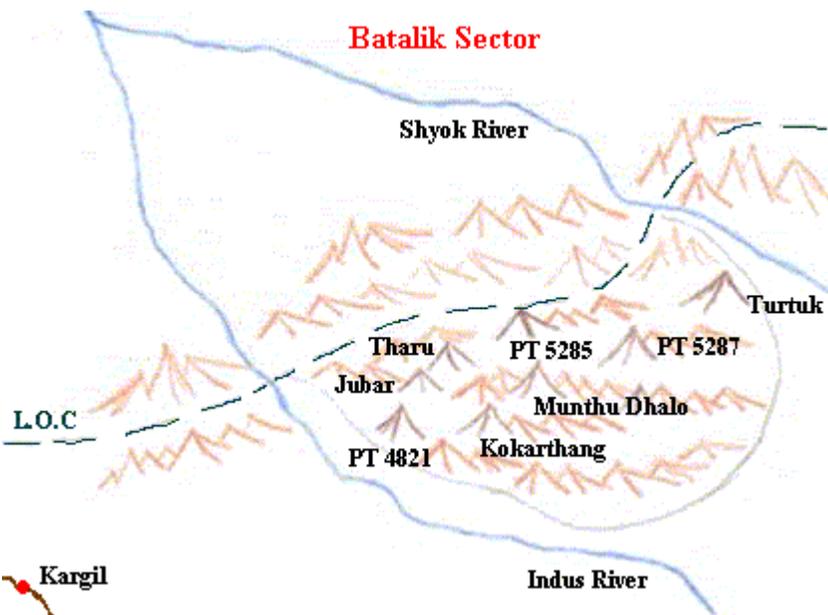


### Intrusion & War

The terrain of the Kargil and surrounding regions of the LOC is inhospitable in the best of times. Some of the characteristics of the region are jagged heights of up to 18,000 feet and harsh gusts of wind and temperatures plunging to about -60 degrees Celsius in the winter. There had existed a sort of "gentleman's agreement" between India and Pakistan that the armies of either side will not occupy posts from the 15 September to 15th April of each year. This had been the case since 1977, but in 1999 this agreement was cast aside by the Pakistani army in hopes of trying to gain the upper hand in Kashmir and plunging the Indian suncontinent in brief and limited war and raising the spectre of nuclear war.

### The Intruders

The Intruders on the heights were an amalgam of professional soldiers and mercenaries. They included the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 12th battalions of the Pakistan Army's Northern Light Infantry (NLI). Among them were many Mujaheddin and members of Pakistan's the Special Services Group (SSG). It was initially estimated that there were about 500 to 1,000 intruders occupying the heights but later it is estimated that the actual strength of the intruders may have been about 5,000. The area of intrusion extended in an area of 160km. The Pakistani Army had set up a complex logistical network through which the intruders across the LOC would be well supplied from the bases in POK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir). The intruders were also well armed with AK 47 and 56, mortars, artillery, anti aircraft guns, and Stinger missiles.



### Operation Vijay

The Indian Army detected the intrusions between May 3-12. From May 15 - 25, 1999, military operations were planned, troops moved to their attack locations, artillery and other equipment were moved in and the necessary equipment was purchased. Indian Army's offensive named Operation Vijay was launched on May 26, 1999. Indian troops moved towards Pakistani occupied positions with air cover provided by aircraft and helicopters.

### Batalik Sector

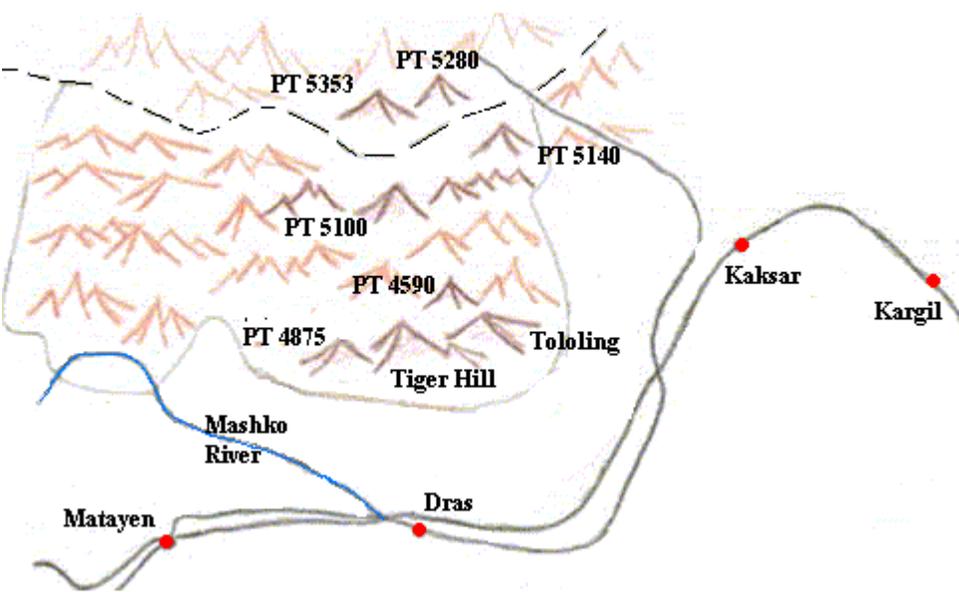
This sector is located between the Shyok and Indus rivers. This sector was responsible for about half of the Indian casualties.

### The Battle for Chorbat La, Turtuk & Eastern section

The Eastern section of the Batalik sector consists of Chorbat La (mountain pass), Turtuk and Pt 5287. The Ladakh Scouts captured the ridge of Chorbat La on the Indian side and preempted the Pakistani forces from occupying the area. This was the first Indian victory in the sector and resulted in heavy Pakistani losses. Turtuk is an important peak and the location of several important villages in the valley as well a link to Siachen Glacier. This sector was recaptured on June 16, 1999 by 11 Rajputana Rifles. Pt 5287 was recaptured on July 5th by the Ladakh Scouts. The Eastern section was recaptured on July 6th after 38 days of war.

### Jubar Ridge

## Dras Sector



Jubar Ridge is located on the western end of the sector and is several km from the LOC. Initial patrols to this area were killed by the intruders. The first attack on the ridge was unsuccessful. In the next attacks, the Indian Army decided to cut supply routes and encircle the enemy camps. Jubar Ridge and the neighboring peaks were the site of some of the fiercest battles during the conflict. The battle raged for 40 days ending on July 8, 1999, involved hand to hand

combat and heavy casualties. Eventually, 1 Bihar of the Indian Army prevailed over the enemy forces.

## Central Section

The Central Section of Batalik Sector consists of Munthu Dhalo, Kokarthang and Pt 5285. Initial attacks in this area were unsuccessful. 1 Paras and 11 Gorkha Rifles pressed on and were able to take back all of the peaks in the region.

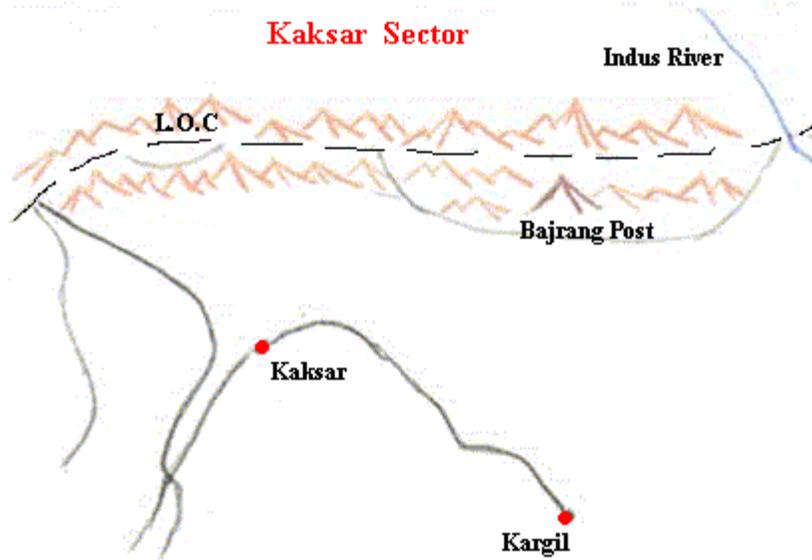
## Dras Sector

This sector is the Western most of the intruders positions. Dras Sector is adjacent to the Srinagar - Leh Highway (NH 1), making this sector strategically important as traffic on the highway was vulnerable to the enemy firing. The main positions of the intruders were the Tololing Top, Tiger Hill, Pt 4875, Pt 4590, Pt 5100 and Pt 5140.

## Tololing

Tololing Peak was the dominant position in the sector as it directly overlooked the highway. The Battle of Tololing was initially carried out by 18 grenadiers on May 22, 1999 and was unsuccessful. Subsequently, 1 Naga Regiment, 15 Garhwal and the Grenadiers took up the task but also failed to beat back the intruders. Eventually 2 Rajput, a fresh battalion, was given the task of capturing the peak. 2 Rajput prevailed on the June 13, 1999. The same battalion was successful in capturing Pt 4590 on June 14, 1999. Pt 5140 located east of Tololing and closer to the LOC was captured by 1 Naga Regiment. Pt 5100, located close to the LOC was a major supply route for enemy forces. The capture of this on July 1, 1999 was instrumental in the recapture of Tiger Hill.

## Kaksar Sector



## Tiger Hill

Tiger Hill is also a major peak located along the highway. Initial attempts by 8 Sikh were unsuccessful. Tiger Hill is also the location of the the downing of the Mi-17 helicopter in early days of the Kargil War. Eventually Tiger Hill fell due to a combined attack from three sides which resulted in the cutting of supply lines of the intruders. Tiger Hill was

recaptured on July 3, 1999 and cleared on July 9, 1999.

Pt 4875, the third of the major peaks located along the highway, was taken by 8 Jat and 16 Grenadiers on July 5, 1999. As the peaks overlooking the highway were cleared, civilian traffic.

## Kaksar Sector

This sector is located in between the two dominant sectors of Batalik and Dras. The peaks in this area do not over look the highway, it was not as priority unlike the other sectors. The major point of intrusion was Bajrang Post located on Pt 5299. Operations in this sector were undertaken after the Dras sector was secured. 1 Naga and 16 Grenadiers were tasked with the recapture of the Bajrang Post and were successful on July 12, 1999.

## Maskoh Valley & Other parts of the LOC

The valley is located west of the Dras sector but does not overlook the Srinagar - Leh highway. Operations to recapture the area were mobilized after the Dras sector was retaken. On July 9, 1999, Pakistan agreed to pull back the intruders and the Indian Army moved forward to reoccupy the vacated land.

Along other parts of the LOC, tensions remained high. Pakistani troops shelled the bordering villages and destroyed houses and schools. Approximately 100,000 civilians were evacuated. Also Pakistan had amassed a large number of terrorists at select points along the LOC for infiltration. It is estimated that several hundred of these terrorists were pushed across the LOC during the conflict. Pakistan also made an attempt to capture the Indian post in the Naushera sector of Jammu but failed to do so.

## Diplomacy

Both sides tried to build up a world consensus for their side. Pakistan issued statements condemning India's counter attack and falsely claiming that the fighters were the mujaheddin and or Kashmiri freedom fighters. Pakistan also falsely claimed that the Line of Control separating the two sides was not clearly defined. This was false as the line of control was clearly delineated by the two

sides in 1972. Pakistan tried to use Kargil as a way to project the Kashmir conflict as a potential nuclear showdown thereby encouraging international intervention that might favor Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistani leaders visited China, an ardent ally, to shore up support for their cause and simultaneously pressure India. However, much of Pakistan's diplomatic overtures failed, despite early success. The world saw proof of Pakistani army involvement in Kargil. India likewise tried to use the international media to make its case known. India was successful in showing the world that the Line of Control was clearly delineated and both sides possessed copies of the maps. Second, India demonstrated that the Kargil conflict was orchestrated and executed by the Pakistani army working with the Mujaheddin. Indian restraint and limitation to restrict the operations to Kashmir, allayed fears that the conflict would spiral out of control and result in nuclear war. It successfully thwarted Pakistani attempts at "nuclear" blackmail. The ultimate triumph of diplomacy occurred as Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif travelled to Washington D.C in early July to negotiate a settlement of the conflict. At this time, defeat of the Pakistani occupying forces seemed assured as Indian armed forces had taken back almost all of the peaks in their respective sectors. The only remaining occupied peaks were the ones closest to the Line of Control, where Pakistani artillery fire could provide cover to the invaders. In a negotiated settlement, Pakistan decided to withdraw its troops from the remaining locations in a set time frame.

### **Mood in India & Pakistan**

Pakistani public had had a banner year from 1998 - 1999. The public opinion despite a failing economy and fears of conflict with India were generally positive. The reason for this was the euphoria over the nuclear tests a "befitting answer" to India's tests and also the initial success of the Kargil operation. The public of Pakistan was told that the Mujaheddin that Pakistan gives moral support has captured the heights in Kashmir and were able to hold off the Indian military, whose casualties were heavy. The public was overjoyed, for their view point, the Kashmir victory seemed right around the corner.

Meanwhile in India, the mood was positive over the nuclear tests. However over time real concerns of an economic slowdown were worrisome and also the fall of the BJP coalition caused political problems. When Kargil occurred, it had a predictable response of anger and outrage at Pakistan and also at the government of India. Indians backed the operations of the Indian government and military. Indians came together as a country to protest the aggression of Pakistan and also to support their troops. The names of those who died in the Kargil conflict, became household names and their funerals and national grief was public. Ultimately, the Indian public rejoiced over the hard fought military victory by the armed forces.

A very different situation was taking place in Pakistan. Pakistani public was generally lied to by their government and became aware of the lies as Indian victories over the "mujaheddin" occurred. The public learned that the "mujaheddin" were largely made of the NLI (Northern Light Infantry) who were

out of uniform. Worse still Pakistan's government refused to acknowledge their own fallen soldiers. The grief of Pakistan's citizen especially of those who lost loved ones was never acknowledged by the government. The mood in Pakistan further soured as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif implemented a U.S brokered deal to withdraw from the heights that the intruders had occupied. The fundamentalists were outraged and threatened the government. Pakistan as a country had gone to war and lost but the official denials prevented the public from knowing the truth or publically mourning their loved ones.

### **Conclusion & Lessons from Kargil**

The most valuable lesson from the Kargil war for India was that Pakistan despite attempts at peace would not end the use of its military option in Kashmir.

Pakistan had since the late 1980's been using an indirect military option against India by backing terrorists under the disguise of "freedom fighters". Kargil a more direct military option was used to bolster the morale of its forces, achieve political and tactical gains. However after the initial shock, the operation for Pakistan was a failure. It failed to achieve the desired political gains, as Pakistan stood isolated within the international community, it failed in its tactical objective, as any gained territory was lost. The morale of its forces despite an early euphoria was badly damaged as many units of the NLI were destroyed and many of the dead were never brought home and worse still not acknowledged.

India also learned another valuable lesson, that its military needed more funds and equipment to maintain a state of readiness against a cunning enemy. India also realized that its intelligence organizations needed to be better organized so that information and evidence would reach the proper authorities. Another important lesson was that the Indian military and intelligence system also needed a system of accountability for its failures.