Our analysis elicited very different lessons learned for India and Pakistan. In the case of Pakistan, most of the lessons learned are strategic rather than operational or tactical in the military sense. This is in part because the open-source reporting of the operation generally denied the presence of Pakistani regulars, which necessarily precluded any open discussion of war-fighting lessons learned. Generally, Pakistan does not have a rich tradition of open accounts of its military operations, which stands in some contrast to India’s more robust private—though not official—publishing industry on political-military affairs.

For Pakistan, the apparent lessons learned from Kargil are principally as follows:

- Pakistan now views Kargil-like operations as an ineffective means of dispute resolution—mainly because Kargil appears to have been such a failure in the eyes of the world. The significance of this conclusion, however, is limited by the fact that many stakeholders in Pakistan simultaneously believe that Kargil can be seen as a victory of sorts. This continuing ambiguity about the effect of Kargil, when coupled with the strong Pakistani belief in the utility of other kinds of coercive operations against India, has unsettling consequences for the prospect of lasting stability.

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- To preclude strategic failure of the kind represented by Kargil in the future, Pakistan must effectively appraise the international response and the operational implications of that response. In particular, Pakistan must better assess the reactions of its adversaries in furtherance of a more effective grand strategy.

- Pakistan needs a broad body of experts, perhaps like the National Security Council (NSC), to adequately assess its planned operations of this sort. This sentiment is aroused by the government’s sweeping failure to anticipate the sequelae of the Kargil crisis and the secrecy in which the operation was shrouded. This veil of secrecy is the manifestation of the deep fissures in Pakistan’s civil-military relations.

- Pakistan must develop specific media strategies to shape international opinion and to mitigate India’s advantages on the information battleground. However, even the best media strategy cannot provide insulation against duplicity in the long term. Recognizing this problem, some interlocutors suggested that Pakistan made a grave miscalculation by hiding behind the transparent mujahideen cover story.

- Because the use of Pakistani regulars in Kargil proved to be counterproductive and because Pakistan believes that it has few or no diplomatic options, Pakistan sees only one successful strategy for bringing India to the negotiating table: the continued prosecution of subconventional conflict in Kashmir and perhaps elsewhere in India.

- Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities have become the key to successful execution of its political strategies at multiple levels. Nuclear weapons not only enable Islamabad to pursue “strategic diversion” and immunize the country from a violent Indian counterresponse, they also serve to catalyze the attention and, Pakistan hopes, the interest of the international community. Consequently, they have acquired centrality in Pakistan’s national strategy.

In stark contrast to Pakistan’s guarded and even deceptive accounts of Kargil, India has been very critical of key operational areas and has published several accounts of the operation, though none are as yet
either complete or definitive.\textsuperscript{2} The principal lessons that India learned from Kargil are as follows:

- India must be prepared for Pakistani recklessness, which could occur in different areas and take different forms: terrorism throughout India, conventional operations and incursions, increased LIC in Kashmir, and a variety of nontraditional threats.

- India must more aggressively counter Pakistani threats along the LOC by investing in more technologically advanced military and intelligence equipment. India is considering a complete overhaul of its intelligence infrastructure in light of its embarrassing failure to identify the Pakistani infiltration. However, despite initial humiliations, India is now confident that it can effectively counter the most audacious conventional Pakistani threats along the LOC even when disadvantaged by surprise.

- The Kashmir issue cannot be neglected in hopes of gradual atrophy. Rather, its resolution requires high-level attention and commitment as well as creative responses on the part of the government.

- India understands that international support cannot be taken for granted. To ensure this support, India must both maintain a posture of responsibility and be seen as seeking peace. These requirements act as an important brake on India’s propensity to respond aggressively to future Pakistani provocations.

- India recognizes the utility of the media in contemporary conflicts and will continue its offensive in the information war. India believes that it won Kargil politically in part because of its dexterous capability of shaping international perception. India also values the role of perception management in affecting public opinion domestically as well as influencing the morale of the Indian and Pakistani militaries.

India must treat nuclear issues more carefully because Pakistan is a risk-acceptant state capable of “irrational” strategic surprises. India thus must be prepared for nuclear operations that may be forced upon it by Pakistani actions.

The next two sections explicate these various lessons learned by the two combatants.

PAKISTAN’S PERSPECTIVE

Premeditated Kargil-like Operations Are Not an Effective Means of Dispute Resolution, But Kargil Itself May Not Have Been an Unmitigated “Failure”

Retired and uniformed military officers, the political leadership, foreign office bureaucrats, and opinion shapers and analysts widely agree that perhaps the most important lesson learned from Kargil is that such operations are not an effective means for advancing Pakistan’s strategic interests and hence are likely to be a less-than-attractive strategy in the policy-relevant future. The reasons cited for this conclusion are numerous and include the following:

- India is not likely to provide the opportunity. India is making (or is likely to make) investments that would seriously hinder any future Kargil-like operations.
- The international community will not tolerate future attempts to change the status quo, so it is in Pakistan’s best interests to avoid such operations.
- Kashmir is a political problem that requires a diplomatic rather than a military solution.
- Kargil was too costly in multiple ways, and Pakistan cannot gamble with such risks again.
- The failure of the operation itself is instructive and ought to be a deterrent to reconsidering such options in the future.

Several opinion shapers argue that in the face of such barriers to pursuing Kargil-like operations in the future, Pakistan will have to
address its own political and economic weaknesses. For example, Shahid M. Amin, a career diplomat who has served the Pakistani Foreign Office in the capacity of ambassador for 18 years, articulated a commonly held opinion when he stated the following:

It is high time that the country became ruthlessly realistic about its limitations and priorities. First and foremost, Pakistan’s survival must precede everything else, including our attachment to the Kashmir cause. Secondly, it has to be understood that our economy is our weakest point and has to be given priority over any other consideration. Thirdly, we need to set our house in order and require a long period of internal consolidation, based on drastic reforms.³ (Emphasis added.)

Aziz Siddiqui, formerly the editor and joint director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), asserted the failure of Kargil—and the failure of future Kargils—most clearly when he wrote:

Can there be other ways [other than Kargil] to persuade India towards a reasonable approach in Kashmir? More Kargils may not do this. . . . [If] one action fails to prove persuasively, there should be little reason to believe that others of that kind will turn out much better. . . . [There is only one remaining] opportunity for Pakistan—which is somehow to create a demonstration effect that accommodation and good relations with it are in India’s own best practical interest. That can happen only if Pakistan sets about concentrating almost exclusively on becoming a strong and stable political and economic entity in the region. . . . This is no doubt a longer-term process. But certainly not as long term as the fifty years we have spent trying to resolve Kashmir and making it even worse confounded with each try. It is also, after all, elementary common sense to discard the methods that have not worked, and which on all sound judgment look unlikely to work, and look for other ways.⁴

Numerous other writers and interlocutors reiterated the argument that future Kargil-like episodes are neither sustainable nor viable op-

³Shahid M. Amin, “Kargil: The Unanswered Questions II—Time to Shed Illusions.”
tions. As one editorialist succinctly put it, “The strongest grantor [sic] of Kashmiri freedom is a strong Pakistan. This is a lesson of Kargil.”

This lesson of a strong Pakistan ought to be particularly attractive to Pakistan’s armed services. One analyst pointed out that since General Musharraf is now Pakistan’s Chief Executive, he has a much more significant understanding of the importance of the fiscal, political, and social health of his nation and, most importantly, he is now directly responsible for these concerns. One could conjecture that in his capacity as leader of Pakistan, Musharraf may understand the dividends that could accrue to Pakistan’s development if he can sell a compromise on the Kashmir issue to the Pakistani polity (likely the conversion of the LOC, with some modification, into an international border), deal with Islamist extremism, and resolve bilateral problems with India. Yet Musharraf is likely leery of mustering the political will to accomplish these tasks because the political fallout of such a move could risk discrediting the institution of the Pakistani Army, a move that Musharraf, an Army officer, might be rather unwilling to take. (It would also run counter to the desire of some elements of the Pakistani military to continue “bleeding” India in Kashmir either as a form of preventive self-defense or as revenge for the debacle of 1971.) Thus, it may be preferable that a civilian government undertake these decisions to compromise—and shoulder the ensuing political consequences. Musharraf’s predicament, according to many Pakistani analysts, embodies the tension between what needs to be done and what he can actually do, a point that will be revisited later in this report.

While there is obviously a significant body of opinion in Pakistan that Islamabad ought to look beyond Kashmir and focus on renewing Pakistan itself, the benefits of this judgment are often undermined by the existence of strong competing views that do not generally reject

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violence as a legitimate means of altering the status quo—a point that will be revisited later—and, more specifically, do not view the Kargil operation itself as an unmitigated failure. While vocal criticisms of the misadventure that was Kargil have been plentiful, it would be incorrect to conclude that various strata of the Pakistani leadership have not seen value from that operation. Even though there is wide consensus that Pakistan paid a heavy price for initiating the Kargil conflict, a large and significant number of uniformed and retired military officers, senior political leaders, and analysts simultaneously argue that Kargil can be read as a success in certain respects. There are several variants of this story, all of which together portend disturbing consequences for strategic stability.

One view that was commonly expressed by informants is that India’s cease-fire offer, its willingness to let the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) go to Pakistan, and its successive extensions of the cease-fire in Kashmir arose because of Kargil. Kargil, it was argued, demonstrated to India that its Kashmir policy is costly and that Pakistan’s LIC strategy is relatively inexpensive. Thus, many stakeholders within Pakistan attribute the extent to which India’s peace overtures are legitimate to the fact of Kargil. To that degree at least, this viewpoint would hold, the Kargil operation—even if it besmirched Pakistan’s reputation internationally—successfully contributed to Pakistan’s strategic objectives vis-à-vis Kashmir.

A second common variant is that Kargil was a tactical success but a strategic failure. This view was also articulated by a number of informants and has been reiterated in various articles. Shireen Mazari, for example, has written that “the military aspect of the Kargil action was simply brilliant.” Later in the same piece she laments that India was able to “turn a military defeat into a diplomatic victory . . . [and] that Pakistan was unable to translate a tremendous military success into a politico-diplomatic victory.” Interlocutors who held this view asserted—often against the weight of evidence—that the Pakistani Army’s operational performance at Kargil was flawless, and they invariably concluded that the Army’s attainment of strategic surprise at Kargil was in effect synonymous with the achievement of victory in

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the campaign writ large. Since those who hold this view entirely neglect the fact that the Indian Army, once mobilized, redeployed, and committed to eviction operations, actually secured repeated tactical victories—often against great odds—throughout the concluding half of the Kargil campaign, they continue to claim that Kargil must be chalked up as an operational victory for the Pakistani Army even if it otherwise appears to be an unnecessary political defeat for Pakistan at large.

A third and related narrative suggests that the Pakistani Army (or in some treatments the “mujahideen”) could have held out until the winter snowfall, giving an honorable cover for retreat, had Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif not sold them out in Washington during his July 4 meeting with President Clinton. According to this argument, Pakistan could have easily maintained its commanding operational-tactical positions along the occupied hilltops while, more importantly, India was not in a position to widen the war. Shireen Mazari, representing this view as well, has argued that “[t]he reality is that there was simply no danger of even an all-out war between Pakistan and India because India was not in a position to instigate such a war.” While Mazari may be dismissed as one of the hawkish voices of the fringe of Pakistan’s security managers, other, less hawkish interlocutors made similar arguments. For example, one academic analyst argued that India marketed its weaknesses as restraint and would have been unable to take back the peaks had the withdrawal not occurred. These views again are significant for two reasons, both disturbing because of their variance with the facts. First, the Pakistani Army’s defeat at Kargil is attributed to the venality of Pakistan’s politicians—a Pakistani version of the post-1918 German “stab-in-the-back” theory—and not the strategic, operational, and tactical blunders of the soldiers who planned, organized, and executed the operation in the field. Second, the failure to appreciate the Indian Army’s operational and tactical successes in the costly eviction campaign is compounded by pervasive ignorance of the extensive Indian preparations for horizontal escalation, preparations that were initiated both as a prudent measure in case of Pakistani attack and as a

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mitigatory strategy in case the eviction efforts along the occupied heights were not as successful as they eventually turned out to be.

If, on balance, these three beliefs represent merely a psychological rationalization aimed at snatching some semblance of victory from what was otherwise a national humiliation, they would have little significance from the perspective of stability. If these beliefs—despite being fundamentally false in their details—represent considered assessments held by Pakistan’s national security establishment, however, the implications for stability are unsettling. They would reinforce the canard that Kargil was a military victory that Pakistan was done out of simply due to the actions of pusillanimous civilian leaders acting in concert with a hostile United States, and the perpetuation of such beliefs could, with the passage of time, give rise to policies that attempt Kargil-like operations in the future, which could lead to more disastrous consequences.

**Pakistan Must More Effectively Assess and Gauge International Reaction**

There is widespread consensus that Pakistan failed to predict strategically the international response to the conflict and the implications that this response would have for the execution of the Kargil operation. The Kargil crisis and its sequels demonstrated Pakistan’s endemic inability to anticipate international opinion and that opinion’s operational implications, as is reflected by the views of high-level officers in the uniformed military and foreign office bureaucrats (who incidentally denied any active role of the Pakistani Army). Of course, the larger issue is the systemic deficiencies seemingly inherent in Pakistan’s grand strategy that permit Pakistan to launch military operations that are not supported by strategic assessment of all possible outcomes and their probabilities. This view of deficient assessment generally, and with regard to Kargil in particular, was expressed by a wide range of public opinion shapers and analysts.

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Pakistan’s strategic objectives in prosecuting the Kargil operation were explicated by retired army officers, political leadership, and analysts. One strategic objective was the internationalization of the Kashmir issue. By reminding the international community that Kashmir is a potential nuclear flashpoint, Pakistan hoped to rouse the comity of nations—particularly the United States and China—to force a peace process in Kashmir. A second strategic goal was the interdiction of the National Highway-1 to disrupt India’s supply lines to Siachen. (Some interlocutors suggested that this was to retaliate against India for its repeated shelling of the Neelum Valley road, a problem that has forced Pakistan to develop an alternate route to the region.) Some informants also conjectured that Pakistan assumed that India, with its weakened government, would not likely respond. Pakistan radically misread the political resolve of Vajpayee and the political pressure put on him to respond in light of the forthcoming elections and the popular outrage in India precipitated by the occupation in the post-Lahore environment. Several interlocutors speculated that the government assumed that the international community would intervene within a few days or weeks (as had been the case in previous India-Pakistan conflicts) in the possible event that India perceived the operation as an act of war and reacted conventionally. A third goal was to give a fillip to the diminished morale among the mujahideen in the valley and to demonstrate that Pakistan’s recently confirmed nuclear capabilities did have strategic benefits in that they allowed Islamabad to undertake more-active military operations in support of the Kashmiri cause without inordinate fear of Indian reprisals.

To the extent that these objectives hinged on specific expectations of the international environment, the question that must be asked is why Pakistan thought that its operations would be greeted with support or at least understanding. Writers in Pakistani English newspapers were also apparently unable to understand the government’s misguided strategic calculus. An article written by Aziz Siddiqui in *The Dawn* captured this sentiment. Siddiqui speculated that planners may have believed no one could be held responsible for “independent mujahideen actions.” However, he also said that “this may be true for something on a guerilla scale. But it is a different

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10See also Altaf Gauhar, “Four Wars, One Assumption.”
matter to hold a stationary position that threatens enemy supply lines.”11 While this analysis cannot fully explicate why Pakistan was so confident, one possible reason is that Pakistan may have been emboldened by the sympathy that the United States expressed for Islamabad after India’s nuclear tests and Pakistan’s subsequently constrained response.

Given Pakistan’s dubious assertions that Kargil was simply a mujahideen operation, the natural question arises as to whether Pakistan expected that the United States would not detect the presence of Pakistani regular forces in Kargil. And if Pakistan did at all expect the United States to uncover the truth of the operation, did Pakistan expect that the United States would not make this information known? Again, based on the expectation that U.S. support expressed in the aftermath of the Indian nuclear tests was durable and enduring, Pakistan may have launched the Kargil operation in part thinking that this action would be perceived abroad—even if its true contours were understood—as an expression of Pakistan’s disenchantment with the desultory Indian approach on Kashmir and as “just deserts” for all the burdens New Delhi imposed on Islamabad as a result of its nuclear tests. One important consequence of this fact for U.S.-Pakistan relations may be the continual prospect of “the tail wagging the dog,” that is, any overt demonstration of U.S. support for some Pakistani geopolitical goals runs the risk of Islamabad’s carrying out destabilizing actions intended to exploit that support.

Clearly, one reading of events suggests that at each node of the decision tree, Pakistan made unrealistic assessments about the range of possible outcomes. Fundamentally, Pakistan did not anticipate the intolerance that the international community—especially the United States and China—would demonstrate for its attempts to alter the status quo even if the community was otherwise sympathetic to its dilemmas in the face of India’s nuclear tests.

A retired general offered a different—but important—interpretation of what has often been understood as Pakistan’s seemingly astrategic prosecution of Kargil. He argued that Pakistan understood very well

the risks but felt compelled to take a calculated gamble in an attempt to alter the status quo—precisely because it perceived that it had no other choices.12 By this logic, if Pakistan always acted according to the anticipated end game, it would never do anything to secure its interests, because all the strategic options available to Islamabad are invariably unattractive.13 This view has serious strategic consequences: it implies that Pakistan may be in many ways like prewar Japan—a country that has few good choices but is nonetheless constrained to act in what may appear to be an inexplicable way because it finds itself in a position where the bad option is, from its perspective, the best of the poor alternatives available. The implications of this logic for Pakistani decisionmaking in the nuclear age are entirely unsettling.

Need for Broad Assessment and Review of Proposed Operations

Several interlocutors explained that at the most basic level, Kargil was a military operation and its planners largely failed to predict both India’s military response to the Pakistani occupation and the diplomatic consequences. For the planners of Kargil, this appeared to be a low-risk, low-cost operation. However, the Pakistani military establishment (and, for that matter, the Pakistani state) does not have the capability to fully assess the full range of costs and benefits. Thus, several editorialists have called for a body akin to an NSC that would comprise the leading organs of the state as well as opposition leadership.

M. P. Bhandara, a columnist for The Dawn, wrote one of the more thorough discussions of an NSC and its presumed role in assessing an operation like Kargil.14 In Bhandara’s formulation, the Foreign

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12It could be argued, of course, that Pakistan did have other choices, but none that it considered palatable or was willing to accept.
13The range, and limitations, of the strategic choices available to Pakistan has been examined in some detail in Ashley J. Tellis, “The Changing Political-Military Environment: South Asia,” in Zalmay Khalilzad et al., The United States and Asia: Toward a New U.S. Strategy and Force Posture (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2001), pp. 218–224.
Office would argue that Kargil would enable India to “expose Pakistan as an aggressor and a fundamentalist state,” allowing India to regain much of the diplomatic clout it forfeited with its nuclear tests. Indeed, Kargil would be a boon to India, as New Delhi would easily make use of the crisis to position itself as a front-line state against Islamist terrorism. The Finance Ministry would argue that Kargil would precipitate a cutoff by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the G-8. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would have the opportunity to assess realistically a local battle in Kashmir, considering the possibility of an unpredictable expansion. The main function of such a body would be to assess the costs and benefits of such adventurism in terms of its economic, political, military, international, and regional consequences. The author lucidly concludes: “The downside price paid by Pakistan at Kargil would have been rated [by the NSC] as simply too high in the context of any possible upside scenario.”

At the heart of these calls for such a body is the understanding that Pakistan needs to expand its understanding of costs to include the opportunity costs of social, political, and economic development that are derailed by Pakistan’s policy of supporting jihadi elements in the Kashmir insurgency. These policies impose many other costs as well, especially with respect to Pakistan’s ability to foster an image as a responsible nuclear state. India, despite suffering much as a result of Pakistan’s Kashmir policy, was a solid beneficiary of Pakistan’s Kargil operation insofar as that conflict allowed the international community to compare India’s cautiousness and restraint with Pakistan’s recklessness and provocation—comparisons that in Pakistan’s case are unfortunately increasingly intertwined with images of state failure, Islamist terrorism, internal corruption, and political decay. Some key Pakistani journalists and political leaders have extended the notion of opportunity costs even further: they have asserted that Kargil has in fact laid the groundwork for legitimizing highly proactive Indian solutions to the Kashmir problem, such as crossing the LOC and striking deep into Pakistani Kashmir.

The absence of an NSC-like organ in Pakistan cannot account for the inability of Nawaz Sharif—a seasoned politician—to think through

15Ibid.
these issues and conclude that the misadventurous Kargil plan would have deleterious consequences. The facile conclusion often drawn is that Nawaz Sharif was not capable of understanding complicated end games, but a more challenging explanation would focus on the deeply conflicted relationship between the civilian government and the military, the imprecise boundaries of mutual autonomy in matters of grand strategy, and the role of specific personalities in any given political-military crisis.16 (This suggests that Kargil might not have been executed or might have been executed very differently if there had been a different mix of personalities at the helm in Pakistan.) Thus, it is important to recognize that without effective civilian leadership structures, a stable balance of power within the Pakistani state, and a clear political will and intentions, even an NSC-like body could not preclude a Kargil-like scenario from occurring. Reflecting upon the explanation proffered by the retired general referred to earlier, it is not obvious that such a body would recommend against the prosecution of such an operation when launched as a strategic risk—if it were to be dominated by unaccountable bureaucracies that are convinced Pakistan must act even when Islamabad is confronted by nothing but poor alternatives.

Pakistan Needs a Media Strategy to Shape Opinion

Many informants and opinion shapers contrasted the facility with which India gained the upper hand on the information battlefield to Pakistan’s deficiencies in this arena. These individuals pointed out the need to develop media policies that would give Pakistan a greater ability to convincingly communicate its position and official version of events to its own populace and to the international community.17

As suggested above, all of Pakistan’s putative strategic objectives were highly contingent on specific expectations of how key players

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16It should be noted that as far as Sharif was concerned, almost his entire second “term” as Prime Minister was focused on preventing a dismissal from office, which occurred during his first term and, as is now acknowledged, on accumulating personal gain. In such circumstances, it is unlikely that he sought outside counsel on matters of state or asked the necessary hard questions of the military himself.

17See, for example, Mahdi Masud, “Kargil Crisis: A Balance Sheet” (also carried by the Pakistan Institute for Air Defence Studies). See also Arif Shamin, “War on the Net,” The News, July 11, 1999.
such as India, the United States, and China would react. Surely, Pakistan’s inability to anticipate the international reaction was deeply problematic. However, Pakistan’s failure to influence the international reaction was also seen to be problematic by its political elites—a view reiterated on numerous occasions in our interviews. While this conviction is understandable, it is important to recognize that not many interlocutors appreciated the fact that even the most effective media strategy in the context of the Kargil war could not hope to influence the international community in the long run if the bedrock of Pakistan’s claims consisted essentially of lies that were not sufficiently recognized within Pakistan.

Some political figures reasoned that Pakistan’s inability to shape international opinion proactively was due to the deep secrecy with which Kargil was conducted, and concluded that Pakistan cannot conduct operations like Kargil without a broad-based consensus across the various governmental and military institutions. Several retired army officers and political leaders opined that the canard of the army’s noninvolvement contributed to the deep distrust of Pakistan in international forums. In this context, it was argued that the international community would have understood Pakistan’s objectives better had Islamabad been forthright about the operation and made the case that India has on numerous occasions violated the LOC in Siachen, Chorbat La, Qamar, and elsewhere. Thus, Pakistan could have cast the Kargil operation as an extension of Siachen, which may have garnered more support internationally.

It is important to understand the extent to which Kargil was perceived to be an extension of Siachen, which Pakistan argues is an illegal occupation in contravention of the Shimla Agreement. A wide range of interlocutors made the point that no one should have been surprised by Kargil insofar as it followed “naturally” from Siachen. Many Pakistanis seemed to believe that the international community would make this link intuitively and support Pakistan—or, at a minimum, take no notice of the operation. In asserting this claim, however, these interlocutors appear to have put much stock in the belief that the international community either cares greatly about minor military operations at obscure locations such as Chorbat La
and Qamar or is convinced about the validity of Pakistan’s grievances with respect to Siachen.18

In any event, while many critics argued the need to counter India’s media machine, a number of concerns arose about the ways in which information on this operation was disseminated domestically. Reflecting the international and domestic distrust of the government, one editorialist wrote incredulously on the misinformation campaign against domestic and international audiences:

We are told incessantly that the Kargil freedom fighters are genuine Kashmiri freedom fighters. However, is it reasonable to believe that freedom fighters can fight at 15,000 feet above sea level without Pakistani rations, clothing, logistics, ammunition and intelligence support? Again, who are we fooling? It is possible for PTV to beguile

18 Pakistan did try to make this case. However, it did so late in the crisis in what appeared to be an insubstantial ex post facto rationalization of the operation in international forums. Pakistan’s ability to make this case convincingly had numerous shortcomings. First, there is a paucity of public information about the alleged Qamar and Chorbat La incidents, and Pakistan could only provide scant data about these incidents. Second, there is little documentation of Pakistan’s protesting these incidents at the time of their occurrence. Third, the terrain in question (and the Indian penetrations, if they occurred) in the Qamar and Chorbat La incidents was not sufficiently substantial to provoke a robust international response, which may make these incidents incomparable to the larger-scale Kargil incident. Fourth, assuming Pakistani claims are true, these incidents occurred in a very different international context from that of Kargil; they occurred prior to the formal nuclearization of the subcontinent and well before the attempted rapprochement represented by Lahore took place. Finally, these events (which arguably occurred in 1972 and 1988, respectively) lacked currency and thus appeared to be a pallid motivation for prosecuting the Kargil operation in 1999. The Indian operations in Siachen, however, represent an exception to this conclusion as there is considerable information about India’s occupation of Siachen. The legal status of this occupation, however, is ambiguous because of the imprecise language in the India-Pakistani agreement demarcating the territory north of Point NJ 9842. (For more on this issue, see Jasjit Singh, “Battle for Siachen: Beginning of the Third War,” in Jasjit Singh (ed.), Kargil 1999: Pakistan’s Fourth War for Kashmir (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 1999), pp. 60–88; Lt. Gen. (Retd) Dr. M. L. Chibber, “Siachen—The Untold Story,” Indian Defence Review, January 1990; Robert G. Wirsing, “The Siachen Dispute: Can Diplomacy Untangle It?” Indian Defence Review, July 1991.) While invoking these incidents to justify the prosecution of Kargil may seem like an “excuse” grounded in a post factum defensiveness, evidence gathered from interviews and from the literature review strongly supports the notion that these incidents are critical to Pakistan’s public mythology about Kashmir, India’s behavior in Kashmir, and Islamabad’s justification for Kargil.
its captive audience at home but the world does not consists [sic] of retards [sic].\textsuperscript{19}

This same author situates Kargil within the landscape of Pakistani adventurism and misrepresentations dating back to the 1947 war with India. One interlocutor, a retired general, aired irritation with the government’s story and succinctly argued that Pakistanis had a right to know that their troops were fighting and dying in Kargil. Even Shireen Mazari wrote critically about the inability of the state to “take its people into confidence on crucial policy matters.”\textsuperscript{20}

Although several informants expressed considerable interest in Pakistan’s becoming better situated to influence international opinion, it remains unclear whether there are efforts under way to build this capacity. Moreover, there are serious limitations imposed upon the efficacy of such a strategy, even if the capacity to carry it out existed in the first place. The most important limitation on such efforts derives, first and foremost, from the very legitimacy of the use of violence to achieve Pakistan’s political objectives and from Pakistan’s continuing perception that violence—whether unleashed through conventional operations, low-intensity wars waged by proxy, or state-sponsored terrorism—is necessary to achieve its political objectives vis-à-vis India. Pakistan will no doubt persist in its support of insurgency in Kashmir, since this is seen as one of the few low-cost options Islamabad has versus New Delhi, and it is far from clear what impact an enhanced media strategy could have when such a policy increasingly finds disfavor in international politics. Further, even the best media strategy would be inutile in the long run in sustaining a fallacious cover story.

**Pakistan’s Options Are Limited to the Pursuit of Low Intensity Conflict**

A wide range of interlocutors, including uniformed and retired army officers, present and former diplomats, analysts, and journalists, explained that in their view Pakistan’s options to bring about a favor-
able resolution in Kashmir are highly limited. Kargil-like operations cannot be prosecuted at will, because they are inherently risky and costly. Diplomatically, Pakistan recognizes that the initiative will remain with India in part because Pakistan cannot marshal international influence to bear upon India.

Yet Pakistan desperately wants to change the status quo. Pakistan deeply fears that India will be able to coerce it into converting the LOC as the international border, and these fears become more salient as India continues along its currently ascendant path. Thus, there is wide concurrence in Pakistan that violence remains Pakistan’s only option if the current peace opening is not productive. Nearly all informants indicated that Pakistan’s only viable option for bringing India to the negotiating table is to continue to calibrate the heat of the insurgency within Kashmir. It is presumed that this LIC strategy will over time tire the Indian Army by affecting its PERSTEMPO (Personnel Tempo), OPSTEMPO (Operations Tempo), and morale. It is expected that once India’s will to fight has been vitiated, India will become amenable to resolving the Kashmir issue on terms more favorable to Pakistan. However, few Pakistanis appear to recognize the inherent long-term challenges of this strategy, and many have succumbed to the illusion that India is tiring with respect to Kashmir.

While it is important to understand the extent to which Pakistan is dissatisfied with the status quo, it also should be pointed out that a few interlocutors did in fact suggest that Pakistan’s minimal requirements for resolving the Kashmir issue could be as little as “the LOC plus or minus.” One academic analyst even went so far as to suggest that Musharraf ultimately believed that this was the only realistic option. Another political leader emphasized that both Pakistan and India need an honorable way out of this impasse: “Any change in the status quo can be claimed as a victory.” While these views are consoling, it is far from obvious that they are held by a broad swath of individual stakeholders.

Most Pakistanis recognize that the struggle of Kashmir today, including the use of jihadi forces in the fight, is complicated by other considerations, such as the desire to be responsive to the disenchantment of the Kashmiris, the opportunity to provide gainful employment to some of the Islamist mercenaries currently operating
within Pakistan, and the perceived necessity to keep India pre-occupied with Kashmir lest it shift its superior military resources to threatening Pakistan directly. Despite all these considerations, however, many Pakistanis have become increasingly aware of the painful costs of the Kashmir war for Pakistan’s own domestic stability, economic growth, and international image. The alternatives to Islamabad’s current strategy, however, are not easy, given the historical legacies of the India-Pakistan conflict, the dominance of the Pakistan military in national decisionmaking, and the internal challenges facing the Pakistani state.

Nonetheless, the Kargil episode has fomented a nascent debate among the security elite with respect to Pakistan’s well-known policy position calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir and the implementation of other UN resolutions. In a recent article, Alexander Evans, a Western analyst, has in fact argued that the voices of what he calls “modernists” have inveighed more loudly now that Pakistan’s position is no longer relevant internationally. These modernists argue that Pakistan should focus on promoting self-determination of the Kashmiris, which implies that Pakistan should entertain independence for Kashmir as an option. (Abdul Sattar’s statements in December 2000 that Pakistan would entertain the third option of independence may reflect this growing modernist influence.) They contend that the “best current option for Pakistan . . . is letting the best argument have its day in the court of Kashmiri public opinion.” Some modernists have even proposed reducing support for the jihadis, arguing that Kashmir’s disposition will not be solved through military action alone. Still others have become unsympathetic to the national obsession with Kashmir itself because they contend that Pakistan’s fate hinges upon investors, reformers, and

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22 Evans’s use of the terms modernists and traditionalists in this recent article is unusual in the context of Pakistan. Rather than indexing a commitment to Islamicization (or some other religious frame of reference), these terms identify positions with respect to Pakistan’s Kashmir policy. Modernists are those who are receptive to new formulations in Pakistan’s Kashmir policy (e.g., recognizing the third option of Kashmiri independence); traditionalists are those who resist moving away from Pakistan’s historical stance out of fear that any relaxation of this position will result in a de-internationalization of the problem.

multilateral lending agencies—as much as it does on the ruling generals.24

Conversely, Evans’s “traditionalists” steadfastly cling to Pakistan’s 54-year-old policy position, arguing that any concession will precipitate a de-internationalization of Kashmir that will eventually permit India to “absorb” Kashmir. The traditionalists also reject the modernists’ suggestions for diminishing (covert) support for the militancy, as such reduction would give India an upper hand.25 To date, these views appear to remain dominant with respect to Pakistan’s policy on Kashmir.

Nuclear Capabilities Become Key to the Successful Execution of Pakistan’s Political Strategies

The Kargil crisis highlighted the critical importance of nuclear weapons to the success of Pakistan’s grand strategy at multiple levels. To begin with, Pakistan’s possession of nuclear weapons functioned as the critical permissive condition that made contemplating Kargil possible. The Indian decision to resume nuclear testing in May 1998 provided Pakistan—for all its encumbrances—with an incredible opportunity: first, to technically validate the weaponry it had assiduously sought to create since 1972; and second, to conclusively demonstrate to the world at large and particularly to India that Pakistan possesses capabilities previously only suspected (and in India often denigrated). The new public recognition of Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities—as evidenced through Pakistan’s tests in May 1998—provided Pakistan’s leadership with new windows of opportunity and more-robust forms of immunity. Under the shadow of this public recognition, Pakistan could continue to pursue its objective of “strategic diversion,” that is, enervating India through the mechanism of LIC even as it pursued more positive goals such as attempting to secure Kashmir.

In addition to the permissive role they play, nuclear weapons are also critical for another reason: they function as the means by which

25 Ibid.
Pakistan can ward off the worst Indian counter-responses that could be precipitated by Islamabad’s attempts at strategic diversion. Nuclear weapons play this role in two ways: first, they are straightforward deterrents to any Indian conventional and nuclear threats that may materialize in a crisis, and second, they are perfect instruments for catalyzing international intervention on Pakistan’s behalf should a South Asian political-military crisis threaten to spin out of control.

Given the “defensive” and “catalytic” utility of nuclear weapons, three conclusions about these weapons appear to have been drawn by Pakistani policymakers. First, Pakistan may require the largest, most diversified, and most effective nuclear arsenal possible, because the exploitation of nuclear weaponry to secure certain political goals requires more than just token nuclear capabilities. Second, Pakistan may need to prepare and mobilize its nuclear reserves—at least selectively to begin with—early in a crisis for purely defensive reasons in the face of potential Indian counteraction or conventional preemption. This may include crisis alerting, physical dispersal of assets, and possibly preparing weapons and delivery systems for nuclear operations. Third, all the actions connected with this process have the very beneficial result of tacitly signaling to India the seriousness of Pakistan’s deterrent threat even as they help to catalyze international intervention to resolve the crisis—to Pakistan’s advantage, it is hoped.

These three dimensions of Pakistan’s nuclear calculus were evident during the Kargil crisis. A highly placed Pakistani civil servant privately accepted—even if he found it difficult to openly admit—that the Kargil operation was rooted in many important ways in the protection that Pakistan’s newly acknowledged nuclear capabilities provided. Further, he also noted that many senior Pakistani military officers associated with the planning for this operation believe that these same capabilities prevented a wider and more intense war even as they served to catalyze U.S. diplomatic interest in bringing the conflict to a conclusion—though perhaps not in the way desired by Islamabad.
INDIA’S PERSPECTIVE

India Must Prepare for Future Pakistani Recklessness
Across-the-Board

A wide array of Indian policymakers, analysts, and opinion makers expressed the need to be ready for Pakistani adventurism that could successively manifest itself in several issue areas. One senior Indian strategist captured this sentiment by using Mohammed of Ghori as a leitmotif: Ghori apparently made sixteen unsuccessful attempts at capturing the Rajput centers of power in North India before succeeding on the seventeenth try by unfair means. The moral of the story, according to this analyst, is that Pakistan’s defeat at Kargil (and possibly future defeats as well) would only whet its appetite for further attempts at coercion, and if success did not accrue to traditional means of attack, nontraditional stratagems were to be expected. One such stratagem, which was of great concern to policymakers, was the spread of terrorism throughout India. (Indeed, interviews in Pakistan confirmed reason for such concern.) The December 2000 attack on the Red Fort could become a foretaste of things to come as jihadi groups expand their areas of operation beyond the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan was also anticipated to increase its low-intensity activities in the valley itself and in Kashmir more generally. And as shown, this too is consistent with Pakistan’s expressed intentions.

Another stratagem of concern involved possible Pakistani activity using air or naval assets in novel and hitherto unseen forms for conventional operations and shallow incursions intended to probe Indian defenses and possibly force New Delhi to overreact. Other individuals, especially in the Indian intelligence community, argued that India has to brace itself for other nontraditional threats. Some of these “asymmetric strategies” were seen to include the increasing Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) activities in Nepal and in India’s northeastern states, which are rife with insurgency. Another operational possibility mentioned was economic subversion, perhaps through counterfeiting and other black-market operations. Finally, it was feared that Pakistan, again through its ISI, might try to exploit dissatisfaction in India’s numerous subaltern populations, such as the Muslim underclass, the Dalits, and other marginalized social groups. Irrespective of the kind of threat at issue, almost all Indian
policymakers were of the opinion that Pakistan’s defeat at Kargil did not imply the abdication of its traditional objective of weakening India. Rather, the defeat at Kargil was only likely to catalyze the Pakistani imagination in more fervid ways and precipitate a search for more novel means of attacking Indian interests.

India Must Increase Its Efforts to Contain Intrusions Across the LOC

The Kargil Review Committee Report highlights the doubts many military planners had regarding India’s ability to respond effectively against a large Pakistani intrusion. The fear was based on the disposition of Indian forces throughout the country and the perceived inability to respond logistically to an unexpected Pakistani foray. The decisive Indian response to the Pakistani cross-border threat demonstrated to India that it has the inherent capability to counter a well-organized military threat from Pakistan even when Pakistan has the advantage of surprise.26 Not everyone, however, saw the victory as unequivocal. Rather, “the structure and conditions of the withdrawal [rendered] what most likely would have been an unconditional military victory into a profoundly complex and problematic one.”27

Although India claimed military and political success after Kargil, the conflict precipitated serious concerns about current capabilities. The intelligence failure and the idea that harsh weather kept the military from identifying the incursion more swiftly highlighted the need to invest in more-robust military, logistics, and intelligence equipment and personnel in order to deter and counter future attacks.

As fully detailed in the Kargil Review Committee Report, and as echoed by those interviewed in the political-military establishment and the intelligence agencies themselves, the Indian government will begin to investigate the current approach along the LOC and invest heavily in the type of materiel necessary to create a robust forward defense with the ability to inflict great costs on the Pakistani army if required. Several Indian military officers described the need for ad-

26Arpit Rajain, “India’s Political and Diplomatic Response to the Kargil Crisis,” p. 11.
vanced sensors, better communications technologies, and more-effective quick-reaction capabilities if India is to avoid having to create the equivalent of a “great wall” along the LOC. As a way to secure operational advantage, many Indian military officers argued, such solutions promise better dividends in comparison to alternative strategies such as permanently forward-deploying forces along the perimeter, especially the more inhospitable portions of the LOC. As part of this search for alternatives, senior Indian civilian and military officers described the need for upgrading the transportation infrastructure in Kashmir. This includes the need for more all-weather roads, better alternative routes to the currently vulnerable internal lines of communication, more-secure stockpiling of arms and ammunition, and better intratheater airlift.

The Kashmir Issue Requires High-Level Attention

High-level Indian stakeholders indicated that the Kashmir issue requires high-level attention and commitment in addition to creative responses on the part of the Indian state for resolving the ongoing insurgency. India understands clearly that the Kashmir issue will not diminish or atrophy if left unattended.

In this vein, India is attempting to pursue a dialog with all Kashmiris, especially select constituencies such as the more moderate members of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). This high-level strategic effort is being orchestrated by the Prime Minister’s Office—signaling the importance of the issue. This is in contrast to the more tactical concerns of the Jammu and Kashmir Affairs Department, which has resided in the Home Ministry’s Office since May 1998.28 India thus seems to be pursuing high-level strategic engagements with key Kashmiri elements as a way to reach resolution while still attempting to deal firmly with the insurgency at the tactical level.

Because the Kashmir crisis involves law-and-order issues, military operations, economic renewal, the political revitalization of state politics, and interstate relations (including those with Pakistan), the Indian national leadership is convinced that high-level attention

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alone can produce progress that resolves the issue. Many early ideas, such as leaving the state government to take the lead in restoring normalcy, have by now been completely abandoned, and responsibility for managing the Kashmir issue in its many dimensions now lies directly in the Prime Minister’s Office with key national leaders such as the foreign, defence, and home ministers and the national security advisor. If the current dialog with Pakistan gathers steam, this process of centralized high-level attention to Kashmir will only be further reinforced.

**India Must Cultivate International Support That Will Circumscribe Pakistani Adventurism**

India understands well that the extent of international support it received during the crisis was contingent upon circumstances and will be so in the future. India also knows that it cannot take the durability of such a supportive environment for granted and consequently must work consistently to create an international environment that is conducive to its strategic interests. Thus, India will likely pursue a dual-pronged strategy. India will undertake multifaceted efforts that foster a positive international opinion of India as a responsible nuclear state, capable of restraint and interested in peace. However, India will also seek to retain its operational independence insofar as dealing with the insurgency is concerned, since it cannot rely solely on the existence of a positive international environment to limit the damage that might be done to it by both domestic and foreign insurgents as well as by Pakistan. The potential tension that might be inherent in these two strategies implies that the former will serve to put real brakes on India’s propensity, low though it might be to begin with, to deal with its adversaries in overly violent ways. This implies that for external reasons alone, there are strong incentives for India not to pursue more “proactive” solutions to the Kashmiri insurgency, including cross-border attacks, limited aims wars, and offensive air operations. The pressure to avoid international opprobrium also implies that any aggressive Indian responses to Pakistani provocations are likely to be both covert and scaled in intensity to the challenge they are meant to neutralize. This

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29Arpit Rajain, “India’s Political and Diplomatic Response to the Kargil Crisis,” p. 14.
issue is explored further in Chapter Four, in the section addressing India’s future options.

**India Must Sustain the Information Offensive**

The media were continually cited as a relevant factor in influencing public opinion domestically and internationally. (Respondents in Pakistan made much of India’s media strategy and its importance in seizing the diplomatic victory.) The *Kargil Review Committee Report* urges the Indian military to take a stronger role in educating and assisting the media in areas where military operations are unfolding. The lack of a well-articulated perception management campaign and the lack of a comprehensive set of guidelines for handling the media were listed as key deficiencies in the civil-military apparatus that need to be addressed by India. The *Kargil Review Committee Report* lays out a more specific civil-military approach to be implemented for future operations.30

India has a good understanding of the multiple uses of a well-planned media management strategy. For example, Major General Arjun Ray describes the complex role of the media in prosecuting a national strategy with respect to insurgency and terrorism in the *Kashmir Diary*. Ray writes: "[T]he political and operational objectives of the national strategy for fighting militancy and terrorism have to be disseminated to target audiences, coordinated at all levels and monitored continuously."31 In addition, it may be understood when reading the *Kargil Review Committee Report* that the Committee clearly sees the value in the media’s ability to shape both domestic and international perceptions. As a result, the use of information warfare techniques and the intentional use of the private media to mold perceptions in future operations will be thoughtfully considered by members of the Indian political, military, and intelligence groups at all echelons.

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India’s experience in Kargil demonstrated that effective media and opinion-shaping policies could affect both Indian and Pakistani operations. The international reaction to the Kargil crisis bolstered India’s position with respect to Kargil specifically and perhaps toward Kashmir generally. The U.S., Chinese, and G-8 responses to the Kargil events were perceived to signal the international community’s support for Indian restraint while condemning Pakistani aggression. India concluded that it must consistently convey its policy of responsibility and restraint while simultaneously describing its condition of victimization to international audiences. The Kargil Review Committee Report clearly reflects this notion:

Pakistan for its part has become the fount of religious extremism and international terrorism and a patron of the global narcotics traffic. Decades of misgovernance and military rule have prevented the democratic tradition from taking firm root. In consequence, Pakistan poses a threat not only to India but to its other neighbors as well. . . . [T]errorists have carried out murderous assaults in the United States and East Africa.32

This passage summarizes the Indian view of Pakistan as the source of instability in South Asia and beyond. This is a critical element of India’s strategic perceptions, and Pakistan’s own political choices during the last decade amply corroborate such depictions.

Domestic support of operations in Kargil was also demonstrable, as reflected by the generous contributions made to the Army Welfare Fund. Support, in various forms, came from across a variety of constituencies. As Rajain writes, “There were no communal flare-ups. Even the various insurgent groups all over the country chose not to take the sheen away from an emphatic Indian victory.”33 This well-spring of support demonstrated to the Indian military and government that providing the public with information can be an important tool to help cultivate domestic support, and the numerous studies of

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32India Kargil Review Committee, From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report, p. 222.

33Arpit Rajain, “India’s Political and Diplomatic Response to the Kargil Crisis,” p. 21.
the Kargil crisis now being published in India\textsuperscript{34} will enable New Delhi to do even better with respect to perception management than it did the last time around.

**India Must Treat Nuclear Issues More Seriously**

Although Indian policymakers do not wish to advertise the fact that Pakistan issued “tacit” nuclear threats during the Kargil crisis—mainly because doing so only serves to reinforce the value of Pakistan’s nuclear coercion—many key figures in the Prime Minister’s Office, the ministries of External Affairs and Defence, and the Indian military admitted that it was so. These threats were viewed as articulated through both the (formally) ambiguous but nonetheless unsettling statements issued by senior Pakistani policymakers and the “activation” of at least one Pakistani missile base and the possible readying of several missile systems.\textsuperscript{35} Despite the fact that the Kargil operation was a geographically limited affair, Pakistan’s tacit issuance of nuclear threats was read in New Delhi as perfectly consistent with Islamabad’s larger grand strategy: exploiting its nuclear capabilities to underwrite limited conflicts even as it seeks to limit Indian counteraction and catalyze international intervention.\textsuperscript{36}

Precisely because even a limited conflict such as Kargil manifested Pakistan’s willingness to actively exploit its nuclear assets, Indian policymakers drew several conclusions of significant consequence. First, they believe that India must take nuclear issues seriously along multiple dimensions: develop the capabilities necessary to sustain


\textsuperscript{36}A chronological reconstruction of Pakistan’s nuclear threats, however, suggests that these signals were issued primarily after India began its conventional military mobilization and redeployment in response to the Kargil incursion. This mobilization and redeployment was certainly initiated for precautionary reasons, but once completed, it would have enabled India to mount a variety of punitive operations—operations that Islamabad might have been sufficiently concerned about to issue nuclear threats. Because this explanation overlaps with the alternative Indian argument about Pakistan’s interest in catalytic intervention, it is difficult to choose between the two on the basis of unclassified data alone.
the “minimum credible deterrent,” complete the institutional reorganization necessary to manage India’s emerging nuclear capabilities, and plan seriously for the prospect of either deliberate or inadvertent nuclear breakdown. Second, they believe that the Indian national security establishment needs a better appreciation of Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities, the production infrastructure contributing to these capabilities, the key personalities—especially at mid-level—involved in these efforts, and the nature, durability, and extent of Pakistan’s links with its principal external suppliers. Third, they believe that Pakistan’s willingness to exploit its nuclear weaponry for even the most mundane ends might require India to consider developing at least a small set of rapid-response capabilities primarily for shoring up deterrence and “concentrating the mind” of Pakistani decisionmakers who might be tempted to behave irresponsibly in a crisis. Several Indian reports insinuated that New Delhi had readied such nuclear capabilities during the crisis as a precautionary measure. All told, the Kargil conflict appears to have altered the images Indian policymakers traditionally held about the role, necessity, and significance of nuclear weapons in limited conflicts in South Asia. If these alterations lead to dramatic transformations in India’s evolving nuclear posture, the Kargil crisis will have bequeathed a far more lasting legacy than might have otherwise been the case.

CONCLUSIONS

The most important lesson that Pakistan learned from Kargil is that Kargil-like operations have high political costs, especially in terms of Pakistan’s international reputation. That said, however, the Kargil fiasco does not appear to have extinguished Pakistan’s belief that violence, especially as expressed through support for the Kashmir insurgency, remains the best—if not the only effective—policy choice for pressuring India on Kashmir and other outstanding disputes. Perhaps because of such a belief, several constituencies in Pakistan continue to hold that the Kargil war, for all its high political costs, may have been a success lost. The tensions between these two positions—that Kargil, on one hand, was a political debacle and, on the

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37 For details, see Raj Chengappa, Weapons of Peace: The Secret Story of India’s Quest to Be a Nuclear Power (New Delhi, India: Harper Collins, 2000).
other hand, represents a “lost victory” of some sort—were usually not explored at any length by interlocutors who have argued both points of view in private. At the very least, then, what is suggested is a profound ambiguity about Pakistan’s final evaluation of the worth of the Kargil war, which makes it difficult to conclude unambiguously that the Kargil conflict is universally viewed in Pakistan as a cataclysmic event never to be repeated. Consequently, even though the dominant view in Pakistan currently appears to concede the failure of Kargil (and as such, it is hoped, will function as a deterrent to future operations of this nature), it is difficult to affirm conclusively that Kargil-like operations will never occur in South Asia. So long as Pakistan finds value in different kinds of subconventional violence for strategic purposes, the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan remains unresolved, and various pathologies of decisionmaking continue to manifest themselves within the region, it is possible—though not probable—that an unfavorable concatenation of circumstances could spur a Kargil-like event in the future.

What the Kargil fiasco certainly taught Pakistan was that its appreciation of the international environment was inadequate. A number of writers and informants suggested that an NSC-like body might preclude ill-advised operations or even restrain highly insular decisionmaking. A number of writers and interlocutors argued that Pakistan requires a media strategy, and some informants noted in private that the mujahideen cover story fed to the press was not productive for a variety of reasons. Nearly all interlocutors indicated, however, that because Pakistan feels that its diplomatic, political, and military options are highly restricted, its best option is to continue attempting to coerce India to the negotiating table through the low-intensity war in Kashmir. It is in this context that Pakistan’s nuclear capabilities are seen to remain critical and, for all the reasons adumbrated earlier, are only likely to grow in significance for Pakistan.

The most important conclusion that India drew from Kargil is that India must be prepared to counter a wide range of Pakistani threats that may be mounted by what is essentially a reckless but tenacious adversary. In this context, India must develop the robust forward defense capabilities necessary to thwart surprise and to win even if surprised by Pakistan. Despite this need to prepare for future Pakistani adventurism, India has emerged from Kargil much more con-
fident in that it believes it can handle Pakistan’s worst aggression successfully even when it is relatively unprepared. India also appreciates that eliminating the prospect of future Kargil-like operations requires it to focus resolutely on resolving the Kashmir crisis, which in turn implies that the problem must be engaged at the highest level. India further recognizes the need to assiduously cultivate international support and that such support will only accrue to the degree that India both behaves responsibly and is seen to be behaving responsibly toward all its immediate neighbors. The Kargil war demonstrated abundantly that if India behaves as a responsible nuclear state, capable of restraint and desirous of peace, rich dividends can be earned not only in regard to Kashmir but in regard to other issues of interest to India. This understanding is likely to reinforce India’s customary preference for avoiding overly aggressive responses to Pakistan.

If India is constrained to respond forcefully, however, the Kargil crisis suggests that covert rather than overt action might be preferable, though the fear of being embarrassed by the superior surveillance capabilities of the United States (among others) sets sharp constraints on the extent to which even covert action might be pursued as a standard course of state policy. India also understands that it won Kargil at a strategic level in part because of New Delhi’s effective media management and thus can be expected to continue its pursuit of a more robust perception management capability. Finally, India has recognized the necessity of taking nuclear issues more seriously. If Kargil-like operations are expected to occur with some frequency, New Delhi may be forced to consider the need to develop some strategic rapid-response capabilities as a way to deter any Pakistani brandishing of nuclear weapons.