

HISTORY OF IAF

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Air Force was officially established on 8 October 1932. Its first aircraft flight came into being on 01 Apr 1933. It possessed a strength of six RAF-trained officers and 19 Havai Sepoys (literally, air soldiers). The aircraft inventory comprised of four Westland Wapiti IIA army co-operation biplanes at Drigh Road as the "A" Flight nucleus of the planned No.1 (Army Co- operation) Squadron.

Cutting Its Teeth

IAF Wapiti II co-operation biplane of a flight

IAF Wapiti II co-operation biplane of "A" Flight, No. 1 Squadron flying over New Delhi in the mid thirties

Four-and-a-half years later, "A" Flight was in action for the first time from Miranshah, in North Waziristan, to support Indian Army operations against insurgent Bhattani tribesmen. Meanwhile, in April 1936, a "B" Flight had also been formed on the vintage Wapiti. But, it was not until June 1938 that a "C" Flight was raised to bring No. 1 Squadron ostensibly to full strength, and this remained the sole IAF formation when World War II began, although personnel strength had by now risen to 16 officers and 662 men.

Problems concerning the defence of India were reassessed in 1939 by the Chatfield Committee. It proposed the re-equipment of RAF (Royal Air Force) squadrons based in India but did not make any suggestions for accelerating the then painfully slow growth of IAF except for a scheme to raise five flights on a voluntary basis to assist in the defence of the principal ports. An IAF Volunteer Reserve was thus authorised, although equipping of the proposed Coastal Defence Flights (CDFs) was somewhat inhibited by aircraft availability. Nevertheless, five such flights were established with No. 1 at Madras, No. 2 at Bombay, No. 3 at Calcutta, No. 4 at Karachi and No. 5 at Cochin. No. 6 was later formed at Vizagapatnam. Built up around a nucleus of regular IAF and RAF personnel, these flights were issued with both ex-RAF Wapitis and those relinquished by No. 1 Squadron IAF after its conversion to the Hawker Hart. In the event, within a year, the squadron was to revert back to the Wapiti because of spares shortages, the aged Westland biplanes being supplemented by a flight of Audaxes.

At the end of March 1941, Nos. 1 and 3 CDFs gave up their Wapitis which were requisitioned to equip No. 2 Squadron raised at Peshawar in the following month, and were instead issued with Armstrong Whitworth Atalanta transports, used to patrol the Sunderbans delta area south of

Calcutta. No. 2 CDF had meanwhile received requisitioned D.H. 89 Dragon Rapides for convoy and coastal patrol, while No. 5 CDF took on strength a single D.H. 86 which it used to patrol the west of Cape Camorin and the Malabar Coast.

Meanwhile the creation of a training structure in India became imperative and RAF flying instructors were assigned to flying clubs to instruct IAF Volunteer Reserve cadets on Tiger Moths. 364 pupils were to receive elementary flying training at seven clubs in British India and two in various princely States by the end of 1941. Some comparative modernity was infused in August 1941, when No. 1 Squadron began conversion to the Westland Lysander at Drigh Road, the Unit being presented with a full establishment of 12 Lysanders at Peshawar by the Bombay War Gifts Fund in the following November. No. 2 Squadron had converted from the Wapiti to the Audax in September 1941 and, on 1 October No. 3 Squadron, similarly Audax-equipped, was raised at Peshawar.

Line up of IAF aircraft

Line up of IAF Aircraft types at the start of world war II

The IAF VR was now inducted into the regular IAF, the individual flights initially retaining their coastal defence status, but with Japan's entry into the war in December, No. 4 Flight, with four Wapitis and two Audaxes, was despatched to Burma to operate from Moulmein. Unfortunately, four of the flight's six aircraft were promptly lost to Japanese bombing and, late in January 1942, No. 4 Flight gave place in Moulmein to No. 3 Flight which had meanwhile re-equipped with four ex-RAF Blenheim Is. For a month, these Blenheims were to provide almost the sole air cover for ships arriving at Rangoon harbour.

The Rise of the Indian Navy:

India's path to greatness does not lie in the dusty plains and frozen passes of its northern reaches. If it is to be found at all, it will be at sea—out in the dark blue of the Indian Ocean.

– Iskander Rehman, India's Aspirational Naval Doctrine

Since antiquity the Indian Ocean has been the centre of human progress, a great arena in which many civilizations have mingled, fought, and traded on important trade routes criss-crossing the waters around India for thousands of years. The entry and exit to this vast water body is through four 'gates' or choke points: the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb; around South Africa's Cape Agulhas; the Strait of Malacca; and past Australia's Cape West Howe. The bulk of the global energy trade originating in the Persian Gulf needs to traverse yet another 'gate', the Strait of Hormuz, before it reaches open waters.

At the hub lies the Indian subcontinent, itself the site of ancient cultures in the Indus valley. Whilst there was much turmoil as conquering armies spawned in the remote steppes of Asia swept down to overthrow old empires and impose new dynasties, the oceanic approaches remained benign and trade with the known world continued unhindered. Around the twelfth century, quasi-religious imperial orders prohibited overseas

102 Journal of Defence Studies

voyages, of crossing the 'kala paani', ostensibly to stem the brain drain to Baghdad, the silicon valley of those times. This made Indians insular. They forgot that the seas are the great 'commons' of civilization and naval power to protect merchant fleets has always been the determining factor

in the political struggles of nations. Shipping and marine infrastructure decayed and seaborne trade passed into the hands of the Arabs. For centuries, national strategy focused on dealing with threats through the passes in the Hindu Kush and maritime security was ignored.

History has taught India a bitter lesson. The neglect of the seas resulted in loss of sovereignty to traders who arrived on ships from outside the region, and ultimately became its masters, proving the old adage that whoever controls the Indian Ocean has India at its mercy. Naval thinkers realized this—the diplomat–strategist K.M. Pannikar envisaged a ‘steel ring’ around India where the Indian Navy would be paramount, whilst Keshav Vaidya in 1949 spoke of an invincible navy to not only defend India’s coastline but also her oceanic frontiers.

In the post-Cold War modern world, the prospect of a major global conflagration is low. However, India lives in a dangerous neighbourhood, occupying strategic space in the middle of an ‘arc of instability’ that extends from the Levant to Mindanao. Few other countries face such implacably hostile neighbours and the security environment is fragile. A proxy war aimed at ‘bleeding India by a thousand cuts’ is underway and other conflicts perpetrated by inimical nations and non-state actors cannot be ruled out. As India emerges, its strategy must be to synergize its sea power with other elements of national power. Unfortunately, its maritime intentions remain shrouded in mystery.

The Indian Navy does not have a maritime tradition in the ‘Mahanian’ sense, of fleets operating in the blue oceans far away from their bases for long periods of time. Descended from the colonial Royal Indian Navy, its strategic thinking was limited to coastal patrols and the ‘defence of the homeland’. Despite an array of impressive surface ships, it still lacks

a 'balanced fleet' in the mould of Sir Julian Corbett's exposition. It has limited fleet aviation and a dwindling submarine force to execute an anti-access and sea denial strategy even though the navy has acquired the contours of a 'fleet-in-being'. However, its power projection capabilities in a Mahanian sense are rudimentary. It lacks the capacity to control the sea for a limited period of time to land boots on the ground across the beach in a hostile littoral environment to establish zones of influence.

Consequently, Harsh V. Pant's collection of articles by an range of

Book Review 103

eminent authors, professional as well as academics, foreign and Indian, on the rise of the Indian Navy is a timely tome. It should form the template for further discussion and debate on India's maritime strategy in the twenty-first century in the Staff and War Colleges. This is more so as China's increasing challenge no longer looms over the horizon, rather its influence has surreptitiously seeped into India's backyard. There is a need for serious dialogue with intellectual rigour within the navy to establish a strategic maritime direction, to find purpose, role and structure for itself, forgoing the existing bottom-up approach that is sometimes confusing. The book, very correctly, examines a range of issues that have contributed to the navy's rise and shaped the broader context over the past two decades for this rise to occur within the confines of India's grand national strategy; consequently, the book looks at the issues and reasonings that have guided naval thinking but have remained hidden from view, even from policymakers. The book has been divided into two parts: Part I focuses on the internal dimensions of India's evolving maritime prowess; on forces which would almost compel the rise of the navy despite its political relegation to second-class 'Cinderella' status until the Boxing Day

tsunami of 2004, a natural disaster of biblical proportions. This resulted in the second geopolitical shift in the Indian Ocean after the advent of the Europeans with Vasco da Gama's landing at Calicut in May 1498. With the altered geopolitical environment, no longer can these 'dimensions' of the navy's rise be ignored.

In Chapter 2, Walter Ludwig looks at the 'Drivers of Naval Expansion'. He starts with bean counting and a comparison of naval expenditure with other regional navies to conclude that the Indian Navy's quest has been for increasingly capable modern platforms, whilst being less concerned with the overall size of the fleet: modernizing but not growing. The submarine arm has dwindled in size and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) does not appear to be concerned with righting this deficiency. The amphibious units are, at best, capable of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) missions. Whilst analysing the drivers of modernization, Ludwig concludes that the objective is quite apparent. It is not to confront hostile powers or to project power on land but to secure the country's sea lanes, Mahan's great highways, and become a benign hegemon in the Indian Ocean to provide public goods for all regional states. As India's economy expands and its overseas trade burgeons, should the focus of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) control and protection not shift to include areas extending from Venezuela to the Sakhalin? Further, China's claim of

104 Journal of Defence Studies

the South China Sea being its 'core national interest' has not been really challenged and the right to use the global commons clearly expounded.

In Chapter 3, C. Uday Bhaskar examines 'The Navy as An Instrument of Foreign Policy', where the very nature of the domain it operates in and the calibrated presence-cum-force it can bring to bear in a given space—

time/politico-military context makes the navy a very potent instrument of national policy. He is very candid and traces the origins of the politicobureaucratic nexus which suffers from 'sea blindness' and manoeuvres not only to keep the navy but the military in its perceived rightful place. He goes on to state that the role of the Indian Navy in furthering the nation's foreign policy priorities is, at best, tenuous with little synergy despite the success of Operation Cactus in the Maldives in November 1988 and other operations subsequently. The navy, in its Maritime Doctrine, has identified the diplomatic role it could possibly undertake, the essence of which has not been appreciated by the foreign service mandarins and it remains a work-in-progress exemplified by the initial reluctance to participate in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

In Chapter 4, Iskander Rehman starts by stating that India is blessed by geography but cursed by its neighbours who have thwarted its sporadic thalassocratic ambitions. The study moves in three parts. Section one dissects India's Maritime Doctrine in great detail and comes to the conclusion that its lofty didactic ambitions, when juxtaposed with current realities, suggest that it is more advocatory and aspirational than genuinely reflective of reality as it lacks the capability for all that it desires to do. Section two ventures that Indian naval thought can be understood as syncretic of the many strands of naval thinking that have emerged over time. Section three looks at different schools or traditions of thought to chart out the potential trajectories for the Indian Navy in terms of its organization. He concludes that strategically minded and outward looking, the Indian Navy could add a much-needed direction to India's slow drift towards great power status.

In Chapter 5, K. Raja Menon looks at 'Technology and the Indian Navy'. He says that the transformation of the Indian Navy from being a

brown-water navy to almost a blue-water navy under technology denial regimes has been unique among Third World navies. This has happened despite the short-sighted policies of the MoD in protecting and allocating work to inefficient public sector undertaking (PSU) shipyards. Hence, planned numbers have never been achieved. Nevertheless, technology has been deployed to increase capabilities in all spheres from power

Book Review 105

trains and propulsion systems to increase speed and time on station, to sensors and long-range weapon systems connected through data link. The author goes on to comment on various types of indigenous designs of ships, including the Vikrant-class carrier, and the debate on the nuclear versus the conventional submarine. He cites three strands of motivation for the navy's rise: the determination to escape the Pakistan syndrome to focus on the blue waters; to place faith in naval aviation; and to promote indigenization. This is the reason why the navy has emerged as a powerful tool of foreign policy.

Part II deals with the external dynamics influencing the rise of the navy. This includes the reasoning for the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN) entry into the Indian Ocean, ostensibly to safeguard its SLOCs and maritime interests, including energy; an aspirational India wanting a greater diplomatic and military role despite the recent political and economic setbacks; and finally, an essay on Indo-US naval ties which, notwithstanding a standstill on other fronts, has led to an era of 'good feelings'.

In Chapter 6, 'Sea Dragon on the Doorstep', Probal Ghosh looks at the changing profiles of the Chinese Navy with a hawk's eye. Till recently, a neglected force in a communist country with traditional

continental leanings, it has received considerable priority in recent years.

The perception of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) now is that maritime power often holds the key to enhanced international status, to achieving national objectives and is a means of expanding influence in near and distant waters. The template that emerges is compared with India's maritime calculus to see the emerging contours of congruence and dissonance with the Indian Navy. The PLAN's foray into the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), its increasing footprint and its 'string of pearls' strategy is a challenge, even though there have been attempts at cooperation starting with the anti-piracy patrols in Horn of Africa.

In Chapter 7, 'India in the Indian Ocean: A Mismatch between Ambitions and Capabilities', Harsh Pant establishes the geopolitical importance of the IOR and explains that the Indian Navy would like to establish its preponderance in the Indian Ocean, but its limited material capabilities have constrained its unrealistic ambition and its options given the stakes others have in the region. What is required is a multilateral, multipronged approach to preserve and enhance its strategic interests and to shape the strategic environment. The challenges are many. He concludes that the ambitious modernization programme is geared towards

Kashmir conflict

The **Kargil War**, also known as the **Kargil conflict** was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place between May and July 1999 in the Kargil district of Kashmir and elsewhere along the Line of Control (LOC). In India, the conflict is also referred to as **Operation Vijay** which was the name of the Indian operation to clear the Kargil sector. The war is the most recent example of high-altitude warfare in mountainous terrain, and as such posed significant logistical problems for the combating sides. The cause of the war was the infiltration of Pakistani soldiers disguised as Kashmiri militants into positions on the Indian side of the LOC which serves as the border between the two states. During the initial stages of the war, Pakistan blamed the fighting entirely on independent Kashmiri insurgents, but documents left behind by casualties and later statements by Pakistan's Prime Minister and Chief of Army Staff showed involvement of Pakistani paramilitary forces led by General Ashraf Rashid. The Indian Army, later supported by the Indian Air Force, recaptured a majority of the positions on the Indian side of the LOC infiltrated by the Pakistani troops and militants. Facing international diplomatic opposition, the Pakistani forces withdrew from the remaining Indian positions along the LOC.

There were three major phases to the Kargil War. First, Pakistan infiltrated forces into the Indian-controlled section of Kashmir and occupied strategic locations enabling it to bring NH1 within range of its artillery fire. The next stage consisted of India discovering the infiltration and mobilising forces to respond to it. The final stage involved major battles by Indian and Pakistani forces resulting in India recapturing most of the territories held by Pakistani forces and the subsequent withdrawal of Pakistani forces back across the LOC after international pressure.

Occupation by Pakistan

During February 1999, the Pakistan Army sent forces to occupy some posts on the Indian side of the LOC. Troops from the elite Special Services Group as well as four to seven battalions of the Northern Light Infantry (a paramilitary regiment not part of the

regular Pakistani army at that time) covertly and overtly set up bases on 132 vantage points of the Indian-controlled region. According to some reports, these Pakistani forces were backed by Kashmiri guerrillas and Afghan mercenaries. According to General Ved Malik, the bulk of the infiltration occurred in April.

Pakistani intrusions took place in the heights of the lower Mushkoh Valley, along the Marpo La ridgeline in Dras, in Kaksar near Kargil, in the Batalik sector east of the Indus River, on the heights above of the Chorbat La sector where the LOC turns North and in the Turtuk sector south of the Siachen area.

India discovers infiltration and mobilises

Initially, these incursions were not detected for a number of reasons: Indian patrols were not sent into some of the areas infiltrated by the Pakistani forces and heavy artillery fire by Pakistan in some areas provided cover for the infiltrators. But by the second week of May, the ambushing of an Indian patrol team led by Capt Saurabh Kalia, who acted on a tip-off by a local shepherd in the Batalik sector, led to the exposure of the infiltration. Initially, with little knowledge of the nature or extent of the infiltration, the Indian troops in the area assumed that the infiltrators were jihadis and claimed that they would evict them within a few days. Subsequent discovery of infiltration elsewhere along the LOC, and the difference in tactics employed by the infiltrators, caused the Indian army to realise that the plan of attack was on a much bigger scale. The total area seized by the ingress is generally accepted to be between 130 and 200 km² (50 and 80 sq mi).

The Government of India responded with *Operation Vijay*, a mobilisation of 200,000 Indian troops. However, because of the nature of the terrain, division and corps operations could not be mounted; subsequent fighting was conducted mostly at the brigade or battalion level. In effect, two divisions of the Indian Army, numbering 20,000, plus several thousand from the Paramilitary forces of India and the air force were deployed in the conflict zone. The total number of Indian soldiers that were involved in the military operation on the Kargil-Drass sector was thus close to 30,000. The number of infiltrators, including those providing logistical backup, has been put at approximately 5,000 at the height of the conflict. This figure includes troops

from Pakistan-administered Kashmir who provided additional artillery support.

The Indian Air Force launched Operation Safed Sagar in support of the mobilisation of Indian land forces on 26 May. The Indian Govt cleared limited use of Air Power only on 25 May, for fear of undesirable escalation, with the fiat that IAF fighter jets were not to cross the LOC under any circumstance. This was the first time any air war was fought at such high altitudes globally, with targets between 6–18,000' AMSL. The rarified air at these altitudes affected ballistic trajectories of air to ground weapons, such as rockets, dumb and laser guided bombs. There was no opposition at all by the Pakistani Air Force, leaving the IAF free to carry out its attacks with impunity. The total air dominance of the IAF gave the aircrew enough time to modify aiming indices and firing techniques, increasing its effectiveness during the high altitude war. Poor weather conditions and range limitations intermittently affected bomb loads and the number of airstrips that could be used, except for the Mirage 2000 fleet, which commenced operations on 30 May.

Naval action

The Indian Navy also prepared to blockade the Pakistani ports (primarily the Karachi port) to cut off supply routes under *Operation Talwar*. The Indian Navy's western and eastern fleets joined in the North Arabian Sea and began aggressive patrols and threatened to cut Pakistan's sea trade. This exploited Pakistan's dependence on sea-based oil and trade flows. Later, then-Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif disclosed that Pakistan was left with just six days of fuel to sustain itself if a full-scale war had broken out.

India attacks Pakistani positions

The terrain of Kashmir is mountainous and at high altitudes; even the best roads, such as National Highway 1 (India) (NH1) from Srinagar to Leh, are only two lanes. The rough terrain and narrow roads slowed down traffic, and the high altitude, which affected the ability of aircraft to carry loads, made control of NH 1 (the actual stretch of the highway which was under Pakistani fire) a priority for India. From their 130+ covertly occupied observation posts, the Pakistani forces had a clear line-of-sight to lay down indirect artillery fire on NH 1, inflicting heavy casualties on the Indians. This was a serious problem for the Indian Army as the highway was the main logistical and supply

route. The Pakistani shelling of the arterial road posed the threat of Leh being cut off, though an alternative (and longer) road to Leh existed via Himachal Pradesh, the Leh–Manali Highway.

The infiltrators, apart from being equipped with small arms and grenade launchers, were also armed with mortars, artillery and anti-aircraft guns. Many posts were also heavily mined, with India later stating to have recovered more than 8,000 anti-personnel mines according to an ICBL report. Pakistan's reconnaissance was done through unmanned aerial vehicles and AN/TPQ-36 Firefinder radars supplied by the US. The initial Indian attacks were aimed at controlling the hills overlooking NH 1, with high priority being given to the stretches of the highway near the town of Kargil. The majority of posts along the LOC were adjacent to the highway, and therefore the recapture of nearly every infiltrated post increased both the territorial gains and the security of the highway. The protection of this route and the recapture of the forward posts were thus ongoing objectives throughout the war.

The Indian Army's first priority was to recapture peaks that were in the immediate vicinity of NH 1. This resulted in Indian troops first targeting the Tiger Hill and Tololing complex in Dras, which dominated the Srinagar-Leh route. This was soon followed by the Batalik-Turtok sub-sector which provided access to Siachen Glacier. Some of the peaks that were of vital strategic importance to the Pakistani defensive troops were Point 4590 and Point 5353. While 4590 was the nearest point that had a view of NH 1, point 5353 was the highest feature in the Dras sector, allowing the Pakistani troops to observe NH 1. The recapture of Point 4590 by Indian troops on 14 June was significant, notwithstanding the fact that it resulted in the Indian Army suffering the most casualties in a single battle during the conflict. Although most of the posts in the vicinity of the highway were cleared by mid-June, some parts of the highway near Drass witnessed sporadic shelling until the end of the war.

Once India regained control of the hills overlooking NH 1, the Indian Army turned to driving the invading force back across the LOC. The Battle of Tololing, amongst other assaults, slowly tilted the combat in India's favour. The Pakistani troops at Tololing were aided by Pakistani fighters from Kashmir. Some of the posts put up a stiff resistance, including Tiger Hill (Point 5140) that fell only later in the war. Indian troops found well-entrenched Pakistani

soldiers at Tiger Hill, and both sides suffered heavy casualties. After a final assault on the peak in which ten Pakistani soldiers and five Indian soldiers were killed, Tiger Hill finally fell. A few of the assaults occurred atop hitherto unheard of peaks—most of them unnamed with only Point numbers to differentiate them—which witnessed fierce hand to hand combat.

As the operation was fully underway, about 250 artillery guns were brought in to clear the infiltrators in the posts that were in the line-of-sight. The Bofors FH-77B field howitzer played a vital role, with Indian gunners making maximum use of the terrain. However, its success was limited elsewhere due to the lack of space and depth to deploy it.

The Indian Air Force was tasked to act jointly with ground troops on 25 May. The code name assigned to their role was Operation Safed Sagar. It was in this type of terrain that aerial attacks were used, initially with limited effectiveness. On 27 May 1999, the IAF lost a MiG-27 strike aircraft piloted by Flt. Lt. Nachiketa, which it attributed to an engine failure, and a MiG-21 fighter piloted by Sqn Ldr Ajay Ahuja which was shot down by the Pakistani army, both over Batalik sector.; initially Pakistan said it shot down both jets after they crossed into its territory. According to reports, Ahuja had bailed out of his stricken plane safely but was apparently killed by his captors as his body was returned riddled with bullet wounds. One Indian Mi-8 helicopter was also lost due to Stinger SAMs. French made Mirage 2000H of the IAF were tasked to drop laser-guided bombs to destroy well-entrenched positions of the Pakistani forces and flew its first sortie on 30 May. The effects of the pinpoint non-stop bombing by the Mirage-2000, by day and by night, became evident with almost immediate effect.

In many vital points, neither artillery nor air power could dislodge the outposts manned by the Pakistani soldiers, who were out of visible range. The Indian Army mounted some direct frontal ground assaults which were slow and took a heavy toll given the steep ascent that had to be made on peaks as high as 5,500 metres (18,000 ft). Since any daylight attack would be suicidal, all the advances had to be made under the cover of darkness, escalating the risk of freezing. Accounting for the wind chill factor, the temperatures were often as low as -15 to -11 °C (5 to 12 °F) near the mountain tops. Based on military tactics, much of the costly frontal assaults by the Indians could have been avoided if the Indian Military had chosen to blockade the supply route of the

opposing force, creating a siege. Such a move would have involved the Indian troops crossing the LOC as well as initiating aerial attacks on Pakistani soil, however, a manoeuvre India was not willing to exercise due to the likely expansion of the theatre of war and reduced international support for its cause.

Two months into the conflict, Indian troops had slowly retaken most of the ridges that were encroached upon by the infiltrators; according to the official count, an estimated 75–80% of the intruded area and nearly all the high ground were back under Indian control.

Withdrawal and final battles

Following the outbreak of armed fighting, Pakistan sought American help in de-escalating the conflict. Bruce Riedel, who was then an aide to President Bill Clinton, reported that US intelligence had imaged Pakistani movements of nuclear weapons to forward deployments for fear of the Kargil hostilities escalating into a wider conflict. However, President Clinton refused to intervene until Pakistan had removed all forces from the Indian side of the LOC. Following the Washington accord of 4 July 1999, when Sharif agreed to withdraw Pakistani troops, most of the fighting came to a gradual halt, but some Pakistani forces remained in positions on the Indian side of the LOC. In addition, the United Jihad Council (an umbrella for extremist groups) rejected Pakistan's plan for a climb-down, instead deciding to fight on.

The Indian army launched its final attacks in the last week of July in co-ordination with relentless attacks by the IAF, both by day and night, in their totally successful Operation Safed Sagar; as soon as the Drass subsector had been cleared of Pakistani forces, the fighting ceased on 26 July. The day has since been marked as *Kargil Vijay Diwas* (Kargil Victory Day) in India. By the end of the war, Pakistan had to withdraw under international pressure and due to pressure from continued fighting at battle front and left India in control of all territory south and east of the LOC, as was established in July 1972 as per the Simla Agreement.