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Solution to Kargil-like situations

Sir,

In its report just submitted to the Government, the stress of the Subrahmanyam Committee seems to be on the failure of Indian intelligence to detect the intrusions at Kargil in the initial stage, which led to operations of the magnitude that India was ultimately forced to carry out. Consequently most of its recommendations, (at least those that have been made public), relate to the upgrading of the intelligence net work, through reorganization and provision of more sophisticated equipment. While no one can doubt the veracity of the Committee's assessment in this regard, it would be well to remember that even with the best of efforts it may not be possible for any country to make its intelligence net work so foolproof as to totally eliminate the chances of a failure. The fact of the matter is that a country that holds the initiative, can, if it is determined to, achieve strategic surprise by so organizing its counter-intelligence as to prevent the enemy intelligence from acquiring information that it would not want it to. We have the example of our own country having successfully prevented the CIA and the ISI, the top names in intelligence organisations, from getting the slightest inkling of what we intended to do at Pokhran until we had actually done it.

The permanent solutions to Kargils lies in what the Committee has listed as the last recommendation to warn Pakistan that India will respond to a Argil at a place of its choosing. It, however, needs to be elaborated that the warning is not to be by making announcements but by creating a deterrent that speaks for itself. As n effective deterrent we need to have an armed force that can produce decisive results in case of a war with Pakistan. At present the strength that we can muster against Pakistan after meeting our commitments towards countering insurgencies in the various parts of the country and ensuring the security of our border with China, cannot be more than what can, at the best, produce a stalemate. Pakistan knows this and that is why the Argil and threats to more Kargils.

At a rough estimate India, would require twice its present strength of the Army if it is to make Pakistan desist from committing aggression every now and then. Let us hope the Subrahmanyam Committee has made some such suggestion in its report to the Government even if this has not been made public in national interest.

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