This thesis titled U.S. Media Framing of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1999: Religious Framing in an International Conflict?

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ABSTRACT

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U.S. Media Framing of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1999: Religious Framing in an International Conflict?

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This study examines the framing of religion in the news coverage of a conflict between India and Pakistan which happened from May 5, 1999 and July 30, 1999 in selected U.S. news outlets. The study looks into the coverage of the conflict in seven national and regional U.S. newspapers, and three U.S. television channels. The theoretical framework of this study was framing, and the frames of reactionary depiction and partisan alignment were used to study if the news outlets framed any country or its religion like Hinduism and Islam negatively or in a partisan manner.

The findings showed that the coverage of the conflict covered Pakistan and Islam negatively, and held them responsible for invading India and escalating the conflict. The coverage also reported extensively on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism within Pakistan, the ties of Islamist organizations with the Pakistan government, and their hand in the rising violence in Kashmir. The coverage carried reactionary depictions of Islamic fundamentalism and its role in destabilizing Kashmir. The study of this coverage allows an insight into the coverage of a foreign conflict by some U.S. news outlets, and discovers that the coverage of Islam was reactionary and generally negative even before the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001.
DEDICATION

To my dear parents:
My mother Vandana Atre and father Rajendra Atre for their constant support and encouragement.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Dedication ..................................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgments ..................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents ..................................................................................................................... vi
Chapter One: Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
  1.1: Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.2: Background & Context ............................................................................................ 2
  1.3: India-Pakistan Conflict in the Media ....................................................................... 7
Chapter Two: Background of the news outlets studied ....................................................... 9
  2.1: The New York Times .............................................................................................. 9
  2.2: The Washington Post ............................................................................................. 10
  2.3: The Wall Street Journal .......................................................................................... 11
  2.4: The Chicago Tribune ............................................................................................. 12
  2.5: The Boston Globe .................................................................................................. 12
  2.6: Los Angeles Times ................................................................................................ 13
  2.7: The Seattle Times .................................................................................................. 14
  2.8: Cable News Network (CNN) ................................................................................. 14
  2.9: American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) ......................................................... 15
  2.10: CBS News ............................................................................................................ 16
Chapter three: Theoretical Framework: Framing .................................................................. 18
Chapter Four: Religion, Conflict and Communication ....................................................... 22
  4.1: Communicating Conflict ....................................................................................... 22
  4.2: The Interaction between Religion and Conflict ..................................................... 23
  4.3: Religion and News Media ..................................................................................... 30
  4.4: Research Questions ............................................................................................... 34
Chapter Five: Method ............................................................................................................. 36
Chapter Six: Results ................................................................................................................. 40
  6.1: The Chicago Tribune ............................................................................................. 40
6.2: CBS News .............................................................................................................. 54
6.3: ABC News ............................................................................................................. 56
6.4: CNN News ............................................................................................................. 57
6.5: The Seattle Times .................................................................................................. 67
6.6: The Wall Street Journal .......................................................................................... 76
6.7: The Boston Globe .................................................................................................. 79
6.8: The Los Angeles Times .......................................................................................... 86
6.9: The New York Times ............................................................................................ 95
6.10: The Washington Post ......................................................................................... 109
6.11: Summary ............................................................................................................ 123

Chapter Seven: Discussion ............................................................................................. 125
Chapter Eight: Conclusion .............................................................................................. 142
References ....................................................................................................................... 144
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Introduction

The killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in May 2011 by U.S. Navy SEALs and the killing of twenty-four Pakistani soldiers by U.S. drone strikes in November 2011 somewhat put the U.S.-Pakistan relations in difficulty. Media houses in the United States like the Washington Post, the New York Times and MSNBC questioned whether Pakistan can be trusted as an ally of the United States in the war on terrorism. Since 2010-2011, major media outlets including the New York Times, Washington Post and MSNBC have discussed the question, “Is Pakistan our enemy?” through editorials and interviews with experts (Scarborough, 2011a).

Some Islamic factions such as the Jamaat-ud-dawa have remained hostile to the Pakistani government in power due to their opposition to the government’s friendship with the United States (Tankel, 2009). Former U.S. national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, suggested a “cautious” approach in dealing with Pakistan because even though the Pakistani government might not be an overt supporter of terrorists, it is known to support factions whose actions have in the past helped enemies of the United States (Scarborough, 2011b).

This case study examines the coverage of Pakistan in U.S. news media. The focus of this thesis is on the Kargil war in 1999 and its coverage in the U.S. media. This thesis will study if the U.S. media used religion as a frame of coverage in an international conflict, and will study if any of the two religions involved, Hinduism and Islam was framed negatively in the conflict. A war broke out between India and Pakistan from May-
July 1999. If the coverage depicted Pakistan negatively, this study will support earlier studies like those of Khan (2008), Siraj (2008) and Yousaf (2012). It will also support contentions of scholars like Said (1997) and Kamalipour (2000), who have concluded that the depiction of the Middle East, and of Islam in U.S. media are framed negatively and have treated Islam and Islamic countries as interchangeable. It will also study the coverage of Hinduism in India.

1.2: Background & Context

The independence of India and the forcible partition of Pakistan was preceded by widespread rioting and extreme communal violence. The British and Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League sided against the Indian national Congress, stating that Hindus and Muslims in India were two different nations. Many prominent Congress officials like Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad disagreed; the most prominent opponent to partition was however, Mohandas Gandhi. Many authors agree that Jinnah had efficiently wielded religion as a weapon, and had threatened civil war between Hindus and Muslims if India was not divided. Prominent biographers of Jinnah agree that Jinnah was in the end forced to take a divisive stand to carve a niche for him in politics when he realized that he would always be overshadowed by Gandhi if he stayed in the Congress (Wolpert, 2005; Zakaria, 2004). Alan Campbell-Johnson, one of Mountbatten’s press secretaries, also documented Jinnah’s behavior to be capricious in most meetings where he was present. After a politically, economically and socially sapping Second World War, the British were no longer in a position to hold at bay India’s
demands for independence. However, through political ploys to divide the predominantly Hindu population of India from the minority Muslim population, Jinnah coerced Indian leaders to grant Pakistanis their sovereignty as a nation. He also threatened to instigate the Muslim community in India against the Hindus of India if his demands were not granted, which would effectively give rise to uncontrollable rioting and violence all over India (Campbell-Johson, 1953; Wolpert, 2005; Zakaria, 2004).

India and Pakistan fought their first war in September 1947, a month after both nations gained freedom from British rule. Pakistan had laid claim to Kashmir right from independence, but the province was then the kingdom of Maharaja (King) Hari Singh, who was the Hindu monarch of India’s only predominantly Muslim state. Hari Singh actually wanted to be independent and retain the rule over Kashmir, however, both India (with Nehru) and Pakistan (with Jinnah) had resolved to annex Kashmir to their respective nations (Wolpert, 2005).

Pakistan decided to coerce Hari Singh and sent a mixed force of Pathan guerrillas and some army soldiers to capture Kashmir by force. After being scared into hiding by Pakistan’s attacks, Hari Singh agreed to accede to India and signed the Act of Accession to India. Jinnah decided to fight for Kashmir their first war in 1947, which ended in a ceasefire after UN intervention. Jawaharlal Nehru, for whom Kashmir was a personal rather than political matter, ordered the first soldiers to be airlifted into Kashmir (Moon, Roychowdhury, & Tully, 1998).
India and Pakistan fought two other wars over Kashmir, the second in 1965, and the third in 1999. A fourth war between the two nations, fought in 1971, was not for Kashmir. The latest war of Kargil was fought in a place called Kargil in the Ladakh region, near the Line of Control (LoC), and was their first war amid the glare of a strong, well-connected national and international media. Until the last three wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971 there were fewer and less prominent media in the Asian subcontinent (Mishra, 2003). International media houses such as the New York Times, The Washington Post and media from other countries had correspondents present in both countries and covered this war in detail. This also was their first conflict after both countries tested nuclear weapons in 1998. The Kargil war was considered particularly dangerous because of the nuclear arms they both possessed. It was also a conflict that could have easily escalated into a war, which would have resulted in enormous destruction of life, property and the environment in the Himalayas (Kronstadt, 2009).

The Kargil war is defined by most Indian politicians as a betrayal of trust by Pakistan, while Pakistan denies its direct involvement, characterizing it as an invasion by Islamic separatists who had fought Indian armed forces in Kashmir since 1989 (Rai, 2000a). Pakistan has always claimed that the violence in Kashmir which was particularly directed against Hindus and the Indian army is an outburst of the Kashmiri anger against India (Hippel, Barton, Irvine, Patterson, & Samdani, 2010). In spite of a lot of evidence that Pakistan and Pakistan-based organizations were the perpetrators of violence in Kashmir, Pakistan always denied any involvement with the Kashmir violence (Fair,
2009). It labeled the 1999 war as “a spontaneous uprising” of the disgruntled elements of Kashmir. Yet, its main demand for negotiations with India to progress was the accession of Kashmir to Pakistan, which it claims as a natural and rightful part of Pakistan (Hippel et al., 2010). There are some Kashmiri citizens who wish for Kashmir to be independent or for it to be in Pakistan, since it is the only state claimed by India with a predominantly Muslim population.

India did not expect the Kargil war. The Indian armed forces always maintained a presence in Kashmir and had frequently combated Islamic separatists who wished to claim Kashmir for Pakistan. However, in January 1999, five months before the Kargil conflict, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif held a well-publicized peace summit in Lahore, Pakistan. The Indian prime minister traveled to Lahore through a bus route between the two countries that had been sealed for decades. This new era of friendly ties was abruptly ended with the invasion of Kargil.

Later, it became known that Pakistan was planning the Kargil invasion during the Summit (Kux, 2001). Except for the perennially debated Siachen glacier; the outposts on Kashmir’s highest features were customarily abandoned in winter because of the inhospitable weather. However, Pakistan managed to create a strong presence of 700 to 1,000 infiltrators who manned an area 150 miles long. They were well supplied, and had supply bases in nearby mountains (Rai, 2000b).
The Indian army discovered the infiltration on May 5, 1999, when five of its soldiers from a patrolling party were captured and later killed (Orr & Hussain, 1999). On May 9, there was heavy shelling on the Indian village of Dras, and reports from local shepherds and reconnaissance missions confirmed an intrusion. The Indian army ordered more troops to the area, and by May 15, 1999, about 30,000 troops were deployed in the Kargil sector (Constable, 1999c).

The conflict drew international attention when India ordered air strikes on the intruders on May 26, 1999. Until then, the global media had treated the conflict as a routine exchange of fire between the two perpetually hostile nations. The media was also not allowed into the Indian side of the war zones until July 5, 1999 (Constable, 1999a).

Most of the news from the region was available through correspondents who were already there and also through detailed, daily military briefings from both sides. Most global news media outlets had correspondents covering the war, shuttling between India and Pakistan. Journalists complained that information about the developments in the conflict were seldom declared officially by both the Indian and Pakistani government. Both countries were economically developing, with India being a valuable trade and diplomatic partner of countries in Europe and the USA. The region being fought over—Kashmir and the Himalayas—is a major ecological and environmental landmark. A nuclear conflict would devastate the entire environmental balance of Asia.
The Kargil war was a watershed in India-Pakistan relations. The world paid a lot of attention to the war between the two developing countries (Kux, 2001; Rai, 2000b; Seshu, 1999; Tankel, 2009). Since both countries were the newest nuclear-armed nations in the world, a full-scale conflict between them would have serious ramifications for the world. Studies of the Kargil war and its media portrayal have focused the analysis mainly on studying the Indian or Pakistani media (Kamalipour, 2000; Khan, 2008; Siraj, 2008; Yousaf, 2012). Shah (2001) studied the major themes of coverage in Indian media during the Kargil War. India-Pakistan relations are still complicated after 65 years of independence. Apart from events such as the war in Kargil and the attacks on Mumbai in November 2008, India and Pakistan rarely share openly hostile repartee, although their relations are not exactly friendly either.

Indian defense experts called the Kargil war “India’s first war on television” (Thussu, 2002). Social scientists characterized the coverage as a “mass patriotic” movement and criticized the news media for sensationalizing incidents during the war, spreading rumors and also for ruining the chances for future dialogues and negotiations (Rai, 2000a, 2000b; Seshu, 1999). Some factions of activists criticized the media for painting an indiscriminately heroic picture of the armed forces, and demonizing Pakistan beyond the aggression (Rai, 2000a). The India-Pakistan cricket match that occurred during the same time was another important media story when India’s national media characterized the match “a battle no side dare lose” (Constable, 1999b).
The unabashed patriotism was evident and rarely questioned by the nation and its people. Some journalists even gained world-wide acclaim for their coverage of the conflict, the most prominent example of which was Barkha Dutt, a broadcast reporter who has since then moved on to become the editorial chief of New Delhi Television, more well known as NDTV (Seshu, 1999).

The media attention and intense coverage of the war by various national media overwhelmed even the Indian Armed Forces who did not really have the resources to deal with the coverage and incessant queries for information and scoops (Anand, 2000; Mishra, 2003; Seshu, 1999). In the later course of the war, when India began air raids, the Indian armed forces had routine media briefings. Seshu (1999) criticized the media for being jingoistic and stated that many media houses simply focused on the patriotic feelings to publish biased stories. Seshu (1999) claimed that a lot of the information was often similar and uniform without much investigative reporting done to verify it.

The U.S. media has always criticized Pakistan for its alleged tacit support to terrorist activities (Kamalipour, 2000; Tankel, 2009; Yousaf, 2012). Although there have been various ups and downs in U.S.-Pakistan relationships, there has been consistent criticism of Pakistan in U.S. media (Fair, 2009; Khan, 2008; Kux, 2001; Saleem, 2007). This study however, will focus on Pakistan’s identity as an Islamic nation, and will study if the coverage used religion as a construct with which to depict Pakistan in a reactionary manner.
CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF THE NEWS OUTLETS STUDIED

The print news outlets for the study were selected through two major criteria. The national newspapers were selected through their circulation; the newspapers with the highest circulation were selected for the study. Two newspapers among the ones with the highest circulation, USA Today and the San Jose Mercury News were excluded. USA Today was excluded because of the very little coverage the conflict received in it, while the San Jose Mercury News was excluded since it was a local newspaper. The rest of the newspapers were publications with the highest circulation in areas with the highest proportion of Indian and Pakistani immigrants within the United States. The areas of Dallas/Fort Worth were rejected from this because newspapers from the area did not cover the conflict except for the news briefs.

2.1: The New York Times

The New York Times (NYT) is widely regarded as a high-quality newspaper in the United States. According to statistics provided by the Audit Bureau of circulations in May 2012, it has one of the highest circulations among national newspapers in the United States. The newspaper even today receives the largest number of unique visitors on its website. Its record of 108 Pulitzer Prizes, the highest among all news outlets in the United States is considered as evidence of its quality.

The NYT was accused of being partisan in terms of covering the Middle East, especially Israel and Palestine (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006). In terms of covering the Muslim world and Pakistan, the NYT presented and highlighted coverage against
Pakistan, but not specifically against the Muslim community (Khan, 2008). A study by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) found that the NYT was partisan against Israel in its coverage of the conflict between Israel and Palestine (CAMERA, 2012). Its reporting of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq by Judith Miller was largely inaccurate (Editorial, 2004). Its international coverage was negative or partisan against most foreign countries that it extensively covered, including the Middle East, Pakistan, Palestine, China and even Africa (Kamalipour, 2000; Khan, 2008; Peng, 2004; Zelizer, Park, & Gudelunas, 2002).

2.2: The Washington Post

The *Washington Post (Post)* is the oldest newspaper in the Washington D.C. area, founded in 1877. The *Post* and its coverage are mainly focused on national news reporting and the *Post* is popularly considered as an important newspaper for the analysis of political news in Washington. The newspaper is also an important source of political analysis about international relations and its repercussions in Washington. The *Post* was instrumental in reporting some important stories in American history, including the exposition of the Watergate scandal and the publishing of the Pentagon Papers along with the *New York Times*.

In the early 1980s, the *Post* framed its coverage of the world according to the United States’ political relationship with the nation being covered (Riffe & Shaw, 1982). The *Post* was reportedly biased against China, and highlighted only the negative news in South Asia rather than the positive developments during the last decade of the twentieth
century (Peng, 2004). In another study, the Post was compared with the NYT and the Chicago Tribune regarding its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the study reported that the Post had a bias against the Palestinian movement (Zelizer et al., 2002). Some other studies have also reported that the Post was biased against the Islamic world, where all countries with a predominantly Islamic population were criticized without sufficient evidence or analysis (Kamalipour, 2000; Said, 1997; Zelizer et al., 2002).

2.3: The Wall Street Journal

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) is one of the three most well-known newspapers of the United States along with the New York Times and the Washington Post. It is officially the newspaper with the highest circulation in the United States, with a circulation of 2.1 million copies, according to the Audit bureau of circulation’s data. It is one of the world’s most well-known newspapers and focuses on economic news, but also extensively covers international affairs through various global editions.

However, apart from its economic reporting, the WSJ is also known for its in-depth editorial stories and reporting, most notable of which are its investigation of the planning and execution of the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, during the course of which journalist Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and killed. The WSJ was reportedly biased against Islam, especially after the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001 (Khan, 2008; Malashenko, 2006). Said (1997) reported that the Islamic nations and some of their leaders, especially the leaders of the Organization of
the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries were presented negatively by the WSJ as the ‘people who were holding the American economy ransom.’

2.4: The Chicago Tribune

The *Chicago Tribune* (*Tribune*) is the eighth largest newspaper in the United States by circulation, and is the main newspaper serving the Chicago metropolitan and Great Lakes area. It was founded in 1847 and is run by the Tribune Company. The Tribune has won 25 Pulitzer prizes for reporting and editorial writing. Its columnists like Phil Rosenthal and Clarence Page are renowned.

In a study comparing the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the NYT, *Washington Post*, and the *Chicago Tribune*, the Tribune was more biased than the two other papers against Palestine (Zelizer et al., 2002). Another study reported that the Tribune was biased against Islam and highlighted negative news in more detail about communities in the Middle East and Asia (Malashenko, 2006; Thussu, 1997; Zelizer et al., 2002). The coverage of Asian countries like India and Pakistan was also negative in it during the Cold War (Thussu, 1997). The Tribune hence has a record of some biased coverage of foreign nations.

2.5: The Boston Globe

The *Boston Globe* (*Globe*) was founded in 1872, and is a daily newspaper situated in the New England region of the United States. It was taken over by the New York Times Company in 1993, and will soon be sold by it as declared by the NYT Company in February 2013. It has won 21 Pulitzer Prizes in its entire history of publication.
A study of the *Globe* found that its coverage of the American Indian community was unfavorable, and that it highlighted the negative aspects of the community rather than the positive ones (Miller & Ross, 2004). Its coverage of some other communities like the Islamic community after the WTC attacks was also negative (Baron, 2006). The *Globe* also covered countries which had fought against the United States in a negative light (Kamalipour, 2000).

2.6: Los Angeles Times

The *Los Angeles Times* is the fourth largest newspaper in terms of circulation in a U.S. metropolitan area. It was founded in 1881 and is a major newspaper in the California region (TTC, 2013). It has won thirty-nine Pulitzer prizes, and had well-known employees such as Carolyn Cole, winner of two Robert Capa Gold medals and a Pulitzer Prize in photography. The *Los Angeles Times* is now owned by the Tribune company, the parent company of the Chicago Tribune (TTC, 2013).

The *Los Angeles Times* had a bias towards foreign communities (Kamalipour, 2000; Peng, 2004). Its coverage of China was negative and highlighted only the problems of the Chinese government (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). A study of its coverage of the Middle East reported that it had a bias against Palestinians and Middle-eastern communities (Kamalipour, 2000). The *Los Angeles Times* also covered ethnic communities within the United States in a negative light (Baron, 2006). Its editorials were critical of the Palestinian community, and their ‘violence’ in Israel (Said, 1997).
2.7: The Seattle Times

The Seattle Times is the only currently published newspaper in Seattle, Washington. It was founded in 1891 and is run by the Seattle Times Company. The newspaper has won nine Pulitzer prizes, and is committed to reporting investigative stories about topics important to the public, it won its latest Pulitzer Prize in 2012 (STC, 2013). While it does not actively and regularly focus on international affairs, it does report on major international events through correspondents and wire news services (STC, 2013).

2.8: Cable News Network (CNN)

CNN is one of the pioneers of round-the-clock news and was the first all news channel in the United States. It covered major events live like the Challenger shuttle disaster, the only channel to do so, and the Gulf War and the Iraq War through embedded correspondents in the U.S. Armed Forces (CNN, 2011).

CNN has a strong international presence, with bureaus in all major countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia (CNN, 2011), although some of its bureaus have been consolidated due to the financial crisis and layoffs resulting from it. Even then, many of its news bureaus are instrumental in making CNN cover most major international news. Well-known CNN International personalities include Chief International Correspondent Christiane Amanpour and reporter and anchor Jonathan Mann. The Kashmir War of 1999 was covered by CNN India bureau chief Satinder Bindra.
CNN International is the international arm of CNN which has a strong international presence. It however, was criticized of presenting a narrow view of the world, especially large and diverse communities like Islam, which CNN covered negatively in many contexts like the Persian Gulf War, the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the dictatorships in Pakistan (Golan, 2003). Another study researched the coverage of Africa by CNN International and reported that although the attention given to Africa by CNN International was received positively, viewers still believed that enough attention was not paid to the positive changes occurring in emerging democracies in Africa (Kalyango, 2011). Some of CNN’s coverage of the Iraq War was excessively critical of the Iraq regime, and positive towards the American military operation (Wanta et al., 2004). Another study criticized CNN domestic of being patriotic and of covering news solely from an American viewpoint (Golan, 2003).

2.9: American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

The American broadcasting corporation was founded in 1945 by the order of the Federal Communications Commission. It serves as the news branch of the ABC network, and is mainly focused on news in the United States, while it deals with international news from a U.S. perspective, and does not report extensively on foreign news; domestically, its political stance is reported to be centrist without showing bias towards any administration (Groseclose & Milyo, 2005).

Like CBS News and CNN, ABC News was criticized of covering events like the Iraq and Afghanistan war solely from the vantage point of the United States and its
invasion of these countries (Wanta et al., 2004). Another study of the coverage of Africa in U.S. network news channels found that the coverage focused more on disasters and negative events like wars, famines and insurrections (Kalyango & Onyebadi, 2012). Even when other news was covered, the coverage was focused on events and topics of strategic importance to the United States (Kalyango & Onyebadi, 2012). The coverage of news regarding Islam too, had a negative slant to it, and the news often criticized the religion indiscriminately rather than the nation where the event was occurring (Golan, 2003; Kamalipour, 2000).

2.10: CBS News

_CBS News_ is one of the oldest news channels in the United States, founded in 1927, and beginning television broadcasts in the early 1960s (CBS, 2013). It was one of the earliest television broadcasters in the United States, and was the company where many very well-known reporters like Walter Cronkite, Mike Wallace, Edward R Murrow and Bernard Shaw have reported. Its programs like _CBS Evening News_, _60 Minutes_ and _Face the Nation_ are widely watched. _60 Minutes_ is one of the major programs on CBS, and is one of the major programs where research on national and international stories is done in more detail than usual news broadcasts (CBS, 2013).

The company has foreign bureaus in Cuba, Germany, United Kingdom, Jordan, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Israel, China, Japan and in South Africa. Its coverage of foreign news was criticized as narrowly focused, especially when it concerned countries other than North American and European countries (Golan, 2003; Wanta et al., 2004).
Kamalipour (2000) criticized the CBS news coverage of the Middle East and Islam as ‘shallow’ and ‘generalizing’. Some of its programs like 60 Minutes had fixed ideas of the nature of the story instead of exploring the facets of the story (Golan, 2003; B. Goldberg, 2001; Wanta et al., 2004). A study of CBS News and other news channels in the United States about their coverage of Africa also revealed that CBS News covered Africa only when the events were significant to U.S. political or strategic interests or when the events were severe or dramatic enough to be covered by an international news channel (Kalyango & Onyebadi, 2012).
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FRAMING

The theoretical framework of this study is framing. Framing is an intricate part of any communication process (Entman, 1991). One of the ways framing can be assessed is through the two tools of selection and salience (Entman, 1993). The messenger usually present the information on some aspect of the story as more important, decides how to present it and hence injects subtly, a moral evaluation and causal interpretation of the story (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Scheufele, 1999). Although framing does not imply that the information provided is false or untrue, its main facet is the presentation of news or information in a manner that is inadvertently partisan or leaning toward some party being covered. Framing can be done through downplaying or highlighting the importance and the coverage of certain events (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). Moreover, as Scheufele (1999) has noted in his study, framing is a continuous process affecting everyone, and not just the audience. Media exposure affects every element of the communication process including the elites and political class who create information, and reporters and news media who disseminate and report it (Scheufele, 1999). This exposure to past media content plays a role in creating preconceived notions about the topic being covered, and this process is especially strong while covering religions since reporters have to carry a distilled, simplified understanding of the religion before covering it (Fox, 2000; Said, 1997).

Framing comes into news coverage because of many factors such as the ownership of the media outlet, the country the news outlets are in, religious allegiances,
and sometimes even due to the beliefs of authors about an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

Within framing theory, the two frames of partisan alignment and reactionary depiction are chosen for this study. Reactionary depiction is conceptualized as depiction of one side in a conflict as an aggressor (Eckler & Kalyango, 2012). Eckler and Kalyango (2012) noted that some coverage of conflicts labeled one of the sides as “aggressors,” “invaders,” “intruders” and hence essentially reported that they were the causes of certain conflicts. This depiction is a moral evaluation or a judgment made by a reporter covering the conflict. Entman (1993) defines it as the creation of a media frame about that country or belligerent group. As the war progressed and drew to its end, the depiction of Pakistan became increasingly consolidated as the aggressor or invader, while India was let off the hook more lightly. Partisan alignment is the second concept within framing used for this study. Partisan alignment entails labeling of a side in the conflict as good or bad (Eckler & Kalyango, 2012). It is enhanced when the negative aspects of an alleged belligerent are highlighted while presenting the other in a positive tone (Eckler & Kalyango, 2012).

The coverage of the India and Pakistan conflict was covered by some news outlets as a battle between Hinduism and Islam (Guha, 2007a; Shah, 2002; Varshney, 2003). One of the major objectives of this thesis is to study if the 1999 conflict between India and Pakistan was framed by the U.S. news media as a religious conflict between Hinduism and Islam. Some scholars who have studied the coverage of Islam in the U.S. news media have reported that its coverage is biased against Islam (Kamalipour, 2000;
Khan, 2010; Said, 1997). This thesis will use the concepts of reactionary depiction and partisan alignment to determine if the religions of Hinduism and Islam were depicted negatively in the conflict. The stereotyping and negative depiction of a particular religion would be supportive to the study of earlier scholars such as Kamalipour (2000), Khan (2008), Said (1997) and Fox (1997), who reported that Islam was depicted negatively in coverage of countries where it was the predominant religion. Ideally, this war should be covered by the U.S. news media as a war between two nations, and the coverage should not contain judgments about the religions of the belligerents. Any judgments about the belligerents’ religion would support the hypothesis of earlier scholars that the U.S. news media frame their coverage of the Indo-Pakistan conflict according to the religious affiliation of the belligerent.

Framing is often considered to be a metaphor; however, there are many processes which lead to certain aspects of a story being allowed in a “frame” while some aspects of the story are not (Entman, 1994; Entman, 2007). As framing occurs, there are intervening theoretical processes that contribute to the framing perspective such as gate-keeping, a relatively greater coverage of some elements of a story, and generalizations of some facts like extrapolation of some behaviors to certain communities. An example would be the deeply rooted concept of “fundamentalist Islam”, a potent and pervasive depiction of Muslims used by the news media in Europe and the United States (Kamalipour, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Siraj, 2008; Varshney, 2003; Zhou & Moy, 2007). Varshney (2003) considers media characterization of Muslims to a “cell membrane” like
selectivity, where the identity of countries, their culture, the large diversity and ideologies within Islam and their divergence is often clubbed together as one. According to Varshney (2003) and Kamalipour (2000), the Islamic belief, way of life, theology, and identity are rejected wholly and only the interpretation of Islam as a violent religion causing geopolitical turmoil is allowed into the mainstream dialogue. This process of selecting, inadvertent sifting out conflicting interpretations, and creating a picture consistent with the existing narrative is what ends up creating, and over a period of time, strengthening the “frame” built around a certain news story (Entman, 2007).

Framing is hence, a complicated process involving the coverage of some aspects of the conflict, and a lack of coverage of others (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). This selectivity and salience is usually not a deliberate process, but an attempt by the news media to simplify stories which are very complex (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Some frames are strengthened over time and they become a regular part of mainstream coverage of a country or a community.
CHAPTER FOUR: RELIGION, CONFLICT AND COMMUNICATION

4.1: Communicating Conflict

Conflict has been covered by the news media since the 1850s, and since then, the reporters and media outlets who have covered war have always created images of the war for their audience (Smith, 1999). However, along with describing events occurring in the conflict, reporters inadvertently injected opinions and viewpoints into the coverage of events due to many factors like access, editorial policies and sometimes, coverage was not objective when reporters belonged to a country fighting the conflict (Lee & Maslog, 2005).

The conflict of Kashmir is between an Islamic republic, Pakistan and a nation whose predominant religion is Hinduism, India. Hinduism is often considered by some Islamists to be an enemy of Islam (Guha, 2007a). As mentioned earlier, however, the Kashmir conflict is more than just religious, it has a lot of geographical, historical, environmental and economic significance for both countries (Campbell-Johson, 1953; Guha, 2007b; Lapierre & Collins, 1975). The U.S. news media, however, has been more focused on the religious aspects of the conflict rather than considering it to be a conflict grounded in multiple interests or contexts (Lodhi, 2009; Saleem, 2007; Siraj, 2008). While the media narrative remains more focused on the religious significance of the conflict, some issues of the conflict are misrepresented, while others never come to the fore (Ahmed et al., 2012; Kux, 2001; Siraj, 2008). The alleged military atrocities of the Indian Armed Forces, who are given plenary powers in Kashmir due to an act similar to
the U.S. PATRIOT Act, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) have been rarely discussed except in reports of human rights organizations across the world (Human Rights Watch, 2008; John, 2011). These atrocities have attracted attention mainly from the human rights organization, and have not garnered attention equal to the terrorism and violence in Kashmir (Duschinski, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2008; Navlakha, 2008).

There are many debatable questions which are often, in the opinion of earlier studies, not adequately represented within the U.S. news media, including the divergence between the beliefs and thoughts of the ordinary citizens and the government’s actions, the amount of extremism actually present in any given religious population, and even the intentions of governments behind pursuing matters like Kashmir as fiercely as they do (Jackson, 2010; Leonard, 2002; Rai, 2000a; Seshu, 1999). This study discusses the contextualization of the conflict in terms of presenting the various representative groups and their reactions and contributions to the discussion about this conflict.

4.2: The Interaction between Religion and Conflict

Religion is one of the primary identities embraced by individuals (Varshney, 2003). Religion was originally created to provide a common, shared set of ideals and values to a community sharing a similar set of beliefs, lifestyles and social norms, religion has over the ages, solidified into a core identity reference for believers (Fox, 1999). Historically, the mingling and confluence of religions has provided changes both peaceful and violent; while the confluence of different religious civilizations has produced scholarship and scientific advancement, it has also created discord, polarization
and an escalation of conflict between the two converging religions (Varshney, 2001). The increasing intermingling of religions, however, has created friction between the communities of various religious beliefs and doctrines, leading to conflict (Huntington, 1996).

Varshney (2003) defines religious conflict as a phenomenon when there is intolerance of each other’s faiths and devotion, a major reason for which is a lack of communication between communities. Another theory notes that identity is a form of security, and the presence of religious identity may also alienate individuals from the other religions until conscious efforts are made to reconcile them (Varshney, 2003). Hence, the beginning of communication between two individuals of different faiths begins with that distance. Since it is not always feasible for communities to mingle with each other as frequently, conflict in this instance often occurs due to a combination of miscommunication and intolerance (Juergensmeyer, 2004).

Religious conflicts, however, also have their origin in a personal and psychological sphere as much as in real life (Seul, 1999). Differences between religions are often a source of alienation from each other, and this alienation often leads to the misinterpretation of customs, practices and intentions, ultimately leading to a belief within a community about its incompatibility with the other (Coleman, 1956; Inglehart & Norris, 2003). An example would be the symbolic importance of the conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India over the slaughter of the cow. While cow slaughter is considered a ‘sin’ by the Hindus, it is not prohibited in Islam. However, the media
coverage of Hindu leaders against cow slaughter, the attempts of defying Hindu ‘hegemony’ by some Muslim leaders has now converted cow slaughter into a political issue (Zakaria, 2004). Islam does not place significance to the consumption of cow meat, although it is allowed and regularly consumed; the belief in many Hindu societies however, is that cow consumption in Islam is a reaction to the Hindu sanctity of the cow (Guha, 2007a; Varshney, 2003).

The increasing modernization, rationality and advances in technology, development and health in many countries led to the theory that religion would ultimately be given up by most civilizations and rational thought would dominate social psychology (Hager, 1956; Haynes, 2013; Treverton, Gregg, Gibran, & Yost, 2005). However, as the revolution of Iran in 1979 led to the replacement of a monarchy by religion, and as religion was a dominant theme in countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan and others in Central Asia, some scholars later doubted the conclusion of the end of religion as a factor leading to conflict (Juergensmeyer, 2004; Seul, 1999; Svensson, 2007). Huntington (1996) and Fox (1997) both noted that religion would always be a major trigger of conflict. A combination of many factors like identity, rising intolerance between religions, and the conflicts originating over land and resources that ultimately end in the domain of religious conflict are evidence of this hypothesis (Abu-Nimer, 2001; Bakke, 2005; Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000; Lai, 2006).

Fox (1997) theorized that although religion is one of the major factors in triggering conflicts, it is not always the sole trigger. Lai (2006) theorized that religion is
often an important element in creating a sizeable pressure group and initiating resistance and pressing for certain demands. While sometimes these religious groups can be formed solely by the natural compulsion of a conflict over essential resources, territory or wealth, the other times, it is a socio-political mobilization deliberately and actively initiated by certain groups or individuals in pursuit of a certain end, as it is often considered in the case of fundamentalism (Nielsen, 1998; Svensson, 2007). In some instances, a blend of these trigger factors is seen in regions like the Middle East. Here, Western countries like the United States and Europe on one side, and Iran, Iraq and Libya on the other have participated in conflicts originating over the possession of oil, but then metamorphosed into religious conflicts when entities like Al-Qaeda propagated this line of thought (Juergensmeyer, 2004; Nielsen & Fultz, 1995; Treverton et al., 2005).

Said (1997) however, notes that large religions are especially tricky to be considered monolithic and singular entities. Along with religion, allied factors like geography, history, interaction with other religions and development of a unique regional culture makes religion hard to completely encapsulate and generalize. Fox (1997) and Said (1997) noted that although religions have certain strong sentiments attached to them especially in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, the religions’ manifestations and practice at different geographical locations is often different. Said (1997) found that the lack of scholarship on the regional and geographical differences in the manifestation of religion makes it an easy target of generalization and monolithic vilification. Said (1997) believes that religions are often considered to be the same all over the world, and
this leads to encapsulation of entire religions like Islam into simplistic characterizations like ‘moderate’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘extremist’ and ‘fanatic’. These labels broadly label entire religions and do not account for other sociopolitical and socioeconomic factors concerning social and individual identity (Said, 1997).

To support his theory of religions not being the sole determinants of identity, Said (1997) cites the example of Pakistan and the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh); while both regions were predominantly Muslim, their customs, practices and ways of life were too different to be reconciled, and this ultimately triggered their separation from one another in spite of being of the same religion. In this case, the differences between the two parts of Pakistan in terms of geography, ways of life, customs and traditions and even language was too large to be reconciled, an example of how religion can be overridden by a combination of other factors determining social identity (Said, 1997; Varshney, 2001).

Juergensmeyer (2004) theorizes that modernization threatened to homogenize and subsume identities into creating a society where in theory, people would be equal, and hence, people would slowly move away from religion as an identity, and a modern rational would come into existence. The disproportionate distribution of economic and natural wealth slowly led to a disillusionment and disorientation of many societies originally expecting modernization, education and economic advancement to replace the void created by the loss of religion (Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000; Juergensmeyer, 2004; Treverton et al., 2005). However, this forecast of religion being sidelined in favor
of modernization soon proved to be false. Events such as the rise of Israel as a military power with the support of the United States, the Persian Gulf War, and the Kosovo bombing by NATO spread the idea within the developing world that modernization would not be a replacement for religion (Nielsen & Fultz, 1995; Treverton et al., 2005). Moreover, events like the rise of Israel and the Gulf War were labeled by extremist, but influential leaders like Ayatollah Khomeini and Osama bin Laden to be an ‘attack on Islamic sovereignty’ and an ‘Invasion of the Holy Land by the Devil’, thus reinforcing in the minds of many people in the Islamic world that the West indeed considered Islam as its enemy (Bakke, 2005; Lai, 2006).

Huntington (1996) hypothesized the importance of identity and proposed that being similar to a certain set of people or different from the others was an important frame of reference for individual and social identity. Fox (1997) argued that Huntington’s contention and conceptualization of civilization was unclear and instead proffered that there was little merit to the term civilization. Fox (1997) proposed that Huntington’s theory could be better applied to religions than civilizations. Other scholars like Schbley (2004), Juergensmeyer (2004) and Lai (2006) have refuted this theory of the clash of civilizations have however, agreed in part and disagreed in part with it. While some argue that the theory does not hold complete merit on its own, it has been reflected in the patterns of global events as they have happened in the past few years, especially since the end of the Cold War (Fox, 1997; Nielsen & Fultz, 1995; Seul, 1999; Varshney, 2001).
The current consensus on religion and conflict is that religion is a frame of identity, an important determinant of human behavior and social interaction, and that some individuals perhaps use it as a political weapon as well. While religions cannot be generalized singularly to be proponents of peace or violence, some scholars like Huntington (1996) and Fox (1997) agree that all religions can be mobilized into violent forces when the need arises. In some societies, the sheer size or dominance of a community in comparison to the other can also be a reason for peace, as is the case in India (Varshney, 2003; Zakaria, 2004). Flux in social dynamics, availability of natural resources like water, oil and food can be major triggers of conflict and will remain so.

At the beginning of this millennium, the Western media continued to cover India and Pakistan as belligerents and enemies due to critical factors like religion, territory, natural resources, and most importantly water (Fox, 2000; Varshney, 2001). While the undertone and media portrayal of their conflict was primarily presented as the clash of two major religions in the early part of this millennium, the dyad did not have too many conflicts over religious issues (Zakaria, 2004). While Pakistan is a declared Islamic state, India is secular and in fact, contains a sizeable population of Muslims who consider India to be their home (Guha, 2007a). Their battle is mainly a strategic territorial battle reinforced and fueled by religious themes and enmity (Guha, 2007a; Varshney, 2001, 2003).
4.3: Religion and News Media

Religion is a critical determinant of global politics, and hence one of the major topics of coverage for the global media (Hjarvard, 2006). Religion is a predominant driving force behind social change and individual behavior, and is considered an important topic to be covered simply because of its significance in civic life (Varshney, 2001). However, since the advent of ethics codes, media are supposed to cover religious stories only from a neutral and objective standpoint, and not discuss the merits or demerits of any religion (Paluck, 2009; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2002, 2003). While religious festivals and opinions of well-known religious leaders are covered by the media as news events, religion has been cautiously covered due to the separation of state and religion, and due to the secular principles accepted by democratic governments across the world (Hoover, 2002; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2003). In spite of the ethical practices in place for reducing religious bias in coverage, religion is always a subject where opinion is subtly inserted into news coverage, even if only through the use of certain words (Huntington, 1996; Khan, 2010; Varshney, 2001). Said (1997) reports one such word often used by the media, ‘fundamentalist’ has not been precisely defined in spite of many scholarly attempts of doing so. Said (1997) reports that such words do not seem biased upfront, and are used by media subconsciously, often unknowingly. However, the use of such words labels an entire religion of having a certain tenet because of the actions of a small number of individuals. The discussion and coverage of religion has never really stopped within the media, since it still plays a central role in society and politics (Hackett,
The coverage of religion varies within countries depending on the predominance of religious parties in the government and administration (Lindlof, 2002). Coverage of religion and the conflict of religion with other spheres of life like social behavior and modernization have often led to polarized coverage of religion in the media (Shinar, 2003). While some coverage is directed towards the importance of religion in dictating civic life, the other side diverges and criticizes religion as a ‘retrogressive’ force (Shinar, 2003). In countries like the United States where the media do not openly declare their religious stance, the news coverage subtly frames its coverage for or against religion (Kamalipour, 2000; Said, 1997; Varshney, 2003). The coverage sometimes acknowledges the importance of religion in civic life in news stories, but refrains from making a judgment on the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ aspects of religious opinions interfering with civic life (Paluck, 2009). In some editorials, a number of publications may take a stand on the role of religion and stance about a particular issue.

Scholars like Said (1997), Varshney (2004) and Schbley (2004) have called religion to be the ‘spice’ of coverage for media houses, since religious news and opinion editorials attract readers’ opinions and increase audience engagement (Schbley, 2004; Stolow, 2005). On the other hand, in countries like India, where religion is a major political and violent force, the media often refrain from making strong statements about religion and religious parties, since their coverage attracts a violent backlash against the media outlet publishing it (Ketkar, 2002). Well-publicized attacks on media entities for religious purposes in India include the attack on the *Times of India* for speaking against

In conflicts between the United States and Islamic countries like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, religion has been a major theme of coverage in publications on both sides of the religious spectrum (Kamalipour, 2000; Said, 1997). During the coverage of conflicts, religion and religious fighters have often been covered from a certain perspective, such as the depiction of Afghani Pathans to be ‘militant’ or ‘zealous’, or the labeling of Hamas to be ‘militant’ and ‘terrorist’ (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007; Fox, 2000; Juergensmeyer, 2004). While Western news media have depicted Islam and its Islamic countries in an unfavorable light, some publications in some Islamic countries have framed the West, Christianity, Israel and even Judaism as aggressors, invaders and in some cases, as agents of the Devil (Lindlof, 2002; Shinar, 2003; Stolow, 2005; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2003).

Apart from the coverage of conflicts, religion is covered in the coverage of immigration and the conflict between the religion of immigrants and the host citizens who belong to different religions (Stout & Buddenbaum, 2002, 2003). While discrimination is a major theme of coverage during this discussion, the coverage also includes the positive attributes of religious intermingling, attributes of interreligious
communication, and the bridging of gaps between two communities due to immigration (Stolow, 2005; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2003). On the other hand, religion does not form a major part of discourse when the social and administrative effects of immigration are discussed, except in cases when the context of coverage is religious violence and crimes directed towards a specific religion (Fox, 1997, 2000).

Even in countries proclaimed to be secular and where religion is considered to be separate from the state, religious discussion occurs in mainstream political and media discussion due to religion’s influence on matters of policy and security (Hager, 1956; Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000). Coverage and opinion of issues encompassing both religion and science, or religion and civic life like abortion, the allowance of hijabs and burqas (veils) in public places, the following of certain religious rituals like prayers in professional and public environments often brings religion into media discourse (Juergensmeyer, 2004; Varshney, 2003). In these situations too, media coverage is often divided and does not express strong opinions within news coverage (Haynes, 2013; Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

Some scholars generally acknowledge religion as an inseparable part of human civic life in some groups of societies, and as an inseparable part of media discourse as well (Lindlof, 2002; Stolow, 2005; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2002, 2003). However, there is no consensus on how religion is covered in global media due to the sheer vastness, diversity and heterogeneity of the coverage of religion in global media (Hjarvard, 2006; Stout & Buddenbaum, 2002, 2003). Religion is often a tool of polarization within media
coverage, and yet the inclusion of religion in media coverage is essential for the media to cover many news stories (Hjarvard, 2006; Paluck, 2009). The meanings and stereotypes attached to most religious entities and events undermines a basic purpose of news coverage—to provide an unbiased, fair coverage of events happening around the world.

4.4: Research Questions

The framing of Pakistan as an aggressor in the Kargil conflict has historical reasons. It has been considered an aggressor and ‘troublemaker’ in India-Pakistan relations (Kux, 2001; Tankel, 2009). Pakistan had often been framed as a threatening country for its ever-changing allegiances with the West on one hand and with some sections of Islamic fundamentalists on the other (Hosenball et al., 2001). Since the 1993 World Trade Center bombings, Pakistan has always been on the terror radar of the U.S. government, people, and press (J. Goldberg & Ambinder, 2011). The alleged sponsorship of terrorism in Kashmir, its affiliations with many organizations like the Haqqani network and the Lashkar-e-Taiba, have always made it a prime suspect in terms of sponsoring terrorism (Kronstadt, 2009). Moreover, Khan (2008) found that the portrayal of Pakistan had been negative in two U.S. newspapers from 1999-2008.

The nuclear conflict frame has especially been used for Pakistan and the potential danger it would cause to the United States. While the U.S. has reacted negatively to both Indian and Pakistani nuclear arms being developed, it has repeatedly maintained a tone of concern regarding the Pakistani nuclear armament and its potential of falling into fundamentalist hands (Constable, 1999c; Goldberg & Ambinder, 2011; Orr, 1999). The
fear of any conflict or uprising in Pakistan is ultimately considered important because of the powerful weapons Pakistan possesses, and which the U.S. thinks, it has the potential to lose in a well-orchestrated, large scale Islamic fundamentalist attack (Goldberg & Ambinder, 2011; Hosenball et al., 2001).

Keeping this in mind, the research questions that this study will explore are follows:

**RQ1)** What frames did three U.S. national broadcast networks, CNN, ABC, CBS and seven select U.S. national and regional newspapers use to depict India and Pakistan during the 1999 war?

**RQ2)** In what ways did the frames align in the aforementioned U.S. media outlets during the coverage of the 1999 Indo-Pakistan war on issues such as religion?
CHAPTER FIVE: METHOD

This study uses textual analysis to examine the coverage of the Kargil war in newspapers and broadcast news media in the United States to identify dominant themes present in the news coverage of the war. This study discusses the differences observed in the tone and objectivity of reporting in the U.S. media. It focuses on one case study where the turbulent relationship between the United States and Pakistan and Islam in general serves as the context. Single-case designs are where a contextual background and a case is selected to represent context for the study (Yin, 2012). Even though the case in point is not always a representative sample of the universe, there lies a generalized pattern within many such single events, which are indicative of a larger phenomenon (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). This thesis will study media coverage of a war, and through the foundation of a theoretical framework of framing, determine whether some U.S. media were biased towards Islam.

The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, The Wall Street Journal, The Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe and The Seattle Times were selected among the newspapers for study, while among the broadcast channels, CBS News, CNN, and ABC News were selected. The newspapers were selected based on their circulation for the national newspapers. For the regional newspapers, they were selected according to the immigrant population in the area. Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles and Boston contain a larger proportion of Indian and Pakistani populations more than other regions of the United States. For some regions like Dallas and Houston in Texas, archives
for the newspapers were unavailable, or coverage of the conflict could not be found through archive searches. The local and city-based newspapers have been shown to cover stories which are likely to be read by immigrant populations (Goodrum, Godo, & Hayter, 2011), while national newspapers are unlikely to be affected by this factor (Wu, 1998). The entire universe of stories for all ten news outlets about their coverage of Kargil, as available in Lexis Nexis, Factiva and ProQuest Central was studied. Stories were found by a keyword search. Stories in each newspaper were searched separately using the keywords “India” and “Pakistan,” and were then filtered further by the word “Kashmir” and “Kargil.” The dates of coverage selected were from May 1, 1999 to July 30, 1999, covering the period of the conflict and a week before and after. All stories reporting events about the Kargil conflict directly were considered valid. Stories discussing other elements of Kashmir, such as the life of the people and the India-Pakistan cricket match were not considered. Letters to the editor, feedbacks and corrections and reports exclusively about other aspects of Pakistan and India like societal life and parallel unrelated events were not discussed.

The Cricket World Cup was simultaneously being played in England, and India and Pakistan, traditional rivals in the cricket field, had a match on June 8, 1999. Stories related to the match, with Kargil mentioned in the background were not considered. News summaries and briefs were not considered. The total number of stories retrieved from Lexis Nexis was sixty-one for the New York Times, forty-three for The Washington Post, thirty-three for The Seattle Times, sixty-five for The Chicago Tribune, forty-four for
The Los Angeles Times, forty-four for The Wall Street Journal and thirty-five for The Boston Globe among the newspapers.

For the broadcast media, CNN, ABC News, CBS News and MSNBC channel transcripts were selected. The search was done on Lexis Nexis using similar keywords as the newspapers. CNN had forty-five stories pertaining to the conflict while CBS News had a total of ten. Video clips were available for CNN on the Vanderbilt Television news archive, while the other channels only had their transcripts made available. The search was done through search terms like India, Pakistan, Kashmir and Kargil and the stories which were irrelevant were eliminated and the final stories were then downloaded from various full-text sources. The total number of stories in the universe added up to 380; and from that total, 325 stories were published in newspapers and only 55 were television stories. These stories were read and reread until dominant themes emerged.

Through a textual analysis, the study will answer the following questions about the manner in which the war was covered, the questions are as follows:

1) How are India and Pakistan framed in the texts? What is the difference between the way they are framed?

2) Are certain generalized words like ‘Islamists’, ‘fundamentalists’, ‘militants’ used in the coverage?

Textual analysis is defined by McKee (2003) as the science of understanding how people interpret texts. McKee (2003) defines discourse as a particular set of interpretations represented through words. The motive behind writing the news articles or
editorials being studied here in a certain way is to elicit a certain set of interpretation from readers (McKee, 2003). Through this arrangement and selectivity of words and depiction, it is possible to build a mental image of a particular entity in a person’s mind (Lin, 2012).
CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS

The results section will report the results for each publication studied individually. The results will report details within the stories which suggest a reactionary depiction of religion in the coverage. The results will also report the parts of the coverage where it aligned towards either India or Pakistan, and against the other. The origin and identity of the fighters fighting against the Indian forces is debated to this day; while India maintains they were Pakistani militants and Pakistani soldiers, Pakistan says they were indigenous freedom fighters fighting for the liberation of Kashmir. The results will report the coverage of the debate about their identity, and the coverage within these publications which drew conclusions of their origin and intentions.

6.1: The Chicago Tribune

The first report on the Kashmir conflict was reported in the Chicago Tribune (Tribune) on May 26, 1999 when India launched airstrikes against the Pakistani fighters. The news report reported the event as an infiltration, although the claims of positions of the Indian side were yet unverified. Although the news report about the infiltration was qualified by the words ‘India says’, the headline did not include this clarification, which in a way endorsed India’s narrative without proper clarification.

The next story on May 27 was titled “Kashmir tense as Indian jets hit infiltrators.” The report included reference to Kashmir’s violent history, and contained remarks like “It is not unusual for Islamic militants to cross the cease-fire line into India,” but the story framed this invasion as more severe since the fighters were allegedly “well-prepared” for
a “prolonged battle.” While the narrative included statements from India about Pakistan being the culprit, the Pakistani military spokesman’s quote was called “defiant,” in response to India’s allegation.

The next news on May 28, 1999 was titled “India loses 2 jets over Kashmir, Pakistan claims responsibility for shooting down fighters.” This was one of the first news stories, which labeled Pakistan a troublemaker or ‘militant’ state. There was ambiguity in the story about the actual origin of these fighters, while some coverage called them Islamic militants, other coverage used varied terminology like fighters, invaders, soldiers and guerrillas. Defense analysts interviewed for the coverage also called this a militant attack.

The next story on May 29, 1999, for the first time, highlighted the most pervasive theme of the coverage, the problem of two quarreling, fledgling nuclear powers, and the danger they were likely to cause South Asia and the world. The article titled “High stakes in Kashmir” noted that earlier ‘mistakes’ by India and Pakistan were no longer survivable, and that both countries could not “operate under the assumption that they can play with matches without starting a forest fire.” The story also contained a criticism on the two countries’ governments, insisting that they had let these ‘brawls’ distract them from the real problems:

Neither side really intends for this latest battle to settle the issue once and for all, and each is aware of the risks of letting it get out of hand. Each government can also see something to gain from the occasional brawl, which stimulates nationalist sentiment, rallies the public behind their leaders, and distracts from the myriad social and economic ills that plague South Asia's people. (p. 15, Tribune news service)
Later, on May 29, 1999, the *Tribune* carried a detailed account of how the Indian armed forces were pulled into this battle. Description of the conflict also contained details of the alleged readiness of the intruders. The story again used terms like intruders, infiltrators, Islamic guerrillas and militants interchangeably. The suspicion of Pakistani regulars being involved was not mentioned in this story. The story also discussed the religious tensions building up within both countries, with one report mentioning demonstrations of people in the Indian capital of New Delhi carrying “Hindu garlands,” something which does not exist. The story discussed the nuclear weapons both countries had recently acquired, by saying:

The sense of urgency seems greater abroad than in India and Pakistan. Having sparred for so long over this rugged territory, they apparently operate under the assumption that they can play with matches without starting a forest fire. (p. 30, editorial)

The next story on May 31, 1999, “Pakistan denies executing downed pilot.” reported again that ‘Pakistani backed Islamic insurgents’ had shot a downed Indian jet pilot in ‘cold blood’. The story reported:

Emotions in India were running high after a military spokesman said an autopsy showed that squadron leader Ajay Ahuja slain at close range, shot once through an ear and once through the chest. Pakistan denied on Sunday that he was executed. The pilot had parachuted from his MiG-21 fighter plane last Thursday after it was hit by what military experts suspect was a U.S.-made Stinger missile fired by the invaders. (p. 1, Schmetzer)

The next story on June 1, 1999, talked about the peace efforts, which was begun on June 1, 1999. The story discussed the Indian shelling of ‘hideouts of Islamic militants’. The story also discussed India and Pakistan’s newly acquired nuclear weapons and how the
two countries were in a hurry to create missile delivery systems. Finally, the story said, “India accuses Pakistan of backing guerrillas who seized positions on 17,000-foot mountains in Indian-controlled territory earlier this month. Pakistan strenuously denies the charge.” A line of narration similar to this story was followed in a story on June 3, 1999.

In a story published on June 5, 1999, the Tribune discussed the release of a prisoner-of-war by Pakistan. In this story, the Tribune used a new term for the first time, ‘Islamic separatists who are aligned with Pakistan’. It was the first time the Tribune called the fighters ‘separatists,’ a word that the Indian government often used in its narrative to describe the infiltration. A similar wording was used in the next story, which discussed India and Pakistan’s fight for the ‘frozen, barren’ land of Kashmir, and it detailed both India and Pakistan’s efforts of controlling Kashmir down the years, since 1948. The story described India’s efforts at dislodging the fighters from the mountains, saying:

A military spokesman said Indian soldiers were fighting their way foot by foot toward the rock-and-concrete bunkers where the invaders have hunkered down in strategic positions well above the approaching Indian force. "Sometimes they blaze away at each other no more than 10 feet apart, with nothing but a rock face between them,” said a senior Indian military officer. Military officials said their plan was to encircle the invaders and starve them out by cutting off their supply lines. This, however, could take months. (p. 1, Tribune news service)

The next story on June 3, 1999, titled “India: No truce till guerrillas pull out, air attacks in Kashmir resume” described the “acrimonious” rhetoric between the two countries, describing Pakistan’s alleged ‘ploy’ to allow its ‘invaders’ to consolidate their
positions on the mountain ridges, while an Indian army official was quoted saying that India would use “all resources at its disposal.”

The next story on June 5, 1999, reported the release of a captured Indian pilot, the report read:

An air force pilot captured by Pakistan walked home across the border Friday in what Pakistan called a gesture of peace, while Indian jets and artillery stepped up attacks against separatist rebels in disputed Kashmir province. (p. 15, Associated Press)

The story also contained the freed pilot’s quote, which read, “I want to immediately go back into the fighting.”

Uli Schmetzer, in a story on June 8, 1999, described the India-Pakistan war in colorful detail in a story titled “Frozen Himalayas a hot zone again: Nuclear capability adds a chilling twist to decades-old feud.” While describing the rising hostilities between the two countries, the story reported the increasing clamor in the two nations to reclaim the land of Kashmir, described historically as the ‘crown’ atop both nations. The description of the battle was as follows:

The fighters who crossed into Indian-held territory over the cease-fire line are holding the high ground. The bulk are believed to be Muslim Afghan tribesmen and fighters from the Taliban, the radical Islamic group that rules Afghanistan, trying to "liberate" Indian-held Kashmir with its mainly Muslim population. Thousands of feet below, along the lush green Sindh Valley [in which rows of bent women still tend terraced rice fields while men smoke water pipes] India has amassed some 30,000 troops. The soldiers are fired up by five decades of national doctrine that Kashmir is an inseparable part of India. "We are fighting for our country against terrorists," snapped a Sikh lieutenant. (p. 1, Schmetzer)

The story also characterized the two countries as ‘novice nuclear powers’. The story described the targeting of Islamic militants by the Indian air force, and the strong rhetoric...
used by both nations to justify their positions. Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee reportedly issued a ‘strong and clear’ statement that any peace talks would solely focus on ending current hostilities and not on the larger issues both countries disagreed upon. In the next story on June 12, 1999, titled “Pakistani peace intentions questioned.” the story reported the “incontrovertible” evidence provided by India to Pakistan about the involvement of Pakistan in the conflict. Indian Minister for External Affairs, Jaswant Singh was quoted, “The evidence we have raises serious doubts about the professed aim of defusing tensions. It also raises doubts about the brief Minister Aziz is carrying.” Pakistan was reported to have denied the charge.

Later in June 1999, as India began to recapture some mountain peaks in the region, the stories provided descriptions of the happenings on the battlefield. Here is one description in a story on June 19, 1999:

On Sunday, Indian troops captured one of three major peaks, Tololing, that Muslim separatists had used as a vantage point for shelling India's only highway in the region. On Friday they were moving artillery closer to the next targets, Tiger Hill and an almost sheer rock face called Peak 5140. (p. 15, Tribune News Service)

That story also quoted an Indian soldier saying, “The enemy has entered our territory, is holding land, our men are dying, if this is not war, what is?” The next story reported the ongoing diplomatic overtures between the two countries amid the continued recapture of territory by the Indian armed forces. India rejected most external mediation offers by other countries and the United Nations, with India’s prime minister stating, “There is no need for mediation, this is a bilateral issue and we will solve it.” The story
said that India was “caught by surprise” when it found ‘Islamic guerrillas’ in its mountain
peaks when they returned for patrols at the beginning of summer in 1999.

A story about the various ‘kinds’ of Islam in Kashmir, titled “Moderate Muslim
leader a key balance in Kashmir against radicals” described the “fundamentalist’s defiant
occupation” of mountain peaks in Kashmir, while India’s efforts to prevent the
‘radicalization’ of Kashmir were also reported. The story reported on the ‘militancy’ in
Kashmir in the terms:

The new militancy of the Pakistan-backed guerrillas has been reinforced by
Afghan fighters, who helped last month to take over high altitude peaks on the
Indian side of the "line of control." That, in turn, threatened India's control of a
vital road from Srinagar to Leh near the Chinese border. The invasion has
triggered the most serious standoff between India and Pakistan in three decades.
(p. 1, Schmetzer)

The story criticized both Pakistan and India for treating Kashmiris as ‘slaves’, and
reported that the Kashmiris did not want the violence that India and Pakistan had brought
there. The story quoted Kashmiri Muslim leaders saying that both India and Pakistan
were responsible for the violence in Kashmir. A ‘moderate’ Muslim cleric was quoted as
saying, “We do not want the militant, extreme Islam of Afghanistan here. We are
moderates, and we are peaceful people.” The clerics quoted in the story also called the
India-backed state government as ‘India’s puppet regime’.

The next story in the Tribune was on June 26, 1999, and was titled, “If war
comes, India vows it will be victor.” The story contained strong repartee from Indian
prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee:
India and Pakistan have fought three wars during the last five decades, two of them over Kashmir. Many fear the fighting could swell into another war between the two nuclear powers. "If a war is thrust on us, we will fight will all our might, and we will win," Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee thundered at a public rally in the eastern city of Patna. "These Pakistanis fight us again and again and lose every time." Vajpayee said India would hold no more peace talks with Pakistan until the Pakistan-based fighters withdraw from Indian territory. (AP, p. 12)

On the other hand, Pakistani prime minister was reported to say, “If a peaceful solution to Kargil was not found to the dispute quickly, situations like Kargil would continue to erupt, threatening peace and endangering the stability in the region.” The story also reported about Muslim rebels in Kashmir wanting independence from predominantly Hindu India. The story ended with prophecies of escalation from U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Anthony Zinni, Chief of U.S. Central Command.

The next story on June 27, 1999 was of Pakistan’s acknowledgement of its active military involvement in the conflict. The story was titled, “Pakistan indicates it has troops in Kashmir.” The story discussed Pakistan’s suspected involvement and Pakistan army chief Parvez Musharraf’s denial to withdraw unilaterally:

Pakistani Army chief Parvez Musharraf was asked in Karachi if Pakistan would withdraw its forces from the Kargil area of Kashmir. He replied: "It is too early to say (but) it's a government decision. It is the prime minister's decision. We will not withdraw unilaterally." Musharraf did not specify precisely where Pakistani troops were located in Kargil or what role they had in the fighting. Kargil, where the fighting is taking place, lies entirely on the Indian side of the cease-fire line. Pakistan had previously said only that it had brought its troops forward onto peaks facing Kargil on its side of the line. (AP, p. 17)

The story also reported the calls of the European Union and the United States to end the conflict. In the next story titled “No talks without Pakistani pullout, government
says” on June 28, 1999, India refused to withdraw unless Pakistan withdrew first. An
Indian army spokesman said that it was “imperative that Pakistan heeded the advice of
the international community” and withdrew first.

In the report on June 29, 1999 titled, “India’s leaders huddle after Pakistan
overture.” India reiterated that it would not withdraw its armed forces unless the intruders
had been evicted, had retreated or were killed. All but one of India’s leaders interviewed
denied that a proposal had been presented to it by Pakistan. The details of the proposal
were not discussed. Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said, "We are clear there
will be no further dialogue (with Pakistan) so long as the incursions continue. We are
making no secret deals, and no further proposals or mediation by third countries will be
accepted," In the meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif decided to cut short his trip to Beijing due to
“the developing situation back home.” Finally, India reported that it had stepped up its
operations against what it called Islamic guerrillas. In a next story on June 30, 1999, India
reported the recovery of fifteen bodies belonging to guerrillas which it had recovered
from a recaptured post.

The next news story on July 1, 1999 titled “India claims to recapture 5 peaks in
Kashmir battles.” reported that India had managed to capture five peaks from “Islamic
separatist guerrillas.” The story continued by reporting Pakistan’s reversal of its
statement that some of its soldiers were within Indian limits, and instead accused India of
having too many soldiers on the border. The official further insinuated that India was the
one carrying out suspicious activities by having so many soldiers on the border:
Pakistan's army chief seemed to acknowledge last weekend that his troops were involved when he said there would be no "unilateral withdrawal" from the area near the front-line town of Kargil. But on Wednesday, a Pakistani army spokesman said his words were "misinterpreted." "Pakistan soldiers have not crossed the line of control. There are no Pakistan soldiers in India," said Brig. Rashid Quereshi. Quereshi accused India of amassing an additional 100,000 soldiers, bringing the military contingent in India-held Kashmir to more than 700,000 soldiers, border guards and paramilitary troops. "This gives India a capability of doing much more than what they are saying they are doing," he said. (AP, p. 20)

The next news story on July 3, 1999 reported the progressive military build-up of Indian forces around Tiger Hill, a peak claimed by India as vital for the protection of the Srinagar-Leh highway, the only connecting road between the lower tracts of the Himalayas to the higher regions of Ladakh and Kargil. Indian officials reported that they were poised to recapture the peak after a fierce battle against the Islamic militants.

On July 4, 1999, the Tribune reported the conclusion of the meeting between Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif and U.S. president Bill Clinton. Clinton and the White House called the situation “dangerous” and the White House stated in a press release that, “All agreed the situation is dangerous and could escalate if not resolved quickly.” The White House then reported that Sharif had agreed to seek a solution, and that Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was apprised of the situation regularly during the meetings. A related news report on July 5, 1999 reported that ‘concrete steps’ were being taken to resolve the conflict, however, no details were provided, in a report that read:

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met Sunday with President Clinton in Washington and agreed "that concrete steps will be taken" to restore the "line of control" separating Pakistani and Indian forces near Kashmir. "Our understanding
is that there will be a withdrawal of the (Pakistani) forces now," a U.S. official said. "Both have a great sense of urgency. We want to see steps taken very quickly." The official declined to elaborate on exactly what "concrete steps" Pakistan might take. (Tribune news service, p. 8)

While Sharif pledged to retreat from Kashmir as soon as possible, the reception he got from other political factions was hostile, a story on July 7, 1999 reported. Most ‘Islamic rebels’ framed the pledge as a sellout, and Sharif was criticized for agreeing to step down. The report of his criticism read:

Sharif had said he would ask the Islamic guerrillas to abandon their positions, but the rebels balked Tuesday, pledging to die rather withdraw from the craggy Himalayan Mountains around Kargil, inside the Indian-controlled Kashmir region. "There is no question of a retreat! If we don't fight now, Indians will push forward in our area," said Mohammad Shoaiib, a Muslim rebel who had been fighting for three weeks. (Tribune news service, p. 2)

India on the other hand, had stepped up its attacks since there was no de-escalation from Pakistan’s side. The report continued by saying that India had undertaken a major military operation to dislodge Islamic guerrillas from the peaks. One of the right-wing parties in Pakistan also wanted to charge Sharif of treason, but was unsuccessful in garnering enough support from other parties. In the next news story on July 8, 1999, the Tribune reported that India had retaken some key mountain peaks from Pakistan-backed Islamic militants. While in Pakistan, the Tribune reported that a ‘defiant’ mob of politicians and Islamic militants waited to denounce Sharif for his promise to de-escalate.

On July 9, 1999, the Tribune announced the launch of new attacks by Islamic militants in a story titled “Kashmir guerrillas launch new attacks.” while Indian officials reported escalation in their own efforts since the response from the enemy was not
weakening, according to Indian army sources. The report concluded by saying that the fighting continued in spite of Sharif’s promise to withdraw from the borders as soon as possible.

In another news story on July 9, 1999, a story reported a major skirmish between the two forces, and a combined death toll of 164 soldiers and insurgents. The report read:

Meanwhile, two days of fighting in Mushkoh Valley, 65 miles to the southwest of Batalik and some four miles from Pakistan's border, has left at least 120 guerrillas and 44 Indian soldiers dead--the highest casualties in a single operation since fighting in the province began in early May, Indian officials said. The reports coincided with a statement by Pakistan's Cabinet-level defense committee asking Muslim insurgents to "help resolve" the crisis, which was seen as an implicit call for the rebels to withdraw from positions in Indian-controlled Kashmir. (Tribune news service, p. 1)

A similar news report on July 10, 1999 titled “India claims some military success; Pakistan meets with insurgents” reported that Pakistan was working to help “resolve the crisis.” while India had reported that many insurgents had been pushed back or killed in the fighting. India once again reiterated that it had conclusive proof that Pakistan was actively involved in the conflict, while Pakistan denied it. The news report ended with the news of joint meetings between the Pakistan government and eleven ‘militant’ organizations:

On Friday, the Pakistani Cabinet's defense committee met in Islamabad and asked the insurgents to help resolve the crisis, an apparent call to withdraw. Soon after that meeting, top Pakistani commanders met the leaders of 11 militant groups fighting in Kashmir to discuss a withdrawal, a government official said in Islamabad on condition of anonymity. The developments came a day after Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif returned from Washington, where he promised President Clinton he would take "concrete steps" to end two months of fighting. (Tribune news service, p. 9)
On July 12, 1999, a report announced the cessation of fighting in the Kashmir region. The report’s title was “India, Pakistan announce Kashmir withdrawal, agreement depicted in different terms.” Both countries, the Tribune reported, had depicted the conflict in widely different terms, the report read:

The nations, which have fought two wars over Kashmir since winning independence from Britain in 1947, were cautious with their statements Sunday, carefully portraying any silencing of the guns in terms of victory for their sides. The recent conflict has been depicted so differently in each country that the citizens of one would barely recognize the war that their counterparts have been following in the news. While the Pakistanis were terming the development as something of a gradual cease-fire between warring parties, the Indians explained matters more as the recognition of a fait accompli: Most of the invaders into its territory had already been killed or thrown out. (Bearak, p. 6)

In the later sections of the story, officials from both regions were reported to agree on a ceasefire. While India hoped that the ceasefire would lead to the restoration of the status quo as it was before the conflict, Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz said, "In the past few weeks, the mujahedeen action has been gloriously successful as the just and legitimate cause of Kashmir has engaged the international community's undivided attention throughout the period. The focus must now shift to the expeditious solution of the Kashmir dispute."

On July 13, 1999, a news story titled “India stops firing in Kashmir, Pakistan-based fighters disengaging” reported that both countries were slowly ceasing to fight amid heated repartee from both sides. While India called its operation of driving out the intruders a success, Pakistan called the Indian claim untrue:

India portrayed the Pakistani decision to support a withdrawal as a concession to their inevitable military defeat because the Indian army was on a steady march to
evict all the intruders--an assertion Pakistani military officials say is false. Indian army officials say they had already almost completely cleared the Dras and Batalik areas in the Kargil sector of Kashmir. (Dugger, p. 3)

On the other hand, Pakistani army spokesman Brig Rashid Quereshi said, “What they are portraying as military victories are actually military defeats.” The report said that both countries had agreed to de-escalate but not vacate the region. The report also said that the U.S. believed that Pakistan was actively involved in the conflict, and that the successful withdrawal after Pakistan agreed to withdraw was evidence of its active involvement.

On July 14, 1999, the report in the Tribune reported the refusal of Islamic militants to move out of the Kashmir region, while agreeing only to ‘shift’ their positions:

The United Jihad Council, a militant umbrella group, maintained its public posture of rejecting calls for it to withdraw, thereby ending the worst Indo-Pakistani military showdown in nearly 30 years. But, while rejecting a Pakistani government appeal for it to withdraw from India's Kargil sector of Kashmir, the council said its forces would, for now, "change positions." "A withdrawal from Kargil as a consequence of any international agreement or appeal is out of the question," the 15-group guerrilla alliance said in a statement after leaders reviewed the government appeal. "For the time being, the mujahideen (holy warriors) have formulated a new strategy to carry out their operations on the present Kargil front." (Tribune news service, p. 8)

A later report on July 15, 1999 confirmed the retreat of the fighters after some minor skirmishes. The Indian army then blasted a wider route into the region to ensure better and quicker supply of men and ammunition to the region in case of a future conflict.

The last report regarding the conflict was published on July 21, 1999, and was titled, “20 Hindus killed by Muslim fighters in Kashmir attacks.” The story reported fears that Muslim insurgents might once again step up violence in Kashmir now that an open
attack had failed. The report confirmed the death of five village council members, and the rest were reportedly relatives of those members.

6.2: CBS News

CBS News carried a total of ten stories covering the India-Pakistan Conflict. CBS broadcast its first news story about the conflict on May 26, 1999. Anchor Mika Brzezinski reported, “Two smaller nuclear powers are going at it this morning, India and Pakistan.” The broadcast ended with the words that Indian commanders were targeting Pakistani forces across the ill-defined border.

The second report was broadcast on May 27, 1999, in which anchor Mika Brzezinski reported that India had lost two jets over the Kashmir region. The report continued that India had acknowledged the downing of the jets, and Pakistan had claimed responsibility. Brzezinski stated that the two ‘dueling’ nations had fought three wars before this one. The newscast ended by reporting that this is the worst flare-up between the two nations after they had tested nuclear weapons last year. The third news report was a similar report on May 28, 1999, in which anchor Bob Schieffer reported that India and Pakistan had escalated their war through air strikes. The report once again, ended with the fact that both nations had tested nuclear weapons a year before.

The fourth report on May 28, 1999, reported by Mika Brzezinski was that Indian helicopters had fired on Islamic guerrillas backed by Pakistan. The report also contained Pakistan’s denial of the allegation, and a demand for UN intervention for a ceasefire. The next report on May 29, 1999 contained similar reports on the air strikes in Kashmir,
while adding that India’s foreign minister Jaswant Singh had confirmed that India would not use nuclear weapons in spite of the escalation.

CBS reported on the peace efforts between India and Pakistan in its next two news reports on May 31, 1999. In a report on May 31, 1999 anchor Russ Mitchell reiterated that the two newest nuclear powers were fighting in Kashmir. The report about the possible negotiations was as follows:

India claims its forces have pushed back infiltrators from the Pakistan side in the northeastern province of Kashmir. It is unclear if those infiltrators are Pakistani troops or paramilitary forces. Pakistan's foreign minister will visit India next week in hope of easing tensions.

The second news report was similar and declared the Pakistani foreign minister’s plans to visit India for a diplomatic visit in the first week of June 1999.

The next newscast came a month later, on June 28, 1999, when India launched stronger air strikes in Kashmir. The news report reported by anchor John Roberts confirmed that India had launched air strikes against infiltrators and Pakistani soldiers on its own side of the cease fire line. The report also confirmed that India would not hold peace talks until the Pakistanis pulled out.

The last two newscasts on CBS, both reported on July 6, 1999, reported Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif’s meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton. Anchor Julie Chen, who anchored both reports stated that a deal had been reached between Clinton and Sharif. While reporting on the denial of Pakistani Islamic Mujahideen, the report read:

“The deal calls for Islamic guerrillas to pull out of Indian-held sections of Kashmir, a disputed border region between the two countries. However, the guerrillas say they have no plans to leave.”
The second report contained the confirmation that Sharif had agreed to hold talks with India and had agreed to pull out of the disputed region soon.

6.3: ABC News

ABC News covered the conflict in ten newscasts. The first news report was on May 27, 1999, when anchor Peter Jennings reported that the United States was concerned because India and Pakistan were ‘at it again’. Jennings reported that India had carried out air strikes and that the issue was concerning since both had tested nuclear weapons last year. In a similar news report on May 28, 1999, Peter Jennings noted that the United States was concerned over the Pakistani infiltration and Indian airstrikes. Jennings quoted a source from the Pentagon, which said that the conflict was concerning since both “had a stiletto in their back pocket which is nuclear.”

In another news report on May 27, 1999, ABC News telecasted the news of two Indian fighter jets shot down over the Kashmir region, the story reported that India claimed it was bombing infiltrators on its own side of the border, while Pakistan replied that the planes had crossed the border into Pakistani territory.

The next news report on June 12, 1999 reported on the failed peace talks between leaders of the two countries. India was reportedly unmoved on its stance to cease fighting unless the guerrilla troops were driven out of the Kashmir region.

The last report of the conflict on ABC news was on July 5, 1999, when anchor Juju Chang reported that Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif had agreed to take concrete steps to resolve the conflict and appeal to the Mujahideen to step down. The
White House said that they expected the conflict to subside soon, but that they did not have information about an exact timeline and the actual conversation that happened between Sharif and Bill Clinton. India in the meanwhile, reported the recapture of Tiger Hill, a peak the Indian armed forces called crucial, since it overlooked the Leh-Srinagar highway, the only highway connecting the lower regions of Kashmir to the higher regions of Ladakh and Kargil, where most of the fighting took place.

6.4: CNN News

The first news report on the India-Pakistan conflict was telecast on CNN on May 26, 1999, which said that India had ‘raised the stakes’ in a long conflict by using air power for the first time in two decades. In the detailed news report, reporter Satinder Bindra reported that India had started using air strikes in a conflict usually limited to shelling. While Pakistan claimed India had crossed the international border, India denied the charge. Indian home minister LK Advani said in a press conference, “This Pakistani operation has to be smashed completely.” Defense analysts quoted in the report said that both countries would refrain from using nuclear weapons. Bindra reported that both the countries had denied instigating the other, and added that leaders from both countries had spoken via telephone to try and stop the conflict. The visuals contained a Pakistani soldiers’ parade, an aerial view of the Himalayas, and Indian soldiers manning artillery and in bunkers.

In the second news broadcast on May 27, 1999, CNN reported India’s confirmation on the loss of two of its jet fighters after Pakistan had claimed shooting
them down earlier on May 27, 1999. Indian Air Chief Marshal SK Malik was quoted saying, “This is a hostile and provocative act, it is clear that the other side has escalated the situation.” On the other hand, a Pakistani official said, “We don’t want to escalate the situation. We hope India, who started this problem will stop in the interests of peace in South Asia.” Reporter Satinder Bindra reported that India believed the infiltrators were Pakistani regulars, and it had escalated since they were in Indian territory. A defense analyst interviewed for the story said, “India considers it a serious situation, and will retaliate strongly since the infiltrators are in India’s land.” The story ended by saying that India’s financial markets had suffered losses due to the conflict. The visuals used for this story included Indian artillery shelling Pakistani positions, Indian jets scrambling from air bases on the border, and a clip of people fleeing the valley due to the conflict.

The third report on May 28, 1999 detailed India and Pakistan’s fifty year history of conflict, beginning with the Partition of India and Pakistan, and describing the 1965, 1971 war and the rise in violence in Kashmir from 1989 to 1999. Bindra reported that the 1999 was showing signs of escalating as India was bombing Islamic militants and Pakistani regulars, and that the infiltrators were evidently well prepared since they had shot down two planes and now a helicopter. Defense analyst Rahul Bedi interviewed for the story said that the conflict was unlikely to end soon, since both countries were well-prepared for a long battle.

The news report on May 29, 1999 reported Pakistan’s offer of holding peace talks with India. In the meanwhile, Indian troops were reportedly attacking the Pakistani
positions on its side of the border, and Bindra reported that around seventeen thousand Indian soldiers were reportedly in the region. The air attacks were reportedly intensifying, while an Indian Army official told reporters that the corpse of the dead Indian pilot had a bullet wound. Pakistan denied military involvement, while India claimed it had retrieved documentation proving the involvement of Pakistan’s armed forces. At the end of the story, Pakistani officials noted that Indian planes flying into its territory would be shot, and Bindra concluded that Indian officials were irritated by such repartee, and warned that it would be a long and protracted conflict. Clips of a captured Indian pilot were shown, along with aerial footage of the Himalayas, and of Indian and Pakistani ground troop movements. In footage borrowed from another channel, Pakistani officials were investigating the remains of a downed Indian helicopter.

The next newscast reported the death and cremation of Indian pilot Ajay Ahuja. In a news conference, Indian air chief marshal SK Malik condemned the shooting of Ahuja by Pakistani regulars after he was forced to eject and land in Pakistani territory. Muslim rebels occupying high peaks on India’s side of the border were held responsible. Video clips showed footage of the other captured Indian pilot, while his family members said, “He was fighting in uniform, defending his country. Everyone should work quickly to get him home.” Bindra reported that public outcry in India over Ahuja’s alleged murder was severe, and an Indian youth was quoted, “They (Pakistan) have indulged in mischief like this far too long, we should end it once and for all.” Bindra quoted Indian officials as saying that Pakistan’s foreign minister would be entertained for peace talks only once the
fighters in the region were withdrawn. Bindra also reported that Indian shelling had allegedly killed seven civilians and injured many others.

On May 31, 1999, CNN reported India’s readiness to host peace talks with the Pakistan government. John Raedler, reporting from the Indian side of Kashmir, said that the fighting had become too fierce for most residents to continue living there. Raedler reported that people were in despair for having to leave their homes and belongings behind. Later in the story, with accompanying visuals of Indian military trucks navigating the mountainous Zoji-la pass leading to the site of the conflict, Raedler reported that the conflict threatened to escalate, as Muslim rebels battled with an increasing force of Indian artillery and airplanes.

Pakistani officials reported the killing of seven children in a school due to Indian shelling, according to a CNN story on June 1, 1999. Correspondent John Raedler reported, to accompanying visuals of an Indian platoon marching to the frontlines, that India was increasing pressure on Pakistan by intensifying the shelling and air strikes. Raedler reported that the battle had disrupted civic life in the villages of Dras and Kargil, where most people had deserted their homes and were awaiting transportation to go to safer places. An Indian artillery commander interviewed during the story said, “They are mostly Pakistani regulars, but there are some mercenaries in those positions.” The destroyed remains of a temple in Dras were seen in the last visuals of the report.

The next two news reports were news briefs which reported India’s declaration that Islamic rebels occupying the peaks were being pushed back, and that India had
agreed to talks with Pakistan and agreed to cease shelling if the infiltrators retreated into Pakistan. The separatists reportedly rejected the proposal.

In a news report on June 6, 1999, CNN for the first time reported from the Pakistani side of the conflict. The video report started with a religious war cry from Pakistani soldiers who shouted “Allahu Akbar” (may God be praised) and fired an artillery shell, after which correspondent Kasra Naji reported that Pakistani soldiers were shelling Indian bases “in the name of God.” Naji then interviewed two Pakistani soldiers who talked about the frequency of shelling and casualties, both stated they had not been pushed back “even an inch,” contrary to India’s claims. The report ended with Naji detailing the costly and difficult logistics of supplying men and equipment to a battle being fought “on the rooftop of the world.” The visuals of Pakistani soldiers shelling after chanting the name of God ended the report.

In the next news report on June 12, 1999, CNN reported the cold and hostile reception Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz received in New Delhi from the Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh, who refused to pose with Aziz for photographers. The report also said that protesters were picketing against his arrival. Correspondent Satinder Bindra reported that the talks were unsuccessful, and India had reiterated its demand for Pakistani withdrawal. Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh was quoted, “We will not withdraw, and I have also reiterated that the perpetrators of the barbaric torture of Indian soldiers before killing them be brought to justice.” Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz said, “I am in no illusion that these primary talks will solve the problem, but I refuse to be
pessimistic. I am sure we will reach a solution. Also, the bodies of Indian soldiers were returned with full military honors, the marks and injuries on their body were probably because of them lying in the mountains for some weeks in bad weather.” Bindra ended the story by saying that the conflict had caused large-scale migration from the region, and that hundreds of soldiers on both sides had died.

The next six stories on June 13, 14, 19, 20, 21 and 22, 1999 were news briefs. In the first brief, Pakistan alleged that India had heavily shelled Pakistan-controlled Kashmir with chemical shells, something which India denied. The brief concluded with the report of the failure of the peace talks and the inability of both countries to set a next date for further talks. The second brief included Pakistan’s contention of heavily injuring many Indian soldiers who tried to recapture the peaks captured by the infiltrators. The report ended with the reiteration of the failure of the last peace talks. The last two briefs reported India’s rejection of international mediation, either by the UN or by another country. In the last brief, India welcomed a joint statement issued by the G-8 (Group of Eight) countries asking Pakistan and India to reinstate the ceasefire line decided by the rivals in 1948. CNN concluded that India was happy that the world agreed on its viewpoint of Pakistan resorting to unnecessary aggression to change the status quo. In the last briefs, CNN reported that India was fighting “ridge by ridge” to reclaim its territory, and with the increasing casualties, the “hopes of peace being restored were fading.”

The next report on June 23, 1999 was about the Indian town of Dras and the shelling occurring nearby. CNN reported that Dras was one of the worst affected, and all
of its fourteen thousand people had fled. It interviewed two such refugees, who were angry over problems caused by the conflict like the destruction of their property, their return home, the survival of their cattle and the quality of homes they would go back to. The Indian army reported that it was stepping up efforts to capture a vital peak towering over Dras, Tiger Hill.

In the next report on June 24, 1999, CNN reported the visit of a U.S. Army general and a U.S. State department official to India and Pakistan. The rest of the report detailed the vigorous battle being fought on the mountain peaks in Dras on the Indian side of Kashmir. Correspondent Satinder Bindra reported that some Indians were urging the army to cross the border and cut off the Pakistani supply chains, something which India’s prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee denied its troops would do. The report ended with the concern being expressed in other countries like the United States over the continued fighting by the two newest nuclear powers.

The June 26, 1999 report was the first time that Pakistan tacitly admitted its involvement in the conflict. Correspondent Kasra Naji, speaking before a backdrop of what he called mourning Islamic militants, said that the admission of the Pakistani army chief of the Pakistan army’s involvement in the conflict was an important step. Naji reported that the U.S. delegation which had visited Pakistan also believed that Pakistan was supporting Islamic militants in the battle, and sending regular soldiers to fight. At the end of the report, a Pakistani official said, “Why should they (the “freedom fighters) stop fighting, their homeland has been divided, for them there is no India or Pakistan, they are
Kashmiris.” Naji reported the death of hundreds of civilians from Pakistan’s side and the flight of thousands more from the site of the conflict. In a related news brief on June 27, 1999, CNN reports that India is relentless on its stance of negotiating with Pakistan, unless Pakistan-backed Islamic militants retreated.

Secret negotiations between India and Pakistan were the subject of the next news report on June 28, 1999. India’s foreign ministry spokesman confirmed that “some messages have been exchanged.” Correspondent Satinder Bindra reported that both countries had denied that they had reinstated negotiation efforts due to the visit of a U.S. delegation. Meanwhile, Bindra reported that the European Union and the United States were urging Pakistan to withdraw the troops it supported. Pakistan replied by saying that they were not within its control.

On July 1, 1999, CNN reported Indian national security adviser Brajesh Mishra saying that “I cannot rule out the possibility of crossing the Line of Control (the ceasefire line between India and Pakistan, drawn after the battle of 1971 by the Simla agreement between the two countries) in this situation, but I reiterate that we do not want to do it. I think that at this point, if they are speaking of nuclear weapons, it is highly irresponsible and can only come from fringe elements in any society. We will not be the first to use nuclear weapons.” The report concluded by saying that there was international concern about the conflict due to the nuclear weapons both countries possessed.

The July 3, 1999 news report on CNN reported the news of the Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif visiting the White House that weekend on July 4, 1999. The
newscast reported that the situation between Indian armed forces and Pakistani-backed Islamic militants had escalated, and that the White House, had in a statement, quoted the situation as “extremely dangerous.” Video clips of White House spokesmen reporting on the developments stated that the United States wanted both India and Pakistan to go back to bilateral talks, the last leg of which had been successfully held in Lahore, Pakistan in February 1999. Once again, the possession of nuclear weapons by both countries was the point most worrying for the White House.

The newscast on July 4, 1999 was the longest newscast in the entire reporting of the India-Pakistan conflict. In the first half of the report, CNN reported that U.S. president Bill Clinton and Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif had held a three hour meeting, and at the end, had agreed that the fighting had to end. As reported by a White House press release, both leaders agreed that they would strive to defuse the current enmity and seek to reinitiate negotiations begun earlier in 1999. The White House also reported that Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was regularly apprised of the developments. In the second half of the story, correspondent Satinder Bindra reported the recapture of Tiger Hill, a peak said to be strategic by the Indian army for the movement of arms and men along the Srinagar-Leh highway, the only connection between the southern and northern part of Kashmir and the higher mountains of Ladakh. India reported the loss of fifty-one soldiers during the recapture. Finally, a statement by a Pakistani official of considering the option of nuclear weapons led to a similarly aggressive response by an Indian defense ministry official.
On July 5, 1999, CNN reported a “defiant” response by India and the “escalation” of the India-Pakistan conflict. Correspondent Satinder Bindra reported that India had not withdrawn its troops as agreed in Washington by Sharif and Clinton, but Indian minister for external affairs Jaswant Singh said, “We cannot stop until this wrong has been undone. The price of casualties India has paid and will continue to pay, is for resolving this situation in Kashmir.” The report reported India’s reported victory at Tiger Hill, and its unrelenting stance to continue fighting until the intruders were dead or had been pushed back. In a related news brief on July 7, 1999, CNN reiterated India’s unrelenting stance on the withdrawal from Kashmir, while it reported that Pakistani “Islamic rebels” had said, “We will not withdraw, we will fight till the last drop of blood is shed.”

On July 8, 1999, CNN reported that Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif had briefed his cabinet about withdrawing from the Indian side, while the ‘Muslim militants’ said that this was a sellout to pressure. While reporting from Kashmir, correspondent Satinder Bindra reported that Indian army officials reported a rise in shelling from Pakistani intruders. The report noted that casualties were mounting on both sides, and that no side was showing signs of relenting despite the developments in Washington. A former Indian army official interviewed by Bindra said that India should open up other fronts in the war.

On July 7, 1999, a news brief reported that India and Pakistan had agreed to stop the conflict; India had agreed to give the Pakistani infiltrators five days to retreat. However, in the last newscast on July 12, 1999, CNN reported that India continued to
shell the peaks in spite of the agreement. Indian army chief General Ved Prakash Malik said, “We need to be cautious. My soldierly instincts tell me we should still be on alert. We will continue to patrol the newly re-acquired positions for some time and ensure that there are no intruders remaining, and in case there, we will take action against them.”

Malik also reiterated the claim that the intruders were Pakistani regular soldiers, and said the Indians had “ample evidence.” The report concluded by reporting the pride and nationalism within India due to the four hundred casualties on the Indian side. CNN reported that millions of dollars of aid had been received by the Indian government from citizens in solidarity with the suffering of the soldiers. In Pakistan, CNN reported that the Pakistani people had called this a sellout to Indian and United States pressure. Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif said, “I want to give diplomacy a chance.”

6.5: The Seattle Times

The first news report of the conflict in the Seattle Times was reported on May 27, 1999 when it reported the shooting down of two of India’s jets allegedly by Pakistani missile fire. The news confirmed that satellite imagery showed six hundred guerrillas on major mountain peaks, and that this was beyond the usual firing on Muslim guerrillas that India does, the report read:

Although Indian soldiers frequently fire to thwart Muslim guerrillas from trying to sneak into India, this time satellite photos showed that nearly 600 guerrillas had pushed four miles into India, in areas uninhabited by the army, officials said. Intelligence agencies said the rebels possessed anti-aircraft missiles, radar, snowmobiles and sophisticated communications equipment. (Max, p. 7)
Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz however said that they were unaware of who the infiltrators were and where they came from. The story reported that the situation was more troublesome since both countries had ‘weak leaders’, while Pakistan had a corruption-riddled Nawaz Sharif government, India was waiting to go to polls and its prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee considered this a chance to show the people “how tough they were.”

In the next story on May 29, 1999, titled “India, Pakistan trying to defuse Kashmir tension,” efforts at de-escalating the conflict were reported. While the prime ministers of both countries communicated with each other, Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif sent a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan requesting him to send UN envoys to the region, stating that the conflict was a “potential nuclear flashpoint” and needed to be dealt with seriously.

From India’s side, defense minister George Fernandes cleared the Pakistan government of guilt, saying that this was most probably an operation planned by the army. Indian Major General JJ Singh reported that six hundred militants had intruded into Indian territory, and efforts were on to drive them out.

On May 30, 1999, news reports reported a continuation of fierce airstrikes by the Indian air force on the Muslim guerrillas entrenched on the borders. Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that he had rejected an offer from his Pakistani counterpart and said that the withdrawal could not be one-sided. India demanded that Pakistan stop sending militant infiltrators and army soldiers into the Indian part of
Kashmir. India said the occupants of the post contain a mix of Afghan mercenaries and Pakistani regular soldiers.

On May 31, 1999, a Seattle Times story denied the execution of a downed Indian pilot after capture. The story reported that Pakistan-backed Islamic insurgents were being bombed by Indian air force pilots, and that two of them had crashed within Pakistan. While India denied they were in Pakistani territory, Pakistan claimed they had flouted the international border. One of the dead Indian pilots Ajay Ahuja was reportedly shot, and the surge in patriotic feelings it garnered ensured that his body received a hero’s welcome. Indian defense ministry officials demanded an apology from Pakistan and trial of the perpetrators of the ‘dastardly and cowardly’ act of killing Ahuja. Finally, India reported that it had evidence of the Pakistan army’s active involvement: name tags and identification cards on the bodies of killed insurgents proving their real identity.

On June 2, 1999, the next story reported the plight of the people fleeing the region of Kashmir due to the battle. In a story titled “Trouble between India, Pakistan boils in Kashmir,” the Seattle Times reported that many people were left homeless due to the conflict and were fleeing due to the shells falling on or near their villages. The story said that the conflict had led to a large displacement of inhabitants, which would cause problems of resettling them in other parts of India. A resident Mohammad Kazim described, “The shelling is everywhere, every day. We are just sitting near the house and we hear the big bang. It is so terrible we pray to God.” Pakistan said that it could resort to “any weapon” to defend itself. The story mentioned that it was a well-planned, well-
orchestrated attack by Muslim insurgents in Kashmir, and was one of the severest conflicts in the history of the two countries. Military officers said that it was a fiercely fought battle, and hand-to-hand combat also occurred between the two countries’ soldiers.

On June 9, the *Seattle Times* reported on a story similar to the earlier one, reporting that a large number of people had been forced to flee, and that Indian shells had only fired shells to dislodge Muslim militants and not for actively targeting civilians. The story said that India had launched a severe air and ground assault on the force of secessionist Islamic militants who were so often in conflict with India since 1989. The story also reported on the closure of schools in the region due to the imminent possibility of shells hitting them. Villagers on both sides complained of loss of property and livelihood. One Indian villager, Mohammed Sadiq said, “There is little or no compensation for the losses we have suffered as a result of the shelling. The government has said it will give us 20,000 rupees ($400) if someone is killed. We pay that much for a cow.”

On June 10, 1999, the *Seattle Times* carried out a detailed analysis of the conflict between India and Pakistan and detailed the three Indo-Pakistan wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971. The story detailed the “snaking” mountain roads where Indian soldiers were patrolling and the heavy build-up of artillery that was occurring on the border between the two countries. The story reported that most of these fighters were thought to be radical Muslims who were fighting for the liberation of Kashmir from India’s clutches.
On the other hand, Pakistan denied that it had any active involvement in the conflict and said that it provided only diplomatic and moral support to the warriors as they fought against India. The news also carried unsubstantiated and uncredited reports of the possibility of Taliban fighters fighting in this region. The conflict was predicted as a long one, and an Indian army official said, “We will need months to push them back. This will be a costly operation in human lives.” The story also contained interviews of civilian porters used by the Indian army, who believed that fighting for those peaks was suicidal since no one could live there in winter. The porter said, “We came under heavy machine-gun fire from the mountaintop, two soldiers were killed. The officer gave the order to retreat and we ran down over the glacier dropping everything.”

On June 14, 1999, the story reported on U.S. president Bill Clinton praising India for its restraint during this conflict, considered a nuclear flashpoint. The story reported gains made by Indian soldiers as they tried to oust Islamic militants from the region. The shelling on Indian positions from the Pakistani side continued, and India also continued its air and ground attacks on guerrillas. Pakistan once again denied having supported the guerrillas.

The Indian navy was put on alert on June 17, 1999. The news reported that Pakistan had also alerted its ships to be ready for a naval conflict, and that India had ordered all its ships to come into the Arabian Sea to prepare for a potential naval standoff. The story reported that India was trying to clear Islamic guerrillas from Kashmir, but the operation was taking longer than it had thought. Pakistani brigadier
Rashid Quereshi said, “The Indians are fighting the Pakistanis who seized the commanding heights, if we see them, we shoot them, if they see us, they shoot us. But we have not crossed the border and invaded India’s side.” The story reported the anomaly of Kashmir being a majority Muslim state in a majority Hindu country.

In a detailed story on June 25, 1999, the Seattle Times reported on the military and diplomatic aspects of the conflict in detail. After detailing the history of the conflict, the story reported that India had claimed significant gains in the conflict, and had reported success in driving out some militants. Most Indian military reports were highly optimistic and confident, and reported India’s increasing gains over the infiltrators. The story reported that the Indian army had recently bombed strategic peaks and were reporting possible recapture of a strategic peak, Tololing in the near future. On the diplomatic end, U.S. General Anthony Zinni visited India and Pakistan to try and get the two nations to the negotiation table. While India repeatedly denied any intention of using nuclear weapons, ‘analysts’ quoted in the story reported that Pakistan could possibly ‘raise the ante’ if it saw its fighters were losing. India also denied of having any plans of entering Pakistan, but India’s prime minister added a caveat that if “national interests” were threatened, India would be forced to enter Pakistan. Pakistan’s tacit acknowledgement of involvement in Kashmir was the conclusion of the story.

In the next story on June 27, 1999, Pakistan refused to withdraw from Kashmir, tacitly acknowledging its involvement in the conflict which it earlier claimed was being entirely waged by Kashmiri “freedom fighters.” Pakistani Army Chief Gen. Pervez
Musharraf said, “It is too early to say but it’s a government decision, it is the Prime Minister’s decision, we will not withdraw unilaterally.” Musharraf also reported the repulsion of an Indian attack on a Pakistani post. India also reported some gains, and India’s prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee also took an unrelenting stance, saying, “We also want peace, but peace cannot be one-sided.” Brigadier Rashid Quereshi from Pakistan reported that Pakistan was in position to target some Indian posts. Heavy casualties were reported on both sides.

On July 6, 1999, India reported that strikes by the intruders had been stepped up and an oil tanker had been targeted by the intruders. Indian home minister Lal Krishna Advani said, “Many people are saying the war is over, I say no it’s not over. The military operation will continue its operation until the eviction of the last Pakistani intruder.” India also reported the capture of a major strategic peak, Tiger Hill which lay near the Srinagar-Leh highway, the sole connecting route between Srinagar and the higher reaches of Ladakh and Kargil.

On July 8, 1999, a story reported on the joint statement released by U.S. president Bill Clinton and Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif, which said that the crisis would be resolved soon. The White House said in a press release, “Our understanding is that there will be a withdrawal of the forces now. We want to see steps taken very quickly.” On the other hand, a group of right-wing groups in Pakistan were defiantly against withdrawing. In a statement, Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Mohammed Saeed said, “Pakistan may withdraw, but the Mujahideen (holy warriors) will not withdraw. Pakistan
should not accept any responsibility on behalf of the mujahedeen because those peaks are not in Pakistani army or Pakistan government hands, but in our hands. This is our work after 10 years of sacrifice. He had no right to assume responsibility.”

On July 10, 1999, a story reported major gains made by India in Kashmir, its capture of two major peaks and regions called Batalik and Dras overlooking the Leh-Srinagar highway. In the meanwhile, Pakistan called a joint meeting with the insurgent organizations and sought help to resolve the crisis, considered by the report an apparent call to withdraw. In the next report on July 18, 1999, India claimed military victory and said that all territory occupied by insurgents was reclaimed. It also reported that the army was now combing for landmines and that only a few insurgents remained, which were given safe passage without being fired upon. Indian air-force jets were reportedly monitoring the withdrawal. India claimed that all peaks captured by the Islamic fighters had been recaptured and reoccupied.

On July 18, 1999, the Seattle Times carried a retrospective analysis of the conflict which concluded that the Indian sub-continent had been pulled back from the brink of war, and that two nuclear powered nations had narrowly avoided a larger conflagration leading to nuclear war. The analysis reported that Pakistan had taken a calculated risk by allowing Islamic militants to cross into India, and had thought they would be able to successfully hold their positions. In what the report called a “very poorly planned operation” by Pakistan in recent times, the hasty retreat of Pakistani forces was because of their lack of anticipation of a strong, decisive Indian response. The report urged the
United States to invest in both countries and ensure that their nuclear weapons were secured and not fired without proper consideration. The story said that Sharif’s government should have fallen if it had a credible opposition, and that India’s elections were bound to tilt in the current administration’s favor. In the end, the report said, “Clearly, the United States needs to help these two great nations to find peace.”

The last report in the Seattle Times on July 26, 1999 reported that India had amassed large artillery, air and ground capability in its border with Pakistan in Rajasthan, and the United States believed that India was going to invade its neighbor. The story said that the United States had helped avert nuclear war in Kashmir. Defense analysts quoted in the story said that the situation had been tense, and could have easily escalated. On both sides of the border, patriotism was high and the people of both countries were condemning and protesting the other for the war. India’s ‘highly nationalistic’ ruling party was likely to escalate the situation, which the report says, was avoided with timely and skilled diplomacy by Washington. India’s tactics of mobilizing its military was “scary,” said a White House spokesman. He also added, “This could have easily gone to a high level.” The story also reported that Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif, in a face-saving tactic, had agreed to withdraw forces near the end of June 1999, but had requested a meeting with U.S. president Bill Clinton. Clinton on the other hand, had invited Sharif to Washington with a caveat, “the meeting had to produce positive results.” In the end, the story reported the withdrawal of Pakistan, an apparent sign of success of U.S. diplomacy.
6.6: The Wall Street Journal

The WSJ first reported on the conflict on May 28, 1999 when Pakistan first struck down two Indian jets which were attacking guerrillas on mountain peaks. India maintained that it had to resort to airstrikes since there were ‘alarming moves’ and change in tactics by the guerrillas. India also maintained that this was only a move to drive out infiltrators from Indian soil, and not a beginning of aggression on Pakistan. India’s national security adviser Brajesh Mishra said, “There is no need for any panic at all, I don’t think that it will escalate into a general war or anything like that.”

The WSJ also reported that this insurgency had its roots in a Muslim separatist insurgency which was on in Kashmir from 1989, in which many Afghan mercenaries also participate. The usual for Indian and Pakistani soldiers is to exchange gun and light artillery fire across the border. The background provided by the report was:

Since 1990, when a Muslim separatist insurgency erupted in Kashmir, the region has witnessed daily border skirmishes during the summer, when the snow melts and Muslim guerrillas, many of them Afghan mercenaries, infiltrate into Indian-held territory. Normally, Pakistani and Indian soldiers exchange artillery and light-weapons fire. (Karp, p. A17)

In the next news story on May 31, 1999, the WSJ reported that the United States was monitoring the conflict carefully and was not ‘in the ring’. It reported that the United States was not completely convinced that the force attacking the ridges was from Pakistan, and that there were some other forces trying to derail the peace process:

Selig Harrison, a veteran South Asia watcher with the Washington-based Century Foundation, sized up this operation as more likely the work of "hard-liners" in the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies. "They may be taking matters into their hands in an effort to derail the Lahore initiative," Mr. Harrison said,
referring to the accord signed by Messrs. Sharif and Vajpayee in February that is aimed at reducing the risk of war. (Lachica, p. 13)

In the next news report on June 1, 1999, the WSJ reported that India had agreed to hold talks, but it had maintained that the “infiltrators will be thrown out.” Indian army officials reported that its infantry was fighting a severe battle against infiltrators, which India called mercenaries and militants. India and Pakistan both received “concerned” calls from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the United Kingdom asking them to end the conflict as soon as possible.

In the next news report on June 17, 1999, India was reportedly happy over Bill Clinton’s agreement with India’s narrative that the Islamic guerrillas were supported by Pakistan. India reiterated it would not escalate the conflict, but the WSJ reported that the severity and timing of the conflict had aroused public sentiment in India. India and Pakistan had held highly publicized peace talks three months before the conflict, and now, Pakistan had infiltrated India, and hundreds of soldiers were dying in what Indians called a “betrayal.” The WSJ feared that India’s right-wing, ‘highly nationalist’ government would succumb to pressure and escalate the conflict to “liberate” Kashmir.

In a guest column in the WSJ on June 24, 1999, Stephen Cohen reported that India and Pakistan had been careless and had not behaved logically about Kashmir, which he said, was “a problem within larger problems.” His analysis of India and Pakistan’s attitude towards Kashmir read:

Despite the hope that the Line of Control would evolve into a permanent border, neither state now seems to accept this most logical of solutions. Pakistan cannot bring itself to back away from its demand for a plebiscite on independence in
India-held Kashmir, where it has long provided support for local Kashmiri Muslim separatists. For its part, India refuses to hold such a plebiscite (which would undoubtedly result in a vote for independence from both India and Pakistan), while maintaining a claim to "Azad" Kashmir, which it calls "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir." (Cohen, p. 6)

Cohen also criticized both India and Pakistan for dominating Kashmir, and the United States for allowing the conflict to fester for so long. This war was called by Cohen, the “point at which the United States should start caring about the battles in Asia.”

The next report on July 2, 1999 quoted a Pakistani commander saying, “Except for destruction and harassment, there is no purpose (to the firing).” The news reported the criticism Pakistan was receiving across the world, the suspicions it had aroused despite its repeated denials of not participating in the conflict. The WSJ reported that the world was almost sure that Islamic guerrillas were part of the attacking forces. The story reported on the visit of the U.S. envoys, and the possible solution which could be in sight soon. In the next story on July 5, 1999, a White House official said, “He (Nawaz Sharif) said all the right things during the meeting (with Bill Clinton), now let’s see what he does.” The White House hoped Sharif would take the “concrete steps” he had promised. However, the WSJ remained skeptical of Sharif’s ability to make the military and Islamic guerrillas to bend to his will. The world had also praised Indian restraint on the issue, and it was hoped that Pakistan would withdraw. India on the other hand, only remarked that it would monitor the situation on the ground before deciding.
A week later, on July 12, 1999, Indian national security adviser Brajesh Mishra was quoted in a news report saying, “We have some withdrawal taking place already.”

Till the end, even as Indian and Pakistani military commanders met for talks regarding pullback of the guerrillas, Pakistan denied supporting the Islamic guerrillas. However, Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz reported that the Islamic militants were disengaging. Near the end of the story, the WSJ reported that this battle begun by Islamic fighters and Pakistani soldiers was the worst flare-up within the two nuclear nations since twenty-eight years.

In his address to the nation on July 13, 1999, Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif reported that the Islamic Mujahedeen had done their job. He said that both countries should give diplomacy a chance and revive diplomatic ties. Around the world, the WSJ reported, the United States and the UN welcomed the end of the conflict and exhorted both countries to work on its poverty, lack of healthcare and poor economic performance. The WSJ reported that in spite of Sharif’s denial, it was clear that the Islamic guerrillas in Kashmir did belong to Pakistan.

6.7: The Boston Globe

The first publication on the conflict in the *Boston Globe (Globe)* was an editorial on May 27, 1999, critical of India and Pakistan’s brinkmanship. The editorial noted:

Both are acting dangerously obtuse. They continue to behave as they have in the past, treating Kashmir as a touchstone for patriotic pride, timing their military ventures to exploit political uncertainty in the rival's camp or to assert militancy in their own. This latest indulgence in reciprocal bravado over Kashmir is all the more discouraging because it signifies a backsliding from the promising bus trip that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee made to the Pakistani city of
Lahore last February. On that occasion Vajpayee and Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed an accord on confidence-building measures. (Editorial, p. A22)

The editorial also noted that the caretaker government in India out to prove itself, and Pakistan’s inching closer towards being a failed state was a ‘lethal mix’.

On May 27, 1999, the Globe reported that India had launched air raids in Kashmir, and that it had escalated the conflict since it had not had success in dislodging the ‘Muslim fighters’ through the use of artillery and infantry. The report noted that Pakistan reported strikes in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and was prepared for “all eventualities,” which the report conceived as a veiled threat to use more sophisticated weapons.

On May 28, 1999, the Globe reported the shooting down of two Indian jets by Pakistan and the concern building within the international community:

Pakistan said yesterday that it shot down two Indian combat jets over the disputed territory of Kashmir, further inflaming a border conflict between the rival nuclear powers. "We are concerned about rising escalation of violence in Kashmir," said US National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer. "We have appealed to the governments in both India and Pakistan" to find a peaceful solution. (Colum, p. A2)

The news also reported the stepping up of attacks by India on Muslim separatists through the use of artillery and more infantry.

The next report on the conflict was an op-ed column May 30, 1999, in which the story began with sarcastic criticism of the two newest nuclear countries:

Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges once referred to the war between his country and Britain over the Falkland Islands as two bald men fighting over a comb. Now, in Kashmir, we have two other bald men fighting over a comb -- but these bald
men have nuclear weapons. The good news is that even now, with the clashes in Kashmir escalating to the point where fighters are being shot down, the odds on a nuclear war between India and Pakistan are probably less than 1 in 5. The bad news is that those odds are 10 times worse than they would have been in the same sort of border clash 13 months ago, before India and then Pakistan openly tested almost a dozen nuclear weapons. (Dyer, p. E7)

The article also criticized India’s ‘bold and counter-productive’ move of carrying out nuclear tests, inciting Pakistan to do the same.

In the next news report on May 30, 1999, the Globe reported that Indian forces were inching closer to the hideouts of Islamic guerrillas, while on the diplomatic front, Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif had called his Indian counterpart to initiate negotiations and India was deliberating on the offer. In the next story on June 4, 1999, Sharif mentioned that the talks were in “grievous danger of being derailed,” and that a caught Indian pilot was being released as a conciliatory measure.

In the next story on June 7, 1999, India reported further gains against the ‘mercenaries’ and said that some positions had been cleared and recaptured. Pakistan once again denied active support and said that it only endorsed their efforts morally. India continued the battle with gunships, jets, artillery and infantry. On June 13, 1999, the Globe reported the failure of talks since they ended with a deadlock due to both sides not giving up on their demands, the news read:

Talks between India and Pakistan over the disputed region of Kashmir ended in deadlock yesterday, with both sides trading accusations over the latest fighting in the Himalayan territory. The conflict could not be solved in one day, said Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz after talks with his Indian counterpart, Jaswant Singh. He said he was optimistic there would be more talks, but no dates were set. (AP, p. A6)
On the other hand, India reported more gains against Islamic militants, in a story on June 19, 1999, where India said it had captured some peaks which were vital strategic positions from the militants. In the next story on June 27, 1999, Pakistan conceded that its soldiers were involved in the conflict, in a tacit acknowledgement from its army chief Gen Pervez Musharraf.

The next story on July 4, 1999 was reported as a detailed effort of the peace conflict by the United States and Bill Clinton, the erstwhile U.S. President. The news reported on the fighting between India and the ‘Islamic forces’:

The Indian and Islamic forces have been battling for almost two months over the high mountain ridges and vales of Indian-controlled Kashmir. The war at the top of the world reached a new intensity last week, as the Indian Air Force launched round-the-clock airstrikes on the bunkers of their foes. India contends that the Islamic forces are Pakistani soldiers who have crossed into Indian-controlled Kashmir in violation of the terms of a 1972 cease-fire. Pakistan says that its armed forces have only been responding to the artillery and airstrikes of its longtime antagonist. (Farrell, p. A3)

The report continued by saying “By investing US resources and prestige in the Indian-Pakistani conflict, Clinton is repeating a pattern he set with mixed results in the Middle East and Northern Ireland. In all three situations, ethnic and religious differences have led to decades of hostility.” Pakistan in the meanwhile, criticized India for resisting peace talks. India reportedly was in the final stages in the recapture of what it called a major strategic peak called Tiger Hill. Reporting about the peace efforts, the story said:

The White House announced yesterday that Clinton had spoken by telephone with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, in an attempt to broker a cease-fire between the two nuclear powers. "All agreed the situation is dangerous and could escalate if not resolved quickly," a White House statement said. Sharif is expected to arrive in Washington today "to
review the situation in Kashmir" and discuss new proposals for halting the fighting, an administration official said. (Farrell, p. A3)

In the next story, the report of Clinton and Sharif issuing a joint statement was reported by the *Globe*:

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan met with President Clinton for more than three hours yesterday and agreed "that concrete steps will be taken" to restore the "Line of Control" separating Pakistani and Indian forces near Kashmir. The statement, issued by Clinton and Sharif, said the two agreed that an Indian-Pakistani dialog begun in February in Lahore "provides the best forum for resolving all issues dividing India and Pakistan, including Kashmir." (Casey, p. A6)

In the very next story however, India denied receiving any communications from Pakistan and the *Globe* reported that India was still bombing the Islamic fighters believed to be on the remaining peaks. Pakistani right-wing organizations also refused to let go of their positions, and the *Globe* reported that the Islamic guerrillas were reportedly attacking Indian posts even when the peace process was in progress. In a following story on July 10, 1999, Pakistan reported that it had held a meeting and had asked what the *Globe* called Islamic militants to help resolve the crisis, considered an apparent call to withdraw.

In the next story on July 11, 1999, the *Globe* gave a detailed account of the Islamic militants which were prepared to liberate Kashmir. The story reported:

Ghullamullah Azad, a 20-year-old Muslim, prays to Allah for a chance to die fighting "the enemy" -- Indian soldiers who are battling an Islamic separatist movement inside Indian-controlled Kashmir. "All Muslims weep for martyrdom," said Azad, clenching his fist against his broad, barrel chest in a typical gesture of Islamic fervor. "We ask, will Allah bless us with martyrdom?" (Lloyd, p. A16)
The story reported that Kashmir was a breeding ground for Islamic militants, and that the youth fighting were trained by an extremist organization, Lashkar-e-Taiba, or Army of the Pure:

The son of a farming family in India's eastern Punjab province, Azad said he joined the Lashkar-e-Taiba militant group three years ago after finishing high school. The group lures young militants with the promise of joining in the jihad, or Islamic holy war, in Kashmir, the mountainous region that is claimed by both India and Pakistan. Devout Muslims believe that those who die fighting are assured of a short-cut to heaven. (Lloyd, p. A16)

The story reported the history of the conflict, the unleashing of Islamic militancy in Kashmir by the jihadist groups in the region, and India and Pakistan’s strong-arm tactics to control the region militarily. The story reported that it remained to be seen if Sharif was able to rein in the fighters, after the fighters’ defiant stance against withdrawing. In the next story on 13 July, 1999 however, the Globe reported the retreat of Islamic militants after Sharif declared it in a speech. His decision was protested and denounced by right-wing leaders, but the conflict ended, the Globe reported. Some defiance was reported from the Mujahideen, as a Mujahideen leader said in a story on July 22, 1999, “Mujahideen consider withdrawal a sin. We have to choose only between victory or martyrdom, Fighting with Indians in Kashmir is not over.”

The final story on the conflict was the rising popularity of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, and the rising protests against the United States within Pakistan. The story on July 25, 1999 reported that many Pakistanis believed the United States to be an enemy:

In Mardan, a crumbling tobacco center 75 miles east of the Afghan border, Islamic priests deliver diatribes against "evil America" during Friday afternoon
prayers. They urge followers to join the jihad, or Islamic holy war against Western infidels.

The US Consulate in Peshawar, the city nearest the Afghan border, beefed up security last week, citing threats from Muslim extremist groups with ties to the Saudi dissident (bin Laden). The groups have denounced Washington in dozens of rallies since President Clinton brokered a deal with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to withdraw Islamic militants from Indian-controlled Kashmir. (Lloyd, p. A27)

The story then detailed the kidnapping of western tourists in Kashmir in 1995, holding Islamic fundamentalists responsible for the kidnappings:

One group, Harkat-ul-Mujahiddin, was singled out in a recent US travel warning for Pakistan after it issued its own warning against US citizens traveling inside Indian-controlled Kashmir. The group is blamed for the 1995 kidnapping in Kashmir of five Western tourists, one of whom was found beheaded. Islamic fundamentalist groups, however, suggested that the heightened security in Pakistan was part of preparation for a US offensive against bin Laden -- not the result of any threat from Muslim extremists.

On Thursday, hundreds of militants belonging to the Islamic fundamentalist Jamiat-i-Islami party demonstrated in the southern port city of Karachi, warning Washington not to incur the "wrath of Islamic forces." (Lloyd, p. A27)

The story then discussed the connection between the Pakistanis, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and Saudi Arabia, and the network’s involvement in Kashmir. In the end, the story reported the danger that this alliance could cause the United States, and the reason why the Kashmir conflict is a microcosm of what seems to be a dangerous alliance. The story reported that this alliance would prove dangerous to peace in South Asia in the long run, especially when there were nuclear weapons involved in the equation now.
6.8: The Los Angeles Times

The *Los Angeles Times (LAT)* reported its first news story on the conflict on May 26, 1999 with a story titled, “Fierce Fighting Flares on the Indo-Pakistani Frontier.” The report began with the remark that the battle was unusually bloody. There was confusion about the exact identity of the invaders, but the LAT reported that there were reports of the operation being a joint operation of the army and Islamist organizations:

The clash would represent some of the fiercest fighting since the end of the last Indo-Pakistani war in 1971. The boasts of a Pakistani-based guerrilla organization over the weekend appeared to buttress the Indian claims of a large armed incursion. An organization called Tehrik-e-Jihad claimed that its fighters had occupied 40 square miles and killed more than 100 Indian soldiers. Pakistani press reports suggested that at least one Indian military post had been destroyed. (Filkins, p. 11)

The news report also said that Pakistani officials issued “vague statements” but “hurled angry threats at their historic rival.” On the other hand, Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif reported that there would be a “befitting response to any Indian adventure.” The story reported that six hundred guerrillas were reportedly in the region, probably along with some regular Pakistani soldiers. Meanwhile, a defense analyst from the Stimson center in Washington, D.C. said, “The military action and level of intensity is unusually high. I don't think anyone can be confident that further escalation will not occur." The report concluded that there were high hopes of peace between India and Pakistan after Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s February 1999 trip to Pakistan through a formerly closed bus route had reinstated peace talks.
The second news report in the LAT said that Pakistan accused India of attacking its posts unprovoked. Pakistan threatened to retaliate if its posts were attacked, with Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz saying, “If they attack our positions, we will defend ourselves, we will retaliate. About the infiltrators, no one knows where they come from and who they are.” Pakistani brigadier Rashid Quereshi noted, “We are prepared for all eventualities.” India was reportedly preparing for a “forceful and limited” response, as the U.S. Ambassador to India in New Delhi put it. India made clear that it would only attack the intruders and not move into Pakistan.

The third story in the coverage came on May 28, 1999, which reported India’s escalating attacks on the Islamic guerrillas. On Pakistan’s side, four militant groups reported their support and intention to send their fighters to help the existing troops. The conflict was intense, the description read:

In Pakistan, four militant groups announced that they were sending more guerrillas into India to help those under attack. Indian and Pakistani troops--both on high alert--were reported to be on the move across Kashmir. Artillery batteries blasted each other along the 450-mile-long Line of Control that divides the nations in the region. In the Indian border state of Punjab, directly south of Kashmir, the military declared a curfew—which some observers saw as an indication that the fighting might spread. The Indian airstrikes, which began earlier this week, marked the first time air power has been used in the disputed region since 1971, the most recent Indian-Pakistani war. (Filkins, p. 1)

The story also contained the news of the shooting down of India’s jets by Pakistan, something which sparked international concern, the LAT reported. India called it a provocative act, while Pakistan maintained India had been given a warning. Amid all the clashes, both countries maintained that they would not cross their respective borders.
The United States and UN however, were concerned with the conflict. A think-tank reported that the United States was concerned since the conflict was escalating and the United States was preoccupied with the conflict in Kosovo.

On May 29, 1999, the LAT reported on the crash of another Indian helicopter by a shoulder-fired missile from the Muslim rebels. India reported this as a clear escalation of the conflict and said that it would monitor the situation carefully. The story stated that this was a dangerous escalation which had not happened in a while:

The use of a shoulder-fired antiaircraft missile marked a significant escalation of the fighting in Kashmir—and was further proof, Indian officials insisted, that Pakistan backs the guerrillas. The missile's short range suggested that it was fired from inside India, and a Kashmiri militant organization called the United Jihad Council took credit for downing the helicopter. In nine years of insurgency inside Kashmir, a divided region claimed by both nations, Friday marked the first time that such a missile had been used. (Filkins, p. 5)

The story reported the rising conflict between India and Islamic militants, which had been trying to recapture and join the region of Kashmir to Pakistan. One Islamic leader was quoted saying, “We are holding positions on top of the mountains, and now the Indian convoys have been blocked.” Finally, the LAT reported that Pakistan had recently celebrated the first anniversary of its nuclear tests, the day had been christened “a day to praise god.” The next news analysis report on May 30, 1999 reported a similar alarm within the international community, which was surprised that both countries had not gone onto fight a full-scale war despite of an escalation. The news read:

For all the violence unleashed along the Indian-Pakistani border, the most remarkable fact for many people here and abroad is that the historic enemies have not yet stumbled into another war.
In the past week, the crisis in South Asia has crept perilously close to the brink: A large group of Muslim guerrillas, allegedly backed by Pakistan, crossed into Indian territory. The Indian air force, for the first time in 28 years, took to the skies to destroy the intruders. A Pakistani missile shot down an Indian fighter over the ill-defined Himalayan border. (Filkins, p. 1)

The news reported that both countries were showing restraint since they both had nuclear weapons which could target each other’s major cities and hence make the conflict costly for both sides. Both countries also reported intentions to start peace talks, and leaders reiterated that they were dealing with the conflict cautiously and not planning to be locked in a potentially unending conflict.

The next news report on June 2, 1999 reported that ten children had been killed in a school due to an Indian shell. These were the first known civilian casualties within the conflict. Both countries reported intensified artillery, bombing and shelling from the other side. The intensity and pressure in both countries were reportedly deeply concerning:

This week, caretaker Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said the fighting amounted to a “warlike situation.” Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad vowed that his country will use “any weapon” to defend itself—a barely hidden reference to nuclear arms. Though both sides agreed this week to hold peace talks, the initiative bogged down Tuesday when they could not agree on a date for starting negotiations. (Filkins, p. 1)

Villagers reported hatred for both forces, like Mohammad Kazim, “‘The shelling is everywhere, every day. We are just sitting in the house, and we hear the big bang. It is so terrible, we just pray to God.” The story concluded that there seemed to be no end in sight for the intense conflict. Later in a news story on June 5, 1999, India reported it had
made “significant gains” in Kashmir and it called upon Pakistan to not escalate the conflict further:

"We call upon Pakistan to respect the sanctity of the Line of Control, give up its desperate and foolhardy attempts to change it and stop its cross-border terrorism against India," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement. "We have been able to get a substantial foothold in Batalik, Dras and some parts of Mushkoh sectors," army spokesman Brig. Mohan Bhandari told reporters in New Delhi. "In the Batalik sector, we have cleared five heights {of infiltrators} and a similar number of heights in Dras and Mushkoh." (LAT, p. A9)

The story also reported the return of a downed Indian pilot back to India. The pilot, Nachiketa told the press, “I would like to go and fight as soon as I can.” In the meanwhile, U.S. president Bill Clinton sent a letter to the Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif asking him to defuse the situation on the border. Both countries were trying to settle on a proposal to hold peace talks, while Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz said Pakistan had offered to hold peace talks, India said it would reply soon.

The subject of the next report on June 10, 1999 was the heavy-handedness of India and Pakistan’s forces in Kashmir, and the resulting violence and disillusionment of the Kashmiri people. The story reported:

Nine years of guerrilla war--fueled by the grand designs of Indian and Pakistani leaders--have left thousands of Kashmiris dead, hundreds vanished and countless others scarred by rape and torture. While Indian soldiers and Pakistani-backed fighters mount an ever more desperate battle to claim this mountain region, more Kashmiris say they feel stuck between the two. "We have two Gods," said Ghulam Pala, who owns one of the numerous floating hotels on Srinagar's fabled Dal Lake. "When we go with one, the other causes problems for us." Pala, 55, tells a tale familiar to many Kashmiris: He supported the guerrilla war against Indian rule when it broke out in 1990, even though the fighting sapped his hotel business. To make ends meet, he sold his wife's gold jewelry piece by piece. (Filkins, p. 4)
Another businessman reported sending a son to fight against the Indians, saying, “I gave one son to the nation, he never returned. No more now.” The story reported on the alleged rampant human rights abuses of the Indian army, the insurgents from Pakistan and the long, violent struggle between the two opposing forces. After a long battle, the LAT reported that India had managed to forcibly keep Kashmir with it, and the people were tired of fighting both sides, just wanting the fight to end. Mohammed Akbar, a village head reported that both nations had demanded fighters for their cause, but the Kashmiris had had enough, saying, “No one wants to lose any more sons.” In a related report, India reported torture of some of its captured soldiers before it killed them, India referred to it as “barbarous medievalism.” Due to these events, Indians protested as Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz came to India for peace talks, warning him to go back.

In a story on June 17, 1999, Gen. Pervez Musharraf tacitly acknowledged the involvement of Pakistan’s soldiers in the conflict. Pakistan said it always had to be well-prepared for India’s intense artillery and air attacks. Pakistani brigadier Rashid Quereshi reported, “The threat is real, we are taking appropriate measures to defend ourselves. We have also made the decision to occupy posts on the Line of Control that did not exist before. If we didn’t occupy those posts, the Indians would have occupied them.” In the meanwhile, Clinton was trying to intervene with both countries and trying to get them to de-escalate the conflict. A western diplomat noted, “It’s a very dangerous situation.”
India soon released a tape of a Pakistani army commander speaking to Gen Pervez Musharraf, the chief of the Pakistan army, the details of which were reported as follows:

A transcript of the conversation is replete with evidence indicating the grip of the armed forces over both civilian politicians in Pakistan and the Kashmir “freedom fighters.” In one conversation, Azizuddin tells Musharaf of an exchange in which an advisor to the prime minister expressed concern that the Islamic militants in the Kargil operation might force an escalation of the war. “We made clear,” said Azizuddin, “that there need be no such fear, since we have them by the scruff of the neck, and that whenever desired, we can regulate the situation.” (Harrison, p. 5)

The story also noted that the western countries and funding agencies like the International Monetary Fund should hold Pakistan accountable and stop aid to it until it stopped its “reckless conflict” with India. The money, it was noted would most likely be routed to Islamic fundamentalists. The stoppage of aid, the story noted would be the perfect leverage to stop the conflict from Pakistan’s side, which would effectively stop it altogether.

The LAT reported on July 1, 1999 that Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said his patience was “wearing thin” about the intrusions and that India would probably strike across the border if the intrusions did not stop. Niaz Naik, a Pakistani envoy who held a meeting with Indian diplomats on June 30, 1999 reported that Pakistan had presented a timeline of withdrawal of the intruders to India. Naik hoped that India would respond quickly and “set the ball rolling.” India also said it wished to give diplomacy a chance.
On July 5, 1999, the White House reported that Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif would take “concrete steps” over the issue and seek a withdrawal soon. Sharif, after requesting a meeting with Bill Clinton, stated in a joint press release with Clinton that he would initiate negotiations soon. A group of Mujahideen however, refused to back down from Kashmir. A leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a right-wing group of Pakistan, Hafiz Mohammed Saeed said, “Pakistan may withdraw, but the holy warriors will not withdraw.” In Kashmir, India noted that it had captured a vital peak called Tiger Hill, a critical vantage point for controlling the Leh-Srinagar highway leading from the lower regions of Kashmir to the higher region of Ladakh. Pakistan hoped the peace process would begin soon, and Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee also agreed to hold peace talks. The next day however, India reported a rise in artillery fire and reported it was retaliating with equal force. A Pakistani soldier said, “I doubt very much that Sharif can survive,” he said. "He will have to defy Clinton or face the wrath of the nation. We will not withdraw, we are not on the Indian side of the border."

On July 10, 1999, the LAT reported that the de-escalation by Pakistan would be problematic since the Mujahideen would not withdraw without the command of religious leaders. A fighter said, “We do not obey the government--only our religious leaders." Pakistan reported it was having meetings with the fighters’ leaders, while the world was worried the delay would cause further escalation of the war:

The refusal of the militants to withdraw from the Kargil area is complicating efforts to end the fighting, which began in early May when Pakistani-backed forces crossed the border and seized positions along a vital Indian highway. Hundreds of people have died on both sides, and the fighting has raised fears that
the two nations, which tested nuclear weapons last year, will stumble into a wider war. (Filkins, p. 5)

Unnamed U.S. defense analysts reported that the Mujahideen would not survive for long without the help of the government, while a Pakistani columnist noted, “Sharif encouraged the militants and the fundamentalists. I don’t think they can overthrow the government, but if they create chaos and divide the establishment, they could gain the upper hand.” U.S. defense analysts however, remained confident that the Mujahideen would be “finished” soon after their ammunition was over and was not resupplied. On July 17, 1999, India reported a retreat of most fighters, India’s military spokesman Col Bikram Singh reported the militants were allowed to retreat and not fired upon. With this, the conflict was reported to have ended. A minor skirmish was reported later, but remained unsubstantiated from both sides.

In the last story in the LAT on July 18, 1999, the story reported on the deep mistrust on Pakistan that had built-up in India. Indian defense minister George Fernandes reported, “It was a costly victory, victory at the expense of the blood of our soldiers.” On a similar note, a senior Indian diplomat said, “There is an immense feeling of betrayal in India, while we were extending the hand of friendship; they were planning a military operation. The Pakistanis will find that regaining trust is a lot more difficult than regaining territory.” While in Pakistan, a former army official Lt. Gen Talat Masood reported, “It was a great fiasco. This was a high risk gamble to attract the world's attention, and no one thought it through.” Both sides reported optimism that diplomacy could begin sometime later, and that the conflict, although scarring, would give way to
better diplomatic relations. This ended the coverage of the conflict by the *Los Angeles Times*.

6.9: The New York Times

The coverage of the conflict in the New York Times (NYT) began on May 22, 1999. The first news reported that India had reinforced its borders with Pakistan. Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said, “The spirit of the Lahore declaration has not evaporated and both sides are committed to it,” which referred to a well-publicized peace summit the two countries had held three months before the conflict began. The story said that Pakistani Islamic separatists were fighting with Indian armed forces.

The next news report on May 23, 1999 was a detailed coverage of the background of the Kashmir conflict and one of its crucial elements, the battle over the glacier of Siachen, an inaccessible glacier high in the Himalayas, captured by India but also claimed by Pakistan. The story covered in great detail the life of the soldiers in Siachen, the price each country was paying to have troops there, the garbage being dumped on the glacier by the soldiers, and finally, the reason why both countries had a presence there.

Barry Bearak, the author of the story reported some racial, religious criticism hurled by Indians and Pakistanis at each other:

General Budhwar, the Indian regional commander, said Pakistanis suffer from a "deformed growth," becoming brainwashed in school "with all the dos and don’ts" of Islamic fundamentalism. "Their very existence depends on being inimical to India," he said. One of his counterparts is Brig. Nusrat Khan Sial, who commands Pakistan's Siachen operation from the city of Skardu. He called the Indians "cowards" whose Hindu beliefs lack reverence for human life. He said he suspects they have used chemical weapons in Siachen, which the Indians vehemently deny. (Bearak, p. 1)
The story noted in the end that the two nations are frozen in fury at the roof of the world, locked in a battle forever.

On May 26, 1999, India reported it had begun airstrikes in Kashmir against the infiltrators. The NYT noted that the airstrikes were one of the most serious escalations in India and Pakistan’s long conflict:

The use of Indian air force jets was the most serious escalation of the conflict since both countries tested nuclear weapons in May 1998, prompting fears of a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent. It was the first time Indian Air Force jets were deployed since the fighting began along the disputed border with Pakistan in the northern Jammu-Kashmir state. (AP, p. 3)

India’s diplomats and officials however, noted there would be no crossing into the border of Pakistan. Pakistani army chief Pervez Musharraf noted however, that escalations and provocations would not be tolerated.

In the next news story on May 27, 1999, Indian airstrikes were reported to attack the militants in the captured posts on the India-Pakistan border. In a war of words, both nations stated there would be strong action against provocations:

At a military briefing, Brig. Mohan Bhandari said that the infiltrating force "consists of a large number of well-trained Afghan mercenaries and Pakistani regular army troops." Brigadier Bhandari contended that Pakistan's involvement was obvious from the extent of coordination and logistical support to sustain the operation. "Any escalation of this conflict will be entirely the responsibility of Pakistan," the brigadier warned. That elicited a defiant response from a Pakistani military spokesman, Brig. Rashid Quereshi, who said, "The Pakistan armed forces reserve the right to retaliate by whatever means are considered appropriate." Pakistan put its military on "high alert." (Bearak, p. 1)

The story reported that it was not unusual for Islamic militants to venture into Indian territory, but this was the first instance of a large-scale invasion, and such a
powerful, serious response from India involving the use of airpower. The story reported the militant separatist movement in the region that had begun since 1989. The story also said that India was bound to respond strongly to control a region it did not want to let go at any cost. In a story on the same day, India reported the loss of two fighter jets over Pakistan, an Indian Air vice Marshal said, “This is a hostile and provocative act. The other side has escalated the situation.” The story again, briefly reported on the separatist militant movement in the region, the anger over the incursion within Indians, and Pakistan’s demand for a plebiscite.

The story reported that this new conflict would also prove to be a test for Indian politicians who would have to appear tough before the people if they wished to win the elections later in 1999. According to an expert on Asia, the situation was clear for the ruling party in India:

"There has been a fundamental assault on their credibility," said George Perkovich, director of the Secure World Program at the W. Alton Jones Foundation in Charlottesville, Va. "The BJP (India’s ruling party) can't afford to lose in this confrontation -or to appear Gandhian. I don't see how they can even afford to take the high ground and negotiate. They're under intense pressure to use their military power." (Bearak, p. 3)

Some political commentators also reported that Pakistan was being too daring when it was planning to confront India through the use of Muslim separatist guerrillas and not expecting India to retaliate. The downing of another Indian helicopter by Pakistani missile further aggravated the tensions, a news story reported on May 28. India confirmed the loss, and demanded the return of the pilot. Pakistan claimed it would
imprison him as a prisoner-of-war. Pakistan also demanded a stop to the air raids and
offered peace talks, India refused to stop the airstrikes but said it was open to talks.

In a later story on May 29, India agreed to host talks with Pakistani foreign
minister Sartaj Aziz, who went to India for talks on June 4, 1999. The both countries, in
the meanwhile, reported that they would continue fighting, Pakistan continued its
incursion while India continued its airstrikes. Meanwhile, the NYT reported on the
reaction of the war in the United States for the first time. The report read:

"There is always the possibility of events spinning out of control," said Karl F.
Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs. "Clearly the
ingredients are there for miscalculation. Our hope is that both sides will take steps
to move this in a peaceful direction."

Mr. Inderfurth said in an interview that he believed that the fighting would
end only after the Muslim separatists who have entered Indian-controlled Kashmir
had left. He would not comment on the question of possible Pakistani backing for
the separatists. (Shenon, p. 3)

Other unnamed experts quoted in the interview also reported that an escalation
was unlikely but not impossible. Some experts said that since both countries now had
nuclear weapons, they would be cautious and would refrain from any further escalations.

On June 1, 1999, India and Pakistan both issued statements criticizing the other.
Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said, "When we started the bus service to
Lahore, it was to improve relations. I went as an emissary of peace. I have told the
Pakistani leadership that it seems that while I talked peace with you, you were preparing
to attack our borders. We still believe in peace, but you cannot clap with one hand."

Pakistan on the other hand, said in a statement, "We regret that India continues to
obstruct all moves aimed at peace and defusing tension at the line of control." In another
statement called “fearsome” because it came from a nuclear power, Pakistani foreign secretary Shamshad Ahmed said, “We will use any weapon in our arsenal to defend our territorial integrity.” The situation was said to be “tense” by the NYT. On another front, the NYT reported the rejection of India’s offer to withdraw by Pakistani militants, governed by the United Jihad Council, who said that Kashmir was part of their “homeland.” A day after this hostile statement, Pakistan reported the release of the imprisoned Indian pilot, Flight Lieutenant K Nachiketa, who Pakistan said was released as a sign of goodwill.

On June 6, 1999, the NYT reported the resumption of airstrikes by India after stopping them for one day for assessing the situation. India reported that it had sent the bodies of three soldiers to Pakistan, while Pakistan claimed India had ambushed the soldiers on Pakistan’s side and attacked them unprovoked. An Indian defense ministry spokesman, Raminder Singh Jassal said, “The armed intruders are trained and indoctrinated people and they are giving resistance, we do not share the assessment that war is not possible.” India reported that it would root out the incursion and had decided to target the positions with more force. Indian defense minister George Fernandes said, “Our sole aim is to drive out the infiltrators, dead or alive from Indian soil.” Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the other hand, said that if Pakistan used the conflict as leverage to discuss the Kashmir situation as a whole, he said, “The proposed talks will be over even before they begin. The subject is one and one alone: the intrusion, and how Pakistan proposes to undo it.”
In a news brief on June 12, 1999, the NYT reported on the alleged mutilation of Indian soldiers’ bodies by Pakistan, a charge Pakistan denied and taunted India for, saying, “No army would mutilate dead bodies and then return them to an enemy as wily as the Indians,” India also protested the issue during the talks held between Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz and Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh. India denied all of Pakistan’s contentions, including the one that the delineated border was “unclear,” and that India should stop the fighting and negotiate for the redrawing of the border. The talks were “frosty and tense”, the NYT reported. According to the NYT, the talks were further derailed by the large-scale protests against Sartaj Aziz in New Delhi and Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh’s statement to the media later, "I think it (the alleged mutilation of Indian soldiers’ bodies is a reversion to barbarous medievalism," he said, "I feel outraged, I feel personally violated that the dignity of the Indian soldier has been subjected to this."

The NYT reported the capture of a crucial peak, Tololing, by the Indian armed forces on June 13, 1999, an Indian army major reported, “Indian forces have physically occupied Tololing.” On the diplomatic front, Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee criticized the Pakistanis for their covert operation in Kashmir, “We wanted friendship with Pakistan, but we got enmity. Our territory has been captured, our land shelled and our people rendered homeless. We won't let Pakistan impose its design on our country, we want peace, but at the same time keep ourselves prepared for war.” Indian army spokesmen again criticized Pakistan for backing a mixed force of Afghan mercenaries
and regular soldiers in Kashmir, Pakistan again framed the operation an “indigenous rebellion.”

On June 16, 1999, the NYT performed an analysis of the Islamic plot to capture Kashmir. In a story titled “Kashmir militants seek Islamic state,” the NYT said:

The fierce combat raging along the mountainous border between the parts of Kashmir controlled by India and Pakistan is only the most visible face of an effort by Islamic militants to turn Kashmir into a religious state.

Militants from various countries appear to have chosen Kashmir as a prime target in their campaign to bring the world's Muslim regions under religious rule. The campaign is in part a legacy of the proxy war that the United States waged against Soviet forces in Afghanistan during the 1980's. (Kinzer, p. 8)

The story reported that the current conflict was a result of the training of Islamic Mujahideen by the United States, before they turned back onto the United States as anti-Islamic infidels. Indian officers too, blamed the United States’ intervention in Afghanistan for strengthening the militants:

Indian officers involved in the current fighting agree. "The militants are using not only small arms that they got from the Americans, but also Stinger missiles and American anti-tank weapons," said one officer, Col. Hemant Desai. "It's not only weapons, but also battle-hardened troops. It's a direct result of the American policy in Afghanistan." (Kinzer, p. 8)

The story also blamed heavy-handed tactics by India, saying it dominated and subdued the discontent within Kashmir, an Indian journalist Surinder Oberoi said, "People here feel very happy when Indian soldiers are dead. When three aircraft were downed, it was literally like a celebration. People were congratulating each other. Now I see another round of violence if the Government of India continues with this rigid policy. It's extremely dangerous in the long run." The report concluded that this mix of Indian
heavy-handedness and Islamic militancy were making Kashmir a volatile environment.

Finally, the NYT reported that the addition of nuclear weapons to this already explosive mix was dangerous:

> Radicals have warned women to wear modest clothing. In at least three cases in the last year, they have shot in the feet women who refused to stop wearing jeans. The combination of Islamic fighters in the mountains and fundamentalist pressures in towns and villages is not all that makes the Kashmir crisis explosive. India and Pakistan are the world's newest declared nuclear powers, and although both have pledged not to use nuclear weapons in this dispute, the prospect lends an apocalyptic air to the recent fighting. (Kinzer, p. 8)

In conclusion, General Joszef Bali, a UN peacekeeping envoy reported, “Here, where there is a great imbalance of conventional forces, the nuclear threshold may be very low. The big powers can’t afford to sit back and let this situation play out.”

In a review on June 20, 1999, the NYT reported that the latest battle between Islamic militants and Indian armed forces was a troubling chapter in the modern history of these countries. Summing up the explosive religious fervor within Pakistan, the NYT reported:

> Some powerful Pakistanis believe that Kashmir represents the unfinished agenda of the 1947 partition. Others see war here as a way to punish India for its support of Pakistani rebels who succeeded in separating Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. But the real fire behind the current conflict is the desire of Islamic militants to wrest control of what they consider a Muslim land from the control of infidels. Many of them fought in Afghanistan; some are loyal to the anti-Western Muslim fundamentalist Osama bin Laden. (Kinzer, p. 5)

In addition, the NYT reported the mistrust for both countries in the Kashmiri people’s minds, and said that Pakistan’s rising fundamentalism and India’s increasing dominance were both disastrous. Finally, the report concluded that China too was worried
with the situation since Kashmir bordered with the western border of China, where Islamic fundamentalism was on the rise, and the Kashmir and Pakistan link threatened to provide a corridor to that terror to spread into China. In an editorial speaking on the same lines, the NYT blamed the provocation by Pakistan by allowing Islamic militants to invade Indian territory, and warned that this was a dangerous escalation in Kashmir at a time when the suspicion between the two countries was high due to the recently conducted nuclear tests.

On June 28, 1999, it was reported that a secret meeting had been held between Indian and Pakistani officials, and that some disgruntled Indian officials had leaked the news to the press. The NYT reported about the alleged secret negotiations:

In Islamabad, Zamir Akram, a senior official in the Foreign Ministry, denied that any message had been sent at all. "This is Mr. Naik's private visit and it has nothing to do with Pakistan's foreign policy," he told reporters. Mr. Naik himself said: "It's all speculation. There was no secret visit."

And so it goes with these bitter adversaries -- the world's two newest nuclear powers -- their versions of reality during the conflict evolving with barely any overlap. (Bearak, p. 4)

The story reported the rising impatience within the two countries and the irritation of both countries’ officials when quizzed about the conflict. The story reported that both nations’ press reports ranged from “swagger to well-practiced restraint,” quoting Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s strong words of “no secret deals with Pakistan” as an example. The story reported that Pakistan was economically spent, and that a freezing of international aid would bring them to the negotiation table and save their economy which was already “limping along.”
On July 1, 1999, the NYT once again reported on the alleged secret negotiations happening between India. While Niaz Naik, a Pakistani envoy to India, reported progress on the issue, Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh said it was “wishful thinking.” On the other hand, a Pakistani spokesman retaliated India’s call to withdraw by saying, “Withdraw from where?”

In a later story on July 4, 1999, the NYT reported the “loss of trust” the conflict had created about Pakistan, in India and elsewhere, a U.S. defense analyst from the Stimson Center in Washington said, “No one believes Pakistan’s cover story.” While the problem of religious differences was the main difference cited by the story as the reason for the conflict, a former Indian army officer Lt Gen Satish Nambiar said that it was also a territorial conflict with a religious background. The Kashmir region’s Muslim majority and its claim by Muslim Mujahideen was a major cause of concern for the Indians, and the reason why peace was never an option between India and Pakistan. According to the story, the backlash from religious groups was mainly what both countries’ leaders faced if they deescalated and showed a lack of bravery in dealing with the other:

Retired Lieut. Gen. Javed Nasir, a former director of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Agency, wrote in a newspaper column on Sunday that General Musharraf is "a gift from Allah" and warned that the Prime Minister would be committing "political Harakiri" if he agreed to have the Kargil area vacated. Pakistan and India say they will seek a peaceful solution, but are ready for all out war. Mr. Vajpayee faces a national election in September and whose Government has been criticized for India's failure to foresee the enemy's strategy, needs a victory before the snows of September and October make further military maneuvers more difficult. (Dugger & Bearak, p. 3)
On July 5, 1999, the NYT reported that Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif and U.S. president Bill Clinton had held a meeting about the issue, and that Sharif had assured he would take “concrete steps” to resolve the issue. The White House said it had no further information about what the exact steps would be, and how they would be implemented. The NYT reported that Sharif faced a tough task convincing the Army, which was powerful in Pakistan. The story also noted the likely opposition of the militant Islamic groups which were so popular within the country. Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was updated about the meeting constantly through telephone. In Kashmir, India reported recapture of Tiger Hill, a major peak near the highway connecting the lower and higher regions of Kashmir.

On July 6, 1999, in a story about a village in the Pakistan lying on the border, the NYT reported the hate which was spreading about the United States and India and Hindus within Pakistani villages. Through interviews with villagers and village elders, the story underlined the discontent about Kashmir and India in Muslim minds within Pakistan. While in Islamabad, the deal offered by Sharif was called a “hard sell.” Islamic groups and some factions of the army reported the deal as a sellout. One of the right-wing parties, the Jamaat-e-Islami party remarked that the deal was a “betrayal.” The NYT called Nawaz Sharif’s task of trying to withdraw akin to hitting a “nest of hornets.” The United Jihad Council, an umbrella organization of the militant groups, refused to back down. Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the army chief said, “We will ask the militants to leave their bunkers, it is to be seen what will be their reply.”
In an editorial on July 7, 1999, the NYT called the conflict in Kashmir a badly miscalculated move by Pakistan since both countries were now nuclear powers. It criticized the support Pakistan provided to Islamic groups. The editorial feared that a withdraw would spark protests Islamists who were bent on conquering Kashmir, and that it would probably push Pakistan into further turmoil. The NYT said Pakistan’s narrative of “moral support” to the Mujahideen was quite hard to believe, and that it had selected the wrong way to highlight the plight of Kashmir for the world to see. While Pakistan aimed to highlight the issue, what ultimately happened was a shameful withdrawal and a possible angering of the Pakistan army and Islamic militants within the country.

In a news report on July 7, 1999, the NYT reported the tough resistance Sharif’s call for withdrawal was getting in Pakistan:

Three days after Pakistan's Prime Minister assured American diplomats that he would seek the withdrawal of Muslim guerrillas from the Indian-held part of Kashmir, no pullback has taken place. Pakistan's Foreign Minister expressed doubts about whether the Government would be able to persuade the men to leave.

The leader of an umbrella organization that represents more than a dozen of the militant groups that say they are fighting in Kashmir vowed today that they would battle on "until the last drop of our blood." Sayed Saluhuddin, head of the United Jihad Council, said at a news conference in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's promise to encourage their withdrawal was "tantamount to stabbing the movement in the back." And Pakistani opposition political parties, fundamentalist groups and retired army officials continued to criticize harshly a deal that they said had undercut militants who were widely regarded in Pakistan as heroic freedom fighters. (Dugger, p. 9)

Most other organizations, including some Pakistan army officers and citizens also called the withdrawal a sellout and a betrayal of an Islamic cause.
To underline the religious importance of the conflict, the NYT covered the burial ceremony of five “martyrs” in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir, or Azad Kashmir as it is called:

The funeral in Muzaffarabad itself seemed a flat rejection of Mr. Sharif’s proposal. "We started the holy war based on our trust in God, not the Governments of Pakistan or the United States," said Ahmed Hamza of Al-Badr Mujahedeen, addressing the crowd. Five of the coffins rested on the ground together. The dead belonged to the group Tehrik-e-Jihad. Dozens of its soldiers in camouflage fatigues and headscarves marched with precision. Before any prayers were recited, speeches were made, amplified through a sound truck. Mourning was secondary to exhortation. "By the will of Allah, we will start dozens of Kargils," said Saleem Wani, a leader of the Tehrik-e-Jihad. A chant began in response, “God is Great!” (Bearak, p. 1)

On July 12, 1999 however, the Indians reported a withdrawal from the infiltrators, and stated that aerial surveillance showed that the fighters were withdrawing. Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz said, “A disengagement of Muslim militants is under way.” Indian army officials in the meanwhile noted that the militants were allowed to retreat, saying, “The Indian army does not have a tradition of shooting at the backs of the enemy.” Pakistan said India was lying about its victories, and had suffered huge casualties. The United Jihad Council denounced the Pakistani decision to withdraw, and said in a statement, “The Mujahideen are perfectly capable of taking their own decisions. Sharif need not claim responsibility for us. We will not withdraw.”

In an editorial on July 18, 1999, the NYT reported that Pakistan’s support to fundamentalism had finally led to a blowback which ended in its shameful defeat at Kargil:
By intervening in India, Pakistan was widely condemned. By retreating, Pakistan has invited internal instability as religious fundamentalists, army dissidents and others mobilize against Mr. Sharif's regime. It is an old story. Back in the 1970's, Pakistan first began encouraging Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas in Afghanistan in retaliation for Afghan support for insurgents in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. After the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, the Central Intelligence Agency and Saudi Arabia joined with Pakistan to support the rebels, eventually pushing the Russians out. The Afghan war helped bring down the Soviet Union. It also led Osama bin Laden, who fought with the Afghan rebels, and his allies to use Afghanistan as a base from which to wage terrorism around the world. Some of these rebels are said to be operating in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-dominated state. (Weisman, p. 16)

In India too, the emotions of religion and winning a battle against its old enemy was touted to be an important and historic achievement. A story on July 18, 1999 described an Indian village’s welcome of a martyred soldier, and the chanting of slogans like, “Death to Pakistan!” Villagers like Balwan Singh Malik, said, “"When we got the news of Suresh Kumar’s martyrdom, we felt lonely. But when people came to this village from the outside world, we didn't feel lonely anymore."

On July 22, 1999, the NYT reported that some insurgents were still fighting in the Himalayas, and that India was retaliating accordingly. An Islamist group, Al-Badr reported that it had fighters there. In another reported incident, twenty Hindus were reported killed in a Kashmir village in India, mostly by Muslim insurgents. Pakistani foreign minister Sartaj Aziz said in a parliament speech, “We demand that India undo its violations of the Line of Control it committed in 1972, 1984 and 1998 to restore trust.”

The years quoted were of the signing of the Simla Agreement agreeing on the Line of Control between the two countries, the capture of the strategically vital Siachen Glacier by India and finally the nuclear tests by India, respectively.
After the fighting finally subsided, the NYT finally reported on July 26, 1999 that India had advanced its positions against the final pocket of Islamic insurgents, and had almost captured all the occupied posts. On another note however, attacks on civilian buses, military convoys and army posts by Muslim insurgents were reported by the NYT on July 28, 1999. That story was the last story about the conflict covered by the New York Times.

6.10: The Washington Post

The first report of the 1999 India-Pakistan conflict in the Washington Post (Post) was reported on May 26, 1999. The story reported Indian airstrikes on “Muslim invaders” which had occupied posts on the Indian side of the border. The airstrikes led Pakistan to alert its military and say in a statement that the situation was “very, very serious.” India alleged that Pakistani soldiers and Muslim militants were present on the peaks for the occupation, while Pakistan said this was “rubbish.” Pakistan said it had always made clear it provided only moral support to the “freedom fighters” and had not actively supported them. The international community including the United States and the European Union said the situation as serious and requested both countries to exercise restraint. The Post reported that although the rhetoric was heated, it was unlikely that both countries would escalate the conflict any further.

On May 28, 1999, the Post reported that there was global alarm over the shooting down of two Indian fighter jets by Pakistani missiles. Both India and Pakistan blamed each other for escalating the tensions:
In Islamabad, Pakistani Information Minister Mushahid Hussain said: "This is a threat to peace and regional stability. Kashmir has been the natural flash point" between India and Pakistan, "and now it has the potential to become a nuclear flash point as well."

India's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "the present situation has been created entirely because of Pakistan's provocative activities. Pakistan should realize that such foolhardy ventures against India will not succeed." But India's national security adviser, Brajesh Mishra, tempered the strong remarks, saying in a television interview that "We don't think the situation will escalate into a general war. There's no need for any panic at all. When we went in for airstrikes, we went in knowing that there could be damage to our aircraft." (Constable, p. A1)

However, both countries denied defying each other’s borders, and said that they were well within their own borders. The Post said this was the most serious escalation in a simmering conflict between Indian armed forces and Islamic militants. The Post said that the United States was intervening, but Washington officials had not directly intervened with either country.

On May 29, 1999, the Post reported a reporter’s tour Pakistan had conducted for the media to the wreckage of the MiG aircraft that had crashed and killed Indian pilot Ajay Ahuja. The military spokesman present said, “The facts you see here vindicate our claims. India definitely has ill and nefarious designs, India might seek to commit genocide against the Kashmiri people or attempt to retake the Siachen region.” The Post erroneously reported that Siachen was briefly occupied by India in 1984, whereas it has been occupied constantly by India and has resisted Pakistani attempts at capture since 1984. The report also said that the captured Indian pilot was being treated as a guest according to Islamic tradition. The news also reported on the celebration of what the Post
called, “Allah is great day” which Pakistan had celebrated for its first anniversary of conducting nuclear tests in quick succession to India’s tests.

On May 30, 1999, the Post reported that both India and Pakistan were involved in “brinkmanship” in Kashmir, trying to prove who could instigate the other to make bold moves:

While making proper noises about the need for restraint and dialogue, government officials here can hardly contain their glee over India and Pakistan coming the closest in nearly two decades to clashing militarily over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

In the Pakistanis' triumphant assessment of this past week's developments, the renewed conflict has embarrassed their larger and more powerful neighbor into overreacting against a handful of "freedom fighters" inside Indian Kashmir. It also has exposed India as a territorial aggressor after two of its military jets were shot down several miles inside Pakistani Kashmir and focused world attention on an issue for which Pakistan has long demanded international mediation.

The Post said that the Pakistan army and Mujahideen, acting in self-interest, were trying to fan the flames of a conflict to showcase their importance, and bring the Kashmir issue to the fore during India and Pakistan negotiations. The Post reported that a stable government and a nuclear deterrent would probably bring both countries to the negotiation table, and the position of the army would be jeopardized. Even in India, the Post reported, the caretaker government soon to face elections would have to show the people that they were being “tough” with the nation’s enemies. The Post underscored the need for both countries to negotiate because it claimed that the stakes of an escalated conflict were intolerably high. In an editorial on May 30, 1999, the Post carried a similar
message, blaming both India and Pakistan for not understanding “the rules of the nuclear game”:

Yet here are India and Pakistan flexing their power in a raw border clash as though their respective tests had never altered the nuclear equation holding between them. Pakistan continues irresponsibly to stoke insurgents in the part of Kashmir it does not control. India continues to deny self-determination to the people of Kashmir, choosing instead to pursue a policy of hegemony in the Asian subcontinent. On the evidence of the latest trouble, neither party has thought through its new obligations for acting in ways, in diplomacy and in military affairs as well, that lead away from nuclear confrontation, not toward it. Their wars and the wasted periods between them were always painfully costly to the two of them. Another war now could widen the zone of danger. Both India and Pakistan are new at the nuclear game. (Editorial, p. B6)

The editorial also said that like the United States which learned restraint during the Cuban Missile crisis, India and Pakistan had to learn their lesson in a much more complicated world.

On May 31, 1999, the Post reported that the Indian armed forces were able to push intruders back towards Pakistan to some extent. While airstrikes continued, Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was also contacted by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who offered UN mediation for the conflict. Vajpayee declined the offer. Indian national security adviser Brajesh Mishra said, “When other countries ask us to exercise restraint, we tell them: Please go and tell Pakistan to undo what it has done.” India contended that since it was the country under attack, Pakistan was the one who would step back first. On June 3, 1999, the Post reported that Pakistani Islamic militants had reportedly spurned India’s offer to retreat from their mountain safely. On June 4, 1999,
Lashkar-e-Taiba reportedly sent Afghan mercenaries to Kashmir for fighting, according to the Post.

On June 6, 1999, the Post described the infiltration of Kashmir through interviews with Muslim militant organizations. The story described the burial of a dead Mujahideen, and the discontent and anger among youth in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK), and their urge to join the battle against India. A shopkeeper, Mohamed Amir, said, “Freedom is our right, and we will fight for it, no one is too old for that.” A legislator from the area also reported similar demands from local youth. While describing the fundamentalist training the youth received, the Post reported:

About a hundred miles away, in a nondescript house in Islamabad, officials of one Kashmiri militant group, Lashkar-e-Tayyba, described how the group has been recruiting teenagers from Indian Kashmir, providing them with military and religious training in clandestine camps in Pakistan and sending them back over the border to fight.

They described the infiltration of Kargil, which required months of extra high-altitude training, as the most ambitious operation since the insurgency began a decade ago. They said their men were hunkered in mountain caves, largely impervious to Indian airstrikes but frequently suffering from frostbite. "We have been planning since last year, and we started when the snow began to melt" in early April, said Abdullah Muntazir, 23, a spokesman for Lashkar, one of four rebel groups that claim to be operating inside Indian Kashmir. Lashkar is affiliated with a radical Muslim organization that has been labeled a terrorist group by the State Department.

Muntazir insisted that Pakistan has not provided their weapons -- which include shoulder-fired missiles and antiaircraft guns -- and said they all had been captured from the Indian army or Soviet forces in Afghanistan. (Constable, p. A17)

The article described the recruitment process, and concluded that fundamentalism was helping convert anger into violence in Kashmir.
In a story reporting on similar lines, the *Post* described the rallying effect of Kashmir on the Pakistani people, who were otherwise not too happy about their government. The story described through quotes from ordinary citizens and civil activists, the apathy prevailing within the Pakistani government about public welfare. Despite of the other complaints the people had about the government, the story described how Kashmir was one cause when the differences between the government and the people no longer mattered. Shahed Raheed, a vendor, said, “In this one thing, Kashmir, we are behind the government 100 percent. But in everything else, our thinking about Pakistan is negative. Our leaders are indifferent, our democracy is not working, and our economy is in trouble. We are waiting for a miracle.” The story also reported how the rest of the issues related to daily life divided the Pakistani people and its government, but the “liberation” of Kashmir was one point of unity for the government, a worrying trend according to civil society activists quoted in the story.

On June 12, 1999, the *Post* reported on a press conference held by the Indian army which presented “conclusive evidence” about the presence of the Pakistani army in the Kashmir conflict. The Indian government also accused Pakistan of mutilating the bodies of dead Indian soldiers before returning them, an act that Indian Minister for external affairs Jaswant Singh called “barbaric.” Col Bikram Singh, an army spokesman presented the tapes supposed to prove the Pakistani army’s participation in the conflict, but the tapes, the *Post* reported, were “semi-audible.” Pakistan, in the meanwhile, denied both allegations of mutilation and army involvement, Mushahid Husain, Pakistani
information minister said, “"This is absolutely baseless, it's a point-scoring exercise on the eve of the talks and a media psy-war to shore up the sagging morale of the Indian army, which everyone knows has suffered serious reversals since mid-May in Kashmir." U.S. diplomats in both countries however, expressed concern that these new accusations might further jeopardize the talks between the two countries which were to be held soon after.

As expected by the United States, the talks between India and Pakistan failed on June 12, 1999. While Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh expressed that Pakistan was the one who could de-escalate the conflict, while Sartaj Aziz, his Pakistani counterpart, said that he did not know where the fighters came from, who they were being equipped and supplied by, and framed it an indigenous rebellion. He also said there was no power struggle between the army and civilian government in Pakistan which would give rise to an unauthorized invasion. Aziz said this conflict was the long freedom struggle of Kashmir which was taking an extreme, violent turn. After the meeting, Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee reported that his patience was “wearing thin,” and though he wanted peace, he feared war would be thrust upon India. Aziz too, replied in a similar manner to Vajpayee’s statement, “In sum, we want peace, but if war is imposed on us we have the capability to defend ourselves and our vital national interests."

In an op-ed on June 14, 1999, the Post endorsed India’s version of the invasion of Kashmir by saying: “In the current confrontation, there is good evidence that Pakistan supported the infiltration of heavily armed fighters into the remote and sparsely populated
area just north of the Srinagar-Leh road. It apparently hoped to focus the attention of the world on Kashmir and to force movement toward the plebiscite directed by the U.N. resolutions of 50 years ago.” The op-ed also claimed that both countries and its leaders privately realized the need for Kashmir’s self-determination, but were reluctant to touch it since it was politically unfeasible. Armies in both countries moreover, would oppose the move strongly. The op-ed concluded that the foreseeable situation for Kashmir was an “indefinite freeze.”

On June 21, the Post reported on the ill-effects of the conflict on the Indian side of Kashmir. The story reported a decline in tourism, the impact it had on the many traders that were part of the region, and the severe economic losses of the tourism industry. In a quote, Abdul Samid Kotroo, president of the houseboat owners association in Srinagar said, “"It was sort of like a dream. For a few weeks, after nine or 10 years, we suddenly had heaps of tourists; some of them couldn't even find rooms. Then Kargil came and suddenly they were gone again. For a little while I thought Almighty God had forgiven us for our sins, but now I don't know. We must pray for him to restore peace, or no tourists will come." The story also outlined the alleged abuse of Kashmiri youth by the Indian army, and the indiscriminate violence the army perpetrated on the people.

The story on June 24, 1999 reported that India was near victory and that Pakistan’s credibility in the world had been damaged due to its covert support to Islamic militants. However, the story reported that there were religious and political pressures in both countries which could force them to “raise the ante”:
Some analysts here in India, however, say they are still concerned that the Kargil conflict could spiral into a major conventional conflict. Indian military officials, frustrated by the difficult terrain and mounting casualty rate, are reportedly considering an attack at another point on the long Line of Control. And on Tuesday, Indian officials said for the first time that if "national interests" are threatened, they would not rule out sending military forces across the line – although Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared today that "we do not intend to cross the Line of Control." Conversely, as Pakistani military officials see their fighters steadily losing ground, they might decide to raise the ante rather than face domestic humiliation. The dispute over Kashmir is an obsessive cause among Pakistan's armed forces, which have long wielded considerable political power at home and have never forgiven India for trying to seize land along the Line of Control in 1972 and 1984. (Constable, p. A21)

Within Pakistan, it was the Mujahideen and fundamentalists who were touted as potential troublemakers pushing for escalation. The situation was still considered volatile by the U.S. diplomats and defense analysts interviewed by the Post. In a following story, Pakistani officials accused India of nibbling and gobbling on the border and warned that Pakistan would be ready “for all eventualities.”

Pakistan however, was soon reported cornered on the international front, since the United States and Great Britain criticized it for escalating a conflict just three months after a landmark peace summit in Lahore three months ago in February 1999. The United States threatened to reconsider the $100 million loan to Pakistan due from the International Monetary Fund. U.S. officials Karl Inderfurth, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright both expressed that Pakistan had needlessly escalated the conflict. The United States and India, both were reportedly worried about the radicalization of the region:

U.S. officials also share India's concern that Pakistan's top military officers are attempting to export into Kashmir the same type of rigid Islamic orthodoxy imposed on Afghanistan by the Pakistan-backed Taliban militia. Mohammad Aziz, chief of the general staff, and Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army staff chief,
"have spent their careers supporting one mujaheddin movement after another," one senior official said. Their appointments in a recent military shake-up "raise serious questions about the long-term direction of the Pakistani state," the official said.

"We don't want the Talibanization of Kashmir," said Indian Ambassador Naresh Chandra, "but if you use these guys as guest terrorists of the Pakistani army, what would be the consequences?" (Lippman, p. A26)

The story reported that Pakistan was under growing pressure to negotiate, while India stepped up attacks against the infiltrators, and maintained that it would continue the airstrikes until the infiltrators were driven out.

In an editorial on June 28, 1999, the Post again blamed the Pakistanis for their reckless escalation and for supporting Islamic militants in Kashmir. The editorial noted that India was justified in using military power, and Pakistan was now in a tight corner diplomatically and militarily. The editorial said that Pakistan needed more restraint and skill in highlighting its diplomacy on Kashmir, and India too, needed to change its posture on the issue of Kashmir to keep hopes of lasting peace in South Asia alive.

In the next two stories, the Post described India’s efforts at recapturing mountain peaks occupied by the infiltrators. The Post described the harsh terrain, the rough weather and the firing Indian soldiers went through to capture the terrain. In the last week of June 1999, India stepped up its airstrikes and severely bombarded the occupied peaks. On July 2, 1999, India reported it was near capturing a key peak, Tiger Hill. The infiltrators were being driven back “inch by inch,” an Indian military official said.

On July 5, 1999, the Post reported that in a hurried meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton, Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif had agreed to take concrete steps to deescale the conflict. The White House reported that it did not have too many details,
but it reported that Sharif would speak to other political stakeholders in Pakistan and manage a withdrawal from India. Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the meanwhile was reportedly being kept abreast of the developments. India remained skeptical of Pakistan’s withdrawal. U.S. diplomats also believed that the “fundamentalists” would not allow Sharif to de-escalate from Kashmir, since it was a matter of “pride” for them. On the battlefront, India reported capture of Tiger Hill, the peak it had said was vital for reinitiating supply routes from Srinagar to Kargil, the main battleground.

On July 6, 1999, the Post reported on the domestic pressures for both countries to stop fighting in Kashmir. However, the story reported that Pakistan’s negotiation with the United States had now internationalized the issue, something India did not want. However, this intervention also was expected to show results, since Sharif had never spoken of taking steps to de-escalate. The story underscored the importance of the United States’ mediation of the issue, even though India never came to the negotiating table.

The Post reported on July 8, 1999 that Pakistani militants had denied withdrawal from Kashmir. The United Jihad Council, an umbrella body of jihadist organizations, had held a press conference and announced their joint decision:

At a lengthy news conference, the normally reclusive militant leaders said they still control 11 square miles of mountainous territory on the Indian side of the border dividing Kashmir and that they intend to remain there until September, when winter sets in. They denied receiving any direct support from the Pakistani army, as India has repeatedly claimed, and they said they had inflicted more than 700 casualties on Indian forces over the past six weeks.

"We will not even think of withdrawing. We will continue to the last drop of our blood, until every holy inch of Kashmir has been liberated from Indian occupation," said Syed Salahuddin, leader of the United Jihad Council and chief
spokesman for the rebel groups. "We will not allow an international conspiracy to hijack our movement." (Constable, p. A19)

United States and Pakistani officials reported that it was expected, and that it now rested on Sharif on how he dealt with the crisis. The Post also reported that although the militants would probably end the fight after they were not resupplied, it could still threaten Sharif and his position in government, and threaten fundamentalism-induced turmoil in Pakistan, supported and backed by the Pakistan army, a powerful force within Pakistani politics.

On July 10, 1999, the news story reported the support of the Pakistani army to withdraw from Kashmir, which many Pakistani defense analysts believed, was a “stalemate” for the fundamentalists. The United States and Pakistani defense analysts believed that without the strong economic and military support of the army, it was almost impossible for the fundamentalists to continue their fight in such harsh conditions. However, the Post also reported that popular resentment in Pakistan, which had grown due to the Sharif-Clinton meeting and Sharif’s eventual “sellout”, would also strengthen fundamentalists. Public meetings were already being convened decrying Sharif’s decision to stop the fighting. The Post reported concerns among political observers in Pakistan that this de-escalation would eventually destabilize the government and bring in one more term of military rule.

In tune with the concerns mentioned in the earlier story, the Post reported that in Pakistan, a ready group of fundamentalists was awaiting its chance to gain martyrdom, as they called it. The Post reported that organizations like the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the
Lashkar-e-Taiba were determined to train youth for terrorist activities, and that the liberation of Kashmir was an important mission for many Pakistani youth. Sayed Muskeen Shah, who “gave” his son to the struggle for the “liberation” of Kashmir, said, “It is the aim of our life to struggle for freedom. We will happily continue to sacrifice for it, and we will never accept any agreement that does not include the wishes of the people of Kashmir." Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, head of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, said, “"In a guerrilla war, you adopt whatever strategy bears fruit. The Indians have now sent five brigades to Kargil and sustained heavy losses, and that has made our movement much easier in other areas of Kashmir. The struggle in the valley is not separate from Kargil, it will intensify because of Kargil."

On July 17, 1999, the Post reported on the concern within the United States and NATO that its “monopoly” on nuclear weapons was slowly being challenged by unlikely contenders. Although India and Pakistan were not on the “nations of concern” list of the United States, unnamed U.S. officials at the White House and defense analysts at the Stimson Center and the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C. expressed concern over the “losing battle” of arms control. The report expressed concern that countries like India and Pakistan would use nuclear weapons in a conflict, and would seriously undermine the curtailment guaranteed by so many efforts.

On July 17, 1999, the Post reported the slow retreat of the fighters on the Pakistani side. Indian jets were reportedly monitoring the withdrawal. However, diplomats, defense analysts and government officials from the United States and India
interviewed for the story expressed skepticism over the resumption of peace talks between India and Pakistan. Some also expressed a lack of trust of any commitment being honored by Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif expressed his desire to “give a chance to diplomacy,” Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee however, replied that it was Pakistan’s turn to prove its worthiness for negotiations. The Post reported that there was wide mistrust and skepticism about Pakistan especially since the Mujahideen and other “fundamentalists” had not yet agreed to withdraw, while some had actually vowed to continue the conflict.

In the reports from July 18-22, 1999, the Post reported the official declaration by India that the operation had ended from its side, resulting in victory and recapture of all lost positions. In Pakistan, prime minister Nawaz Sharif faced protests from the Mujahideen and demanded his resignation, while some accused him of betraying Islam. In the United States however, the CIA and the armed forces revealed that India had actually been amassing its armed forces on another war front with Pakistan on the border of Rajasthan. While Indian ambassador to the United States called it precautionary, U.S. officials reported that the crisis had been defused on the brink of disaster, a claim which India rubbished.

In the final report on July 27, 1999, the Post reported that Islamic militants had killed twenty people in the Kashmir valley, and reported that there were concerns that the battle was once again shifting from open warfare to the pre-existing terrorism which was present in Kashmir from 1989. The Post reported India’s heavy-handed tactics in
Kashmir, the participation of Kashmiri youth in extremist activities, and the stronger repression of protests done by the Indian army. The Post reported that both India and Pakistan had held Pakistan in a grip which was proving to be deadly and fatal for its subjects, who did not want the conflict, and who in the Post’s words, were residents of paradise caught in the crossfire.

6.11: Summary

The coverage of the Indo-Pakistan conflict in the selected U.S. media displayed a reactionary depiction of Pakistan and Islam. Within this conceptual frame, the coverage used the terms like invaders, intruders, Mujahideen and terrorists while covering them, which was akin to labeling them as aggressors. The coverage in the print news outlets, most prominently the Chicago Tribune, NYT and the Boston Globe reported that Pakistan’s establishment was allied with “fundamentalist” Islamic organizations and that they were secretly acting hand-in-hand for the “religious” conflict.

For the second frame of partisan alignment, the coverage did not explicitly align or term any country as right or wrong, but its framing of Pakistan as an invader and a disturber of territorial integrity made it align against it. Articles by Selig Harrison and other defense experts in newspapers like the WSJ, NYT and the Post repeatedly emphasized that while India was trying to aggressively capture lost territory, Pakistan was being adventurous by escalating this conflict, especially when the two countries had nuclear weapons. The defense experts quoted that Pakistan was the more capricious belligerent in the conflict, with no clear policy of when nuclear weapons would be used.
This was contrasted with India’s more responsible policy of not using nuclear weapons first. Moreover, coverage in the national newspapers reported that there was no clear answer of whether the Islamic organizations had access to the nuclear weapons Pakistan had in its arsenal. This moral evaluation of Pakistan being a seemingly treacherous, unpredictable and aggressive belligerent aligned the coverage against it. As far as India was concerned, the coverage only criticized India’s stubbornness in refusing mediation and wider international negotiations.

The coverage hence, did not explicitly take sides of who was “right” or “wrong” in the conflict, but evaluated Pakistan’s stance as invasive, aggressive and dangerous to peace in the region. China’s refusal to help Pakistan was quoted by the selected national newspapers as further evidence that Pakistan’s escalation was unwarranted and quite adventurous. Regarding India, the coverage makes an important omission, the coverage of the alleged Indian atrocities in Kashmir through the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). This omission makes India appear much more restrained about the Kashmir issue, a contention challenged by many scholars and human rights organizations (Duschinski, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2008; John, 2011; Navlakha, 2008). This imbalance in coverage between the two countries gives an impression that Pakistan is considered to be more of a threat to regional security than India is.
CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

The major aim of this thesis was to study the frames used in the coverage of Pakistan and Islam in select U.S. news media during the 1999 Indo-Pakistan War. The study conceptually examined the alignment of the U.S. media coverage regarding constructs such as religion (like Islam) and the depiction of the events in the U.S. media in this dyad. The two conceptual frames, specifically, are partisan alignment and reactionary depiction.

The study found that Pakistan and Islam were depicted in a negative light through reports of their “fundamentalist” activities. The coverage aligned against Pakistan and Islam and framed them as “invaders” and “aggressors” in the conflict, holding them responsible for initiating it. Religion and specifically Islam was a major frame in the coverage of the 1999 Indo-Pakistan war. While the coverage depicted the “militant” and “fundamentalist” side of Islam, it did not cover Hinduism as much, essentially depicting only Pakistan and Islam as “religious” fighters of the Kargil conflict. Many news stories in the newspapers reported an increasing concern about the rising “fundamentalism” within Islam in Pakistan and the instability that it was likely to create in the country, an outright reactionary depiction of Pakistan and Islam in Pakistan. Editorials in the Boston Globe (Globe), the New York Times (NYT) and the Washington Post (Post) reported that the de-escalation in Kashmir could not happen from Pakistan’s side mainly because of the disagreement of some Islamic organizations’ to withdraw from Kashmir.
Within the national newspapers like the *Post*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), the conflict was covered as a conflict of two religious powers fighting a territorial conflict. Interestingly, while discussing the religious aspect of the conflict, the predominant Hinduism of India was mentioned only in passing and not reported on in greater depth. This downplaying of India’s religion and highlighting of Islam in Pakistan provided an impression of Islam being more “threatening” to the escalation of the conflict than Hinduism or India. Although there were patriotic feelings within India about the conflict, the newspapers did not cover this in detail, while going in great detail about the “fiery” zest for the conflict in Pakistan. The prime factor which exacerbated the media’s concern about Pakistan was the indirect yet vital influence that the army, the ISI and the Mujahideen had on Pakistani politics and society. Some editorials in the NYT, the *Post*, the *Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times* reported that it would be difficult to stop the conflict if any of these entities held the view that the conflict was necessary and refused to stop it. Reflecting a partisan alignment against Pakistan, the editorials and even news stories reported that some of the “radical” Pakistani organizations in Kashmir were the initiators of this conflict, and that some of them would come against a withdrawal.

At the beginning of the conflict, when it was unclear whether the intruders were within India’s borders, the media were skeptical about India’s contentions that the intruders were Pakistani guerrillas. India detected the incursion on May 6, 1999, and attempted to recapture the intruders’ positions through artillery and ground operations.
However, on May 27, 1999, India decided to use airstrikes since the earlier options had failed to dislodge the militants. The international media reported the conflict only after airstrikes began, before which it considered the fighting a routine exchange of fire as most newspapers said so in their first news stories. Since India and Pakistan have always had skirmishes on their borders, they were not considered important or “new” to be covered until the airstrikes by India began, something which had not happened in three decades, when the last war between India and Pakistan had occurred. The media reported on India’s airstrikes, the shooting down of India’s planes by the Pakistanis and then regularly used words like Pakistani-backed infiltrators, invaders or intruders. As it became clear that Pakistan was a part of the conflict, the media began to speculate about the possibilities of where the conflict would lead to, and what part the Islamists within Pakistan would play in it.

India and Pakistan both blamed each other for fomenting unrest in Kashmir. While Pakistan claimed India was wrongly claiming a territory meant for Pakistan, India accused Pakistan of sending terrorists into Kashmir to destabilize the region. Detailing the history of the Kashmir region and the conflict over it since 1947, the national newspapers often acknowledged and supported the narrative that Pakistan had a major role in spreading violence in Kashmir. While the media acknowledged that Kashmiri youth had participated in separatist movements in the regions, Pakistan was considered to be the source and the trigger for this violence. India was acknowledged to be reacting to the violence perpetrated by the infiltrators. This was another instance when the coverage
by most news media framed Pakistan as an intruder and aggressor, and in aligning itself with India, labeled Pakistan’s actions “hostile” and “aggressive.”

Kashmiris had reported harassment and torture of Kashmiri youth by the Indian armed forces in the past. This allegation about the Indian army’s involvement and alleged abuses were not reported in detail. Reports by human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch on the activities of the Indian armed forces had substantiated accusations of the tortures, disappearances and the misuse of the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) by India. AFSPA was a legal provision the Indian government enacted to give the armed forces plenary powers to detain and interrogate citizens in Kashmir without a warrant. Through the AFSPA, the Indian armed forces could detain suspects without arrest warrants, without filing a specific crime, and continue to hold “suspects” of terrorism as long as they wanted without legal accountability. The coverage did not discuss this crucial aspect of India’s alleged heavy-handedness in Kashmir, while readily reporting the spread of Islamic “terrorism” in the region.

The newspapers extensively covered Islamic fundamentalism, its rise within Pakistan and its spillover in Kashmir. Through interviews with Islamist leaders, people living near the borders of India and Pakistan and defense analysts in India and the United States, the stories portrayed a grim picture of growing fundamentalism in these regions of India and Pakistan. The stories focused on the spread of terrorism in Kashmir, holding Pakistani Islamist organizations responsible for it. But they did not discuss the human rights violations of the Indian armed forces and the Indian government. In the protests
after the withdrawal of Pakistani fighters in Kashmir, all protesters were framed to be supporting the United Jihad Council which defied the Pakistan government’s decision to withdraw. Hence, the image of Pakistan in news stories was solidified as an “Islamic” country. Most newspapers barring the Post had stories which would consolidate the image of Pakistan as a “fundamentalist” country. Only one story in the Post reported the varied opinions of Pakistani people about the Kashmir war, many of whom did not fully support the Kashmir conflict, and even the “fundamentalist” and Islamic call for Kashmiri “freedom.” Only one article in the Washington Post clarified that the people in Pakistan shared the government’s enthusiasm to “liberate” Kashmir, but did not necessarily support the United Jihad Council. On the contrary, newspaper editors, civil activists and even common citizens quoted in the article expressed dislike towards their activities which then allowed the United States to warn Pakistan against supporting “terror.”

Barring the Post, most other newspapers covered only the “extreme” or “martial” communities of Pakistani society, thereby highlighting the zeal within Pakistan to “liberate” Kashmir. The stories did not cover the other aspects of Pakistani society which opposed the extremist movement and its spread in the country. This was an instance of the framing of a large group of people ready to be “martyred” for the cause of Kashmir. In fact, a lot of people within the country had widely differing opinions on the issue. By only interviewing people who held strong opinions about Kashmir, the newspapers created an impression of Pakistan as a fanatical country. The Post discussed the divergent
opinions various strata of Pakistani society held towards the issue through one story, shedding more light on the ground realities in Pakistan. The other newspapers did not carry stories about widespread public opinion in Pakistan, covering only the towns near the border. The only instance when the national population was covered was during the protests against Sharif’s decision to withdraw. Even when the “anger” within Pakistan was reported, the interviewees for the story were Hafiz Mohammed Saeed and Syed Salahuddin, the heads of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Al-Badr respectively, both considered “terrorist” organizations. The reports hence aligned against Pakistan and depicted its people as supporters of an “invasion.”

Pakistan and Islamic factions both wished for Kashmir to be part of Pakistan. However, more than a religious issue, Pakistan considered it a territorial and national issue, more than a religious one. Some newspapers considered the interests of Pakistan and the Islamic factions to be similar, and reported Pakistan’s “religion-based” demand for Kashmir. Pakistan was accused of supporting organizations which followed “extremist” forms of Islam like Wahhabism and Salafism as their ideology. However, Pakistan’s stance towards Kashmir was not dictated only due to its demand of Kashmir being predominantly Islamic. Kashmir was a strategic, territorial and religious conflict at the same time. The coverage hence aligned against Pakistan and its fighters when it labeled them as “extremist”, and the organizations which fought alongside Pakistani armed forces as “fundamentalist.” While there was widespread involvement of the Pakistan army in the conflict, the coverage of the fighters as Islamic militants,
fundamentalists and separatists framed the conflict to be more religious than international. However, the contention that the Pakistani government was a supporter of the conflict due to its “religious” thought ignored the fact that Kashmir was more than just a matter of “Islamic pride.” Editorials acknowledged the fact that it was a territorial dispute, but the insertion of the frame “Islamic” within news coverage colored the conflict as religious rather than a conflict based on multiple historical and sociopolitical factors. The newspapers’ focus on religion as the most important cause of the Kashmir conflict, coupled with its imbalanced discussion of Islam and Hinduism could lead to Islamists and their desire to capture Kashmir being labeled as the main cause behind this conflict.

The coverage within the regional newspapers suggested that the Islamist organizations within Pakistan were terrorists, since some of them had affiliations with the Taliban and the “anti-western fundamentalist” Osama bin Laden. Some right-wing Islamic parties which did not necessarily follow the Taliban and bin Laden like the Jamaat-e-Islami Party were also labeled “fundamentalist.” This labeling of organizations was an important frame of coverage which aligned against Pakistan, and moreover, depicted political parties in a negative light without real evidence. They were covered as subjects of a story, but received epithets like “anti-western,” “fundamentalist,” and sometimes, their classification as terrorist organizations by the U.S. Department of State was mentioned. Many parties in Pakistan conducted recruitment drives seeking young men to fight in Kashmir, and also sought money and aid from Pakistani citizens to help
the soldiers. These drives by “fundamentalist” Islamic parties were reported in a few stories by most newspapers. Similar efforts at youth recruitment and fundraising in India by Hindu nationalist parties were not reported or even mentioned. The only fund collection drive mentioned was of fundraising drives by Indians residing in the United States.

A reactionary depiction was the framing of Islam as a religion of violence or consisting of “terrorists.” Another reactionary depiction was the use of “Islamic,” “fundamentalist,” “extremist” and “militant” to frame stories of the Mujahideen who were fighting India. This created the image of Islam being associated with these frames and the depiction of Pakistan and Islamic organizations as “bad.” The regional as well as national newspapers reported the development of Islamic organizations and their influence in Pakistani society as “worrying.” The coverage in all newspapers concluded that the complex situation in Kashmir existed because of a non-compromising stand by the Indians and the Pakistanis and the growing preeminence of Islamic organizations within Pakistan who were not ready to back down on their demands for a “liberated” Kashmir.

Apart from implying that India and Pakistan had fought each other over “religion,” and the Hindu nationalist nature of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the nationalist sentiments within India were not extensively reported in the stories. Public reaction in India about the war was only reported on during the stories which reported the alleged murder of downed Indian pilot Ajay Ahuja and the protests against Pakistani
foreign minister Sartaj Aziz. There was a mention of something known as Hindu garlands in a story in the Chicago Tribune, which do not exist.

Many newspaper articles’ blame on Islam could be construed as a partisan alignment against Islam. This finding is consistent with Kamalipour’s (2000), Said’s (1997) and Khan’s (2008) previous conclusions. However, the findings here shed new light on the coverage of Islam in the U.S. media because its context is more “neutral” than the contexts studied by the aforementioned scholars, who examined the coverage of Islam mainly in contexts or events directly dealing with the West. This study finds that the depiction of Islam is reactionary and generally negative even when the United States is not directly involved. It indicates that within a religious conflict not involving the United States, the coverage is still likely to depict Islam as a religion, and not the country in a negative partisan alignment.

The coverage of religion in the newspapers was hence, highly imbalanced and aligned against Pakistan, and specifically, the growing “fundamentalist” within it. There was very little coverage about the nature of public opinion about the Kashmir issue in India and specifically within the Hindu community. The religion frame is hence, selectively applied to the coverage.

Within the television news stories, the discussion of religion was limited to calling the fighters occupying Indian peaks as “Islamic militants” or “infiltrators.” There was little discussion about the religious aspects of the conflict since the newscasts were not longer than two minutes in most cases. Religion was mostly not considered to be a
frame of covering this conflict, and hence, there were few instances where its role in the
classification was discussed. Two such CNN reports however, used audiovisual cues which
underscored the religious backdrop of the conflict. In one newscast, reporter Kasra Naji
stood before a Pakistani artillery unit ready to fire, the chants “Allahu Akbar” were
clearly heard in the background before the men fired the shell and Naji’s proclamation of
the soldiers fighting in the “name of god” gave the story a religious overtone rather than
an international conflict. In another instance, CNN covered a funeral of five “martyred”
militants, a function attended by Pakistan army Chief Gen. Pervez Musharraf. The
narrator announced that they were one of the organizations which were working with
Pakistan to “liberate” Kashmir, and they considered this to be a “holy war” in which God
was with them. The youth were also shown in their training attire and wielding rifles,
ready to fight the “enemy” India. On the other hand, when in a similar instance, Indian
prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee reportedly received millions of dollars in donations
for fighting the “enemy,” the donations and offers of voluntary conscription was framed
patriotism. While Indians were covered as patriotic, villagers in Pakistan who wanted to
fight for Kashmir were said to want an “Islamic state.”

The main ways in which religion was emphasized in this conflict was the Islamist
organizations of the United Jihad Council and their involvement in Kashmir. Each
newspaper had an article dedicated to the UJC and the fighters it sent to Kashmir.
Reporters interviewed leaders of organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
and Al-Badr for these stories, and within each interview, their mention of Islam
repeatedly emphasized the religious frame of the conflict in Pakistan. The emphasis of the connection between these organizations and “fundamentalist” elements like Al Qaeda, the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, already described as “anti-western fundamentalists” underscored their image as organizations perceived negatively by the West. All these organizations were called “radical” organizations, and editorials within the NYT, the Post and some news stories discussed the “radicalization” of Kashmir and Kashmiri youth, something which “moderate” Kashmiri Muslim leaders wanted to prevent. This discussion of “radical” Islam was also a reactionary depiction of Islamic organizations, as their ideology was labeled “violent,” “extremist,” and “wrong.”

While the coverage did not directly deem Pakistan to be a country supporting terrorist activities, it did cover the detailed history of the Mujahideen, their role in the conflict with the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, their alliances with the Taliban and finally, their alliance with Osama bin Laden. Again, only the Post mentioned that military and logistical support to the Mujahideen including Osama bin Laden was provided by the CIA and the United States. Ultimately, the UJC was mentioned to be in close connection with the Pakistani establishment, the ISI and the Pakistan army. They were also mentioned of being responsible for the Kashmir insurgency which led to violence in Kashmir from 1989 to 2000. All these factors ultimately led to the news stories questioning the ability of Nawaz Sharif and the government to curtail the “fundamentalist” Mujahideen and their allies in Pakistan.
One news story in the NYT also mentioned Pakistan’s precarious tendency to slip from democracy to military rule. Some editorials and even news stories in the newspapers doubted Sharif’s survival as Prime Minister after the war, since they opined that he would most likely lose support of powerful political forces like the army, the ISI and the Mujahideen. These reactionary depictions of Pakistan slowly consolidated Pakistan’s image as an aggressor and a country supporting “fundamentalist” Islamic violence. On the other hand, in the early weeks of June 1999, India was actually praised for not escalating the conflict and entering Pakistan. The newspapers viewed the United States’ and the G-8 countries statement exhorting Pakistan to end the invasion as an endorsement of the Indian narrative.

The newspapers reported on the activities of the UJC like their training camps for new recruits, their wish to liberate Kashmir and their well-publicized press conference when they refused to withdraw from Kashmir when Nawaz Sharif decided to withdraw. The most well publicized statement among them was that of Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, head of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and a classified terrorist according to the U.S. State Department. Saeed remarked that Pakistan could not take responsibility for the Mujahideen even though it helped them. Newspapers interpreted Saeed’s statement as an obstacle which would make Sharif’s plan to withdraw a “hard sell” in Pakistan.

India on the other hand was criticized only on limited aspects during the conflict. While India’s airstrikes were the turning point in the conflict which led to the world noticing it, it was still not criticized for the escalation and its aggressive military
operations. It mainly received criticism for making statements against Pakistan and the Pakistan army without proper corroborating evidence. Major endorsements of India’s narrative came when the G-8 countries exhorted Pakistan to withdraw, and U.S. president Bill Clinton mentioned that the conflict was initiated by an intrusion of intruders backed by Pakistan.

The criticism of India was mainly directed to its relentless pursuit of the intruders, its aggressive military response, its allegedly brutal military regime in Kashmir, and finally, its strong denial to seek third party mediation or a Kashmiri plebiscite. While the military aggression was later not criticized, earlier broadcast reports questioned the need of whether such a strong response was needed. All newspapers carried a brief but sharply critical narrative of India’s military presence in Kashmir. Through interviews with Kashmiri villagers, citations and allegations in human rights reports and the alleged torture and detention of Kashmiri youth, the newspapers painted a grim picture of India’s military tactics in Kashmir. News reports cited the alleged tortures, rapes, illegal detentions, exploitation and killings of Kashmiri citizens while detailing the Kashmir conflict’s history. However, there were only two stories in each newspaper mentioning the Indian army’s alleged excesses in Kashmir.

In another frame, India was called adamant by both print and broadcast media for its forceful denial of third-party mediation of the conflict. India always maintained a stance of the conflict being bilateral, and India and Pakistan being capable enough of negotiating it on its own. It also refused Pakistani demands for a Kashmiri plebiscite, for
it allegedly feared the plebiscite would go against it and Kashmir would go to Pakistan or decide to remain independent. While the United States, the United Nations and even Great Britain and China offered to be mediators, India denied all such offers and stuck to its stance of bilateral negotiations. The broadcast media also criticized India since Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee refused to meet with Bill Clinton along with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Bill Clinton had to brief Vajpayee via telephone during his meetings with Sharif.

This adamant attitude was one of the few serious criticisms India was subjected to during the coverage of the 1999 Indo-Pakistan conflict. Otherwise, the depiction of India in the conflict was rather favorable; India was depicted as a nation which had reacted angrily to defend its territorial integrity from foreign aggression. It was also depicted as a nation which inspite of a treacherous invasion, had not escalated the conflict beyond its territorial limits. The news media researched for the study considered it India’s right to defend its territory aggressively.

A common frame of coverage in which both countries were depicted negatively was the nuclear weapons both countries possessed, and their behavior inspite of possessing them. All the print as well as broadcast media studied reported that both countries were taking a huge risk while fighting in such a dangerous environment. The news media used terms like the two countries were “playing with matches without having the fear of lighting a forest fire,” “one intelligence error away from nuclear war,” “novice nuclear powers,” “new at the nuclear game.” ABC news said in a report that India and
Pakistan, the world’s two newest nuclear powers, were “at it again.” In an editorial, the NYT reported that India and Pakistan did not realize that they were nuclear powers, and that they were supposed to behave more responsibly. The reason for this “responsibility,” according to the NYT, was that both countries now had an equal capacity to use nuclear weapons which could essentially cripple the other. In another broadcast, ABC News quoted a CIA official saying that both countries did not realize that they had a “stiletto in their pocket, which is nuclear.”

The nuclear status of both countries was rarely absent in the coverage. While both had fought three wars with each other, this conflict was considered to be more significant, and in fact was covered as much because of the nuclear weapons they had. While all media reported that their earlier conflicts had destabilized South Asia, the news reported that this conflict was now an area to which the West and particularly the United States would have to pay attention to. Defense analysts from U.S. think-tanks like the Brookings Institution, the Stimson Center and other defense officials from the White House quoted in stories always had an ominous tone which forecasted that both countries were only one step away from war. The media studied also reported that Kashmir was an unsolved issue for fifty years, and a matter of special pride for both countries. While other issues between the two neighbors could be sorted out, both countries had an uncompromising stand on Kashmir.

The news media reported that while the governments would not behave irresponsibly themselves, pressure from their people to appear tough against the enemy,
or pressure from people within the governments or the defense establishments within the
two countries could encourage any one of them to take the first step. The concern was
deepen about Pakistan because the media reported that the Pakistan army was hand-in-
glove with the Islamist entities in Pakistan like the United Jihad Council, which could
exhort the army and the Pakistani intelligence agency, the Inter-services Intelligence (ISI)
to use nuclear weapons against their archenemy. This concerned narrative was further
fueled by the coverage of Islamist organizations within the United States being called
militant and wanting to “claim Kashmir at all costs.”

The United States had criticized the acquisition of nuclear weapons by both India
and Pakistan. It was seeking their ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban
Treaty (CTBT). All media outlets were critical and skeptical of both countries’ ability to
handle a conflict and not let it turn into a nuclear conflict. As explained above, both
countries were considered to be too inexperienced about handling nuclear weapons as a
part of their arsenal, and practicing diplomacy in an age when both adversaries contained
equally devastating weapons in their arsenal. The news reports questioned whether they
would behave rashly and use nuclear weapons in a conflict which was framed to be
extremely “unpredictable.” While both countries had held a well-publicized peace
summit in February 1999, in May 1999 they were having their most serious military
confrontation in nearly three decades. This was framed a capricious turn of events which
could easily spiral out of control and disrupt the peace in South Asia and the world.
Hence, both countries were depicted in a reactionary frame in terms of the possession of
nuclear weapons. The coverage criticized both countries for fighting a full-scale conflict even when both had nuclear weapons.

In an interesting portrayal of events, some editorials in the newspaper coverage of the war merged two dominant frames of religion and nuclear weapons. Editorials in the NYT and Post especially noted that both countries were arch-rivals and have had a long-standing enmity. The editorials also said that both might be pressured by “reactionary elements” within their countries to use nuclear weapons. While India’s Hindu nationalist government was said to be trying to show itself as tough, the editorials noted that Pakistani politics too, had some factions in it who could force the government to resort to the nuclear option. Barring two of Pakistan’s official implying that they were considering “all options,” both countries had maintained that they would not use nuclear weapons. While both had indicated that a cross-border battle was a distant possibility, there was no indication from both sides about their intention to use nuclear weapons. Both countries were repeatedly reported to be “on the brink” due to their traditional rivalry, although there was no evidence or reasons cited for these reports. The only evidence-backed report came after the conflict, when the Post reported that the CIA had reported a rise in military strength on the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan, where India was most likely planning to open a second front.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

The print media used frames which aligned against Pakistan and depicted it in a negative and reactionary manner. For the broadcast media, the coverage held Pakistan responsible for initiating the conflict, and also framed the alliance of Islamic Mujahideen and Pakistani soldiers for prolonging and worsening it. Due to the shorter length of coverage of the conflict in the television channels, namely CNN, ABC News and CBS News, the analysis of the news was short, and often did not extend beyond reporting facts.

India on the other hand, is let off more lightly. There are few criticisms of India apart from its refusal to internationalize the conflict, its aggression and its refusal to negotiate without Pakistani withdrawal. Apart from these subjects, India is seen as a secular defender of territorial integrity in a region troubled by religious strife.

The study shares a contention shared by many scholars studying Islam and its coverage in the global news media, including Kamalipour (2000), Said (1997), Fox (1997), Khan (2008) among some others. Scheufele (1999) notes in his study on framing and media effects that framing is an important phenomenon rising out of the preconceived notions, ideology and other environmental factors which journalists face in their daily life. Islam, as scholars mentioned above have noted, has been considered violent, fanatic and troublesome by the Western media since many decades. Tying Scheufele’s (1999) contention to the contentions of scholars studying Islam, it can be noted that journalists carry preconceived, incomplete notions of Islam in their minds.
while covering certain events, and resultantly add to the imbalanced narrative through their own reporting. This study supports the statement that the incomplete narrative of a conflict, consisting of blaming one side for it and passing a moral evaluation about it tends to strengthen the incomplete, distorted version of an otherwise complicated story. This case study reveals how the religious lens is applied to an international conflict which then presents a rather lopsided version of a conflict which otherwise has many facets. As noted earlier, the Kashmir issue is a mixed conflict consisting of complicated facets like demographics, history, religion, economics and even natural resources. The overtly simple religious context provided by the selected U.S. media to Kashmir is selectively reductionist. This reductionism is especially critical of Pakistan and Islam. The coverage of the India-Pakistan conflict in the selected U.S. media depicted Pakistan as the religiously motivated troublemaker of Kashmir, while not giving equal attention to other elements of the conflict. The novelty of this coverage lies in its portrayal of the religion-government alliance as a new, well-developed military and political force. This new reactionary depiction of the construct of religion, specifically Islam, reaffirms the frame of religion as a divisive force, and Pakistan as a nation wielding this tool of religion to great effect in the protracted, historic and extremely violent battle of Kashmir. Religion and religious motivations are considered to be the main culprit by the selected U.S. media in a complicated conflict actually caused by many more intervening factors.
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146


