

Medals and Ribbons

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A SALUTE TO OUR VALIANT WARRIORS



INDIAN ARMED FORCES — AS — UN PEACEKEEPERS

**National Interests in a
Changing Global Order**

In Conversation with
Mrs Nirupama Rao

**Bonded To His Men
- Maj Gen Jai Menon**

An Epitome of Trust, Resolve
and Courage

**Russia's Special Military
Operation in Ukraine**

Persistence vs Resistance



International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

29th MAY

The first UN peacekeeping mission was established on 29 May 1948, when the Security Council authorized the deployment of a small number of UN military observers to the Middle East to form the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to monitor the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. 29 May is hence observed as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. On this day at New York, the Secretary General pays tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel's invaluable contribution to the work of the Organization and honours nearly 4200 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including 135 last year.

Since 1948, more than 1 million women and men have served in 72 UN peacekeeping operations, directly impacting the lives of millions of people and saving countless lives. Today, UN Peacekeeping deploys more than 87000 military, police and civilian personnel in 12 operations.

To commemorate the day, a seminar on UN Peacekeeping was organized jointly at New Delhi on 30 May by the Centre for UN Peacekeeping, New Delhi and the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, New Delhi.

Col David Devasahayam



A few years ago I was on a visit to Israel and caught up with Jai Menon - Major General J S Menon who was then the Force Commander and Head of Mission in United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Syria – Israel, the UN Mission which monitored ceasefire related actions in the Golan Heights area. His responsibilities were on both sides of the Israeli – Syrian border. The few days I spent with him gave me an insight of UN Peacekeeping, the changing nature of conflicts and the new challenges in peace operations, where non-state actors and armed groups had become the ‘peace spoilers’. I was proud that Jai, my schoolmate, Alpha Squadron mate and course-mate was handling the responsibilities with tremendous flair and commitment. Jai went on to make a profound impact on the mission and since his retirement has been working with UN Headquarters in New York.

Indian troops have performed excellently in UN peacekeeping for several decades, earning an enviable reputation in handling violent conditions in remote and poverty stricken regions of Africa like in South Sudan, Congo, Somalia, Eritrea, etc. We have hence put together a mix of articles on UN peacekeeping operations by the Indian Armed Forces. The readers will surely applaud the worthy actions of our troops abroad.

The Russo-Ukraine conflict has disturbed the stability of the global order, especially the security

dynamics in the European theatre. It is an opportune moment to observe the changes in the world power matrix and so I had a vibrant and fascinating interaction with Mrs Nirupama Rao, our former Foreign Secretary and erudite scholar on world affairs. Her perspective on our national interests and foreign policy is worth absorbing.

The Ukraine conflict has taken up much of the media space, and the conflict has thrown up many interesting lessons. Sandy (Lt Gen J S Sandhu), our Chief Editor, has analysed the ups and downs in the conflict at the military and operational level – his analysis would be of value to our young military readers.

This issue of Medals and Ribbons will also be a worthy reference issue in military libraries, as it has assembled a quality mix of informative reading, mainly on UN peacekeeping. I am sure our readers will find it an interesting read!



With Maj Gen Jai Menon

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Medals and Ribbons

A SALUTE TO OUR VALIANT WARRIORS (ENGLISH QUARTERLY)

Founder and Publisher

COL DAVID DEVASAHAYAM (Retd)

Editorial Team

Chief Editor

Lt Gen J S SANDHU (Retd)

Consulting Editors

Lt Gen D ANBU (Retd)

Air Marshal HARPAL SINGH (Retd)

Rear Adm S SHRIKHANDE (Retd)

Creative Editor

Dr. RENUKA DAVID

Vice President Design and Contents

Ms NEETI JAYCHANDER

Admin & Production

Capt R G PRAKASAM (Retd)

Marketing & Subscriptions

CHANDRAVEL KANTHASAMI

Art and Designing

SARAVANAN

SHASHI BANDI

(Captions)

Photography

VIGNESH NARAYANAN

(3Leaf Studio)

Accounting Team

GIRISH SHENOY

Despatch

SUB RAJAN PODUVAL K (Retd)

D STEPHENSON ABRAHAM

Published By

Col David Devasahayam (Retd),

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VGP Golden Beach Phase 1,

Injambakkam,

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T. Nagar, Chennai - 600017.



Lt Gen J S Sandhu, (Retd).

A few years ago, as the Director General Staff Duties in Army Headquarters, I was dealing with UN peacekeeping operations on a daily basis. I observed the hardships and hazards faced by our troops in under-developed areas in South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In Abyei, a few of our military observers were deployed at sites where there were no ablution units and open defecation was the local norm. At places, like in Mali, Darfur, Central African Republic, armed resistance groups have increased the violence levels and UN peacekeepers too are attacked. I visited our contingents in DRC, South Sudan, Lebanon and in Israel. I was glad to note that Indian officers and men were reliable and trustworthy components in these missions, especially when handling difficult tasks like protection of civilians, or countering the hostile designs of rebel forces.

Indian Armed Forces have contributed positively in

UN peacekeeping for seven decades. It is hence apt for us to focus on UN peace operations in this issue. Some of our veterans like Lt Gen J S Lidder, Maj Gen JS Menon, Maj Gen Sandeep Bajaj and Brig Rahul Batra have handled important UN leadership positions in the past for several years, and are also currently involved in UN assignments. They have expounded on current UN operations. Extremely insightful, their words give the readers a clearer picture of contemporary UN peacekeeping. In addition, we have also described past actions of our personnel in Liberia, Angola, Somalia, DRC and deservedly recalled the valour of Captain G S Salaria, PVC (Posthumous) in Katanga, DRC December 1961.

Over three decades ago, as a young officer in Indian Embassy, Nepal, I realised that diplomats and Armed Forces officers are both involved with the external environment around a nation. While we looked at the regional situation within a security frame, the diplomats also looked at global influences in many other dimensions too. When handling UN operations and foreign training teams, I regularly interacted with the Ministry of External Affairs, and noted that defence diplomacy has grown in relevance and in sync with the rising power of our country. The Russo-Ukraine conflict has impacted the European Theatre and global power shifts are gradually taking place. Ambassador Nirupama Rao, former Foreign Secretary has commented on national interests and global power pressures in her interaction with Col D Devasahayam, our Founder and Publisher – worth reading.

Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine has thrown up important lessons on fighting in the modern battlefield, and I have highlighted some of these aspects in my

article. Our perceptions are often influenced by the Western media, who largely control the global media narrative. When looking at the battle as it progresses, we have to avoid falling fully for the “story or propaganda being broadcast”, and make an assessment after diligent analysis.

The Ukrainian War Zone also resulted in a massive evacuation operation for our students and nationals stuck there. In recent years, the Indian Government has often intervened to pull out our nationals from such conflict spots, like from Kuwait in early 90s, Yemen, Wuhan (Covid-19) etc. Vice Admiral R K Pattanaik describes Operation Sukoon, the first such large scale evacuation of Indian nationals done by the Indian Navy in 2006 from Beirut, Lebanon.

And, in our regular columns, Dr. Renuka David discusses the need to retain balance in our physical fitness regimen; and our financial expert informs us about the types of mutual funds and their taxation in our Money Matters column.

I am sure the readers will get a good idea about UN peacekeeping and will learn about our past record in this field, besides gaining from other insights in this issue – we look forward to your tips and feedback. **In our next issue, the primary theme would be on Operation Pawan – the IPKF experience.**

We invite articles and experiences about the actions in Sri Lanka in the late 80s, which may please be sent to chiefeditor@medalsandribbons.com by end July 22 / early August 22.



OUR NATIONAL INTEREST

AMIDST A CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

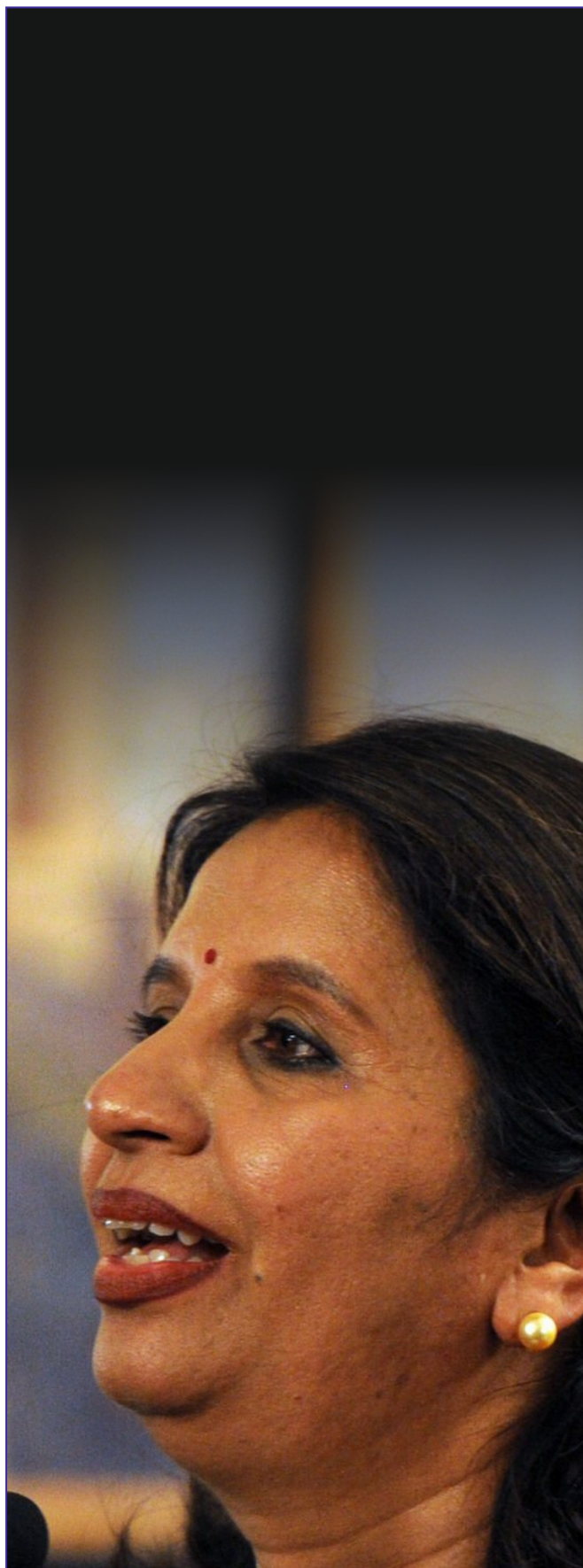
The external environment around a country indicates the external threats to the nation, and wise foreign policies and foreign relations help in diluting the threats. The linkage between foreign affairs and the security scenario is clear.

A new world order is slowly emerging, with newer powers entering the scene. There is turbulence in the world's energy security too, consequent to the Russo-Ukraine Conflict. It is hence apt for us to look at the diplomatic arena. Colonel D Devasahayam (Retd), our Founder, had a thought provoking interaction (based on a questionnaire) with Mrs. Nirupama Rao, former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to the USA.

Excerpts from the same follow.

Indian neutrality in the Russo-Ukraine War has faced several subtle and not so subtle pressures from the Western powers, and perceptions are being formed that India is more aligned to the Sino-Russian bloc. What is the likely long term impact of this Indian position in our relations with USA and European nations like France, Germany or UK?

I believe what we see today is the exercise of strategic autonomy by India in actual practice. This is strategic autonomy as dictated by our national security interest. Our



relationship with Russia which is a time-tested one is still crucial for our defence preparedness, in so many ways. Russia as a Eurasian power is not a presence we can exclude from our strategic horizon. It is a key voice and a crucial player in Central Asia and Afghanistan and Russia's close partnership with China requires that we pay attention to ensuring that our bilateral relationship remains a matter of constant focus and attention. However, we have to assess the impact of the Ukraine war on Russia's status as a world power with global strategic reach. The outlook is uncertain given what will be the long-term reverberations of that conflict in various geographies.

The war in Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis there are matters of serious concern and India cannot and must not ever condone the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty by Russian forces. At the same time, it is vitally important that both sides talk peace instead of more war. The fall-out of the Russia-Ukraine war impacts us all. The Western bloc must also understand and weigh the implications of protracted conflict in Europe, and the devastating humanitarian and economic fallout generated by it. I believe that our relations with the Western democracies, particularly the United States, are built on strong and resilient foundations and will stand the test of any strain imposed by the current situation between Russia and Ukraine, and the stand that India has taken.

Modern warfare is not fought only in the military domain, but economic tools like sanctions have caused immense damage with unintended consequences too. These economic measures are mostly under US control, and a need for alternative financial mechanisms is being felt. What path should India adopt in such international



Mrs Nirupama Rao, former Foreign Secretary

trade mechanisms to improve our financial resilience?

India has always taken the position that the United Nations is the sole body that can legitimately impose international sanctions against a given country in the event of war or aggression and a resultant threat to global peace and security. Unilaterally imposed economic sanctions have caused grave collateral damage, their effect is lopsided and innocent civilians, men, women and children have starved and suffered as a result. Entire societies have been decimated beyond belief. Such sanctions have left a trail of mass destruction in their wake. The global economic situation today is deeply troubled, the golden globalisation years are behind us, and there is increasing, acrimonious polarisation.

Supply chains have been destroyed or broken, and countries are increasingly looking inwards to build self-reliance. This is easier said than done because technology, capital, innovation and the movement of people across borders

characterises the world of today. India can and should play a leading role in building more regional connectivity and integration so that our economy can strengthen resilience and better navigate the turbulent environment generated by these new shocks.

Ultimately there is no solution but to place a concerted focus on building internal economic strength, dynamism and stability making it clear that in the face of such unilaterally imposed economic sanctions, which cause undue hardship to our economy, we are fully justified in putting in place bilateral arrangements with countries from whom we import vitally-needed resources in order to ensure that supplies are not disrupted and our people's interests are not harmed.

The effectiveness of UN has declined over the years, the inability of the UN to play an impartial role has emerged in many conflicts where P5 nations have blocked preferred solutions due to their own national interests. UN



Col and Mrs D Devasabayam with Ambassador Nirupama Rao in Chennai

structural reforms have also been a non-starter, due to 'status quo' preference of the principal powers. Do you expect effective changes in the UN organization in tune with current national power positions, and how would the world body manage the pressures for change?

The short answer is that UN reform has remained a chimera. Within the Security Council, the Permanent Five members have not walked the talk on reform and expansion of this body.

The anachronism of a world order created post-1945 prevails. Within the Security Council, China and Russia are posited against the Western members - the U.S., France and Britain. The situation mirrors the state of the world today. Things have fallen apart, and as the saying goes, the centre cannot hold.

UN Peacekeeping is touted as a noble activity, but peacekeeping missions in Africa have mainly been launched to protect or serve Western interests. Troop contributing countries play no role in decision making or in deciding the mandate, and the peacekeeping operation inadequately addresses the host country's stability need. What pragmatic principles should UN adopt to improve the delivery of peace in such conflict areas?

India has called for effective coordination between Troop Contributing Countries to UN Peacekeeping and the UN Security Council and the Secretariat to reform Peacekeeping and enable it to adjust to new global realities. Women peacekeepers also need to be incentivised. The UN Security Council must initiate collective action in this regard. During India's Presidency of the UN Security Council last year, two key decisions were adopted, one a resolution on accountability for crimes against peacekeepers, and the other a Presidential Statement on Technology for peacekeeping. The Statement stresses the need to leverage technological tools to support greater situational awareness for peacekeepers so as to improve information acquisition and analysis capabilities. This will enable more informed decisions being taken at a tactical, operational and strategic level within the limits of the peacekeeping mandate and the area of operation. India is a key contributor to this innovative process.

Despite decades of discussions and talks, our border dispute with China remains unresolved. Border management is also becoming more volatile as observed in many face-offs with Chinese troops in recent years. How should our two nations break the impasse and resolve the border dispute or manage it without violent contests?

Our relationship with China has been inordinately complicated in recent years - a situation engendered by China's assertiveness and aggressiveness along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh. As a result, the superstructure of relations between our two countries, built with concerted effort over the last three decades has virtually disintegrated. The need of the hour is to restore the status quo obtaining before April 2020 and ensure that proper disengagement and de-escalation takes place in the areas along the Line of Actual Control. It is difficult to envision a return to normalcy until the abnormal situation along the LAC is addressed and resolved. This will not happen easily over-night and patience and restraint are called for from both sides. It is only when the present situation of near-kinetic confrontation between the two sides is resolved that the question of seeking a settlement to the larger border dispute between the two countries can be effectively resumed. Measures to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas are absolutely crucial, both sides should ensure that military build-up in these areas comes down so that the danger of confrontation is reduced significantly, and the Line of Actual Control must be defined concretely and in detail.

Membership of Quad has possibly nudged us into a 'security partnership', with a resultant US tilt. In recent Quad

meetings, India has resisted Quad attempts to comment on issues other than the Indo-Pacific. Has Quad participation constrained our dialogue with China, and how would you evaluate its effect on our linkages with China and Russia?

We cannot take a Rip van Winkle view on Indian foreign policy. The defence of our national interests and our strategic concerns vis-a-vis neighbours like China have particularly necessitated new orientations and realignments in foreign affairs, in order to protect our security and strategic interests. Democratic values plus a network of economic relationships, investment and trade, bind us to the western economies.

The tensions in our relationship with China over the last few years have also necessitated a re-definition of ties with that country, including in the economic field where the present patterns of trade with China are largely unsustainable. Bodies like the Quad are central to the architecture of a rules-based security and economic architecture in the Indo-Pacific today. Our maritime interests in the region particularly define the emerging pattern of our extensive interactions with other member countries in the Quad.

Security cooperation has become a constant in many agreements inked during State visits. Security cooperation translates into port visits, participation in training courses and training events and bilateral / multilateral exercises. How have such training exchanges facilitated our foreign policy goals with these nations?

India is a primary and key Indian

Ocean power. Interactions in the maritime field with littoral countries in the region as also the larger sea-faring nations with blue water navies are important to maintain the security of the sea lines of communication, major trading routes through which much of our ocean-going trade moves, for counter-terrorism and piracy, and in dealing with situations requiring humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Our security, economic and foreign policy interests are essentially seamless and integrated and should be seen this way.

We are on the side of maintaining a rules-based international order, in steadfastly pursuing our Act East policy with the ASEAN countries, and for the protection of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations in the region in the face of aggression, hegemony and expansionism.

As India's national stature has grown, our defence diplomacy too has expanded with countries seeking deployment of training teams. We have maintained training teams in Bhutan, Tajikistan, Lesotho, Uganda, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam, Namibia and such presence helps develop better relations too. We are unable to increase this training team presence possibly due to budgetary constraints. How would you evaluate the role of military training teams and their pros and cons as add-ons to the diplomatic missions?

The high professionalism and outstanding competence of our defence forces greatly enhance the reputation of India worldwide. Within

our diplomatic missions, our defence attachés and our Services' wings significantly augment the professional skill and resources and add great value to our diplomatic representation across the globe. These are assets that we are greatly proud of. Our military training teams in many countries have also played a similar role and enabled the achievement of key foreign policy goals. Defence diplomacy is an intrinsic and organic part of our foreign policy strategy today and promotes the furtherance of key strategic and security interests in each given situation.

The Global War on Terror took centre stage in the last two decades, and counter terrorism became an important talking point with resolutions and conferences devoted to it. The international counter terror campaign has lost steam in the last few years, and actions against non-state actors remains incomplete. Do you feel that our counter terror pitch needs to be downplayed in world bodies hereafter?

The need to counter terrorism has not abated in the least. The threat posed by cross-border forces as well as global terrorist organisations remains clear and present. We cannot afford to downplay our efforts in this context, and we must continue to work within the United Nations and with like-minded countries to effectively counter terrorist forces that remain a threat to the country and the security and well-being of our people. Both within the United Nations and regionally, India remains a champion of efforts to counter and defeat terror. Terrorism seeks to upturn the global order and the stability and wellbeing of our peoples. It is an enemy against which there must be zero-tolerance on every front.

Nirupama Rao is a former Indian Foreign Service officer. She retired as Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, the senior most position in the Foreign Service, being the second woman to occupy the post (2009-2011). She was the first woman spokesperson (2001-02) of the Indian foreign office. She served as India's first woman High Commissioner (Ambassador) to Sri Lanka (2004-2006) and to the People's Republic of China (2006-2009). She was Ambassador of India to the United States from 2011 to 2013. In retirement she has taught at various universities, including as a Senior Visiting Fellow in International and Public Affairs at the Watson Institute at Brown



University where she taught an undergraduate seniors course on "India in the World" and as George Ball Adjunct Professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Her book entitled "The Fractured Himalaya: India Tibet - China, 1949 to 1962" was published by Penguin India in October 2021. Ambassador Rao was a Fellow at the India-China Institute of The New School, New York in 2016, Public Policy Fellow at The Wilson Centre, Washington D.C. in 2017 and Pacific Leadership Fellow at the School of Global Politics and Strategy, University of California at San Diego in 2019. She is a Global Policy Fellow of the Wilson Centre. She was a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow from 2015-2016 and a Practitioner-in-Residence at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Centre in Italy in 2017. She is a member of the Board of Governors of the Indian Institute of Management, Bengaluru, a member of the Advisory Council of the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, on the Board of the Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations (ICRIER), and a Councillor on the World Refugee and Migration Council. She is also a Member of the Board of Directors of the US-India Business Council and heads the Board of Trustees of the India board of the American India Foundation (AIF). She has an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (2012) from Pondicherry University. She is a staunch believer in the power of social media as an advocacy platform for policy and currently has over 1.3 million followers on Twitter. Ambassador Rao is the recipient of a number of awards recognizing her contributions in public service. She received the K.P.S Menon Memorial Award in 2010, the Sree Chithira Thirunal Award in 2011, the Vanitha Ratna Award of the Government of Kerala in 2016 and the Citizen Extraordinaire Award of Rotary International in 2018. She is also the recipient of the Fellowship of Peace Award of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Centre in Washington D.C in 2018.

Ambassador Rao is a Founder-Trustee of The South Asian Symphony Foundation (SASF) (www.symphonyofsouthasia.org) - a not-for-profit Trust which is dedicated to promoting mutual understanding in South Asia through the creation of a South Asian Symphony Orchestra (SASO).

— ■ Col David Devasahayam (Retd) *Founder and Publisher*

Armed young men patrol a road in Monrovia during the Liberian Civil War. (Photo by Patrick ROBERT/Sygma via Getty Images)
Lower Image - Liberian Cross Dressing Soldier (Photo courtesy Ben Curtis/AP)

CIVIL WAR IN LIBERIA

The UN Mission in Liberia faced a violent upheaval from the warring groups, and UN and other international organisations evacuated the country. Lt Gen PR Kumar (Retd) who was in the mission at that time recalls his experiences in UNOMIL.

Liberia - the Oldest Independent Republic of Africa

The Republic of Liberia, a country on the West African coast is bordered by Sierra Leone to the Northwest, Guinea to its North, Ivory Coast to its East and the Atlantic Ocean to its South and Southwest. With a population of around 5 million, it covers an area of 111,369 square kilometres. English is the official language, but over 20 indigenous languages are spoken, reflecting the country's ethnic and cultural diversity. The country's capital and largest city is Monrovia.

In the early 19th century, Liberia began as a project of the American Colonization Society (ACS), which believed that black people would face better chances for freedom and prosperity in Africa than in the USA. Between 1822 and the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, more than 15000 freed and free-born black people who faced social and legal oppression in the US, along with 3198 Afro-Caribbeans were relocated to Liberia. Liberia declared independence on 26 July 1847, which the U.S. did not recognize until 05 February 1862.

On 03 January 1848, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a wealthy, free-born African American from the US State of Virginia, was elected Liberia's first president after the people proclaimed independence - the first African republic to proclaim its independence and is thus Africa's first and oldest modern republic. Liberia is a founding member of the League of Nations, United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity.



Nigerian Troops in UNOMIL

and political environment. There was something really unique about the security situation; while there was a political vacuum, no warlord and his soldiers were fighting for Liberia or its independence or betterment (Liberia was a free democratic independent sovereign country) or with a sense of nationalism; no political aims or policies or programmes for the people were spelt out or even expected; they fought as feudal lords purely to subjugate the masses, garner power and riches and loot the mineral wealth of the country.

Political Unrest and the Two Liberian Civil Wars

In 1980, political tensions from the rule of William R Tolbert resulted in a military coup during which Tolbert was killed, marking the end of Americo-Liberian rule in the country and beginning over two decades of political instability. Military rule and corrupt civilian rule followed by the First (1989-97) and Second Liberian Civil Wars (1999-2003), resulted in the deaths of 250000 people (about 8% of the population) and the displacement of many more, **with Liberia's economy shrinking by 90%**. During this period, Liberia was controlled by numerous war lords with their private armies. Foremost amongst them were Charles Gankey Taylor, leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Prince Johnson leading the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). While both the above rebel groups were indigenous, during the second Civil War, groups supported by neighbouring countries emerged further exacerbating an unstable, violent security

Bringing Peace and Stability to Liberia: Involvement of ECOWAS, ECOMOG and United Nations

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa. The economic and social threats that growing chaos in Liberia posed to West Africa influenced the decision to intervene in Liberia and the creation of a military arm. ECOWAS in a significant geo-political step for the first time established a peacekeeping force ECOMOG with an aim to achieve and monitor the cease-fire in Liberia. The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is a formal arrangement for a West African multilateral armed force to work together.

It was largely supported by personnel and resources of the Nigerian Armed Forces, with contributions from other ECOWAS members like Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Mali, Niger and others. Observing its success in Liberia, ECOMOG was also deployed in Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau later to bring stability. This was a fairly unique arrangement at that time, with security and political management being provided by ECOWAS, while the UN provided the international, unbiased military observer group to support and oversee the peace process. The UN Security Council under Resolution 866 (1993) established The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), headquartered in the capital Monrovia. Its initial mandate was to monitor the implementation of peace agreements between the Liberian parties, investigate ceasefire violations, assist in maintenance of assembly sites and demobilisation of combatants, facilitate humanitarian assistance, investigate violations of human rights and to monitor the electoral process.

A Ceasefire Agreement at last

The Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed by the warring parties on 18 August 2003 marking the political end of the conflict and beginning of the country's transition to democracy under the National Transitional Government of Liberia until the Liberian general election of 2005. UNOMIL was superseded by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in September 2003 under a new UN Resolution 1509 (2003) with a larger mandate 'to support the peace process and implementation of the Accra Accord'. Democratic elections were conducted in 2005, in which Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected President, making history as the first female President in the continent.

My Experiences as a Military Observer (Milob)

I joined UNOMIL as a Milob in January 1996 in Monrovia after a long journey, which culminated in a helicopter ride to Monrovia by a UN requisitioned helicopter as there were no international flights into Liberia. It was a period of uncertainty as the country was in turmoil with the First Civil War still raging with the rebel group NPFL under Charles Taylor appearing to be the most potent and strongest. Numerous reports of his group taking over large areas with support bases in Sierra Leone and heading towards Monrovia were doing the rounds. There was a sense of apprehension and disquiet amongst the civilian staff and Milobs. UNOMIL had around 130 to 140 military officers from 11 countries (India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Czech Republic, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe) at that time. Interestingly it can be seen that the South Asian neighbourhood and China were well represented. Barring a few UN

stations/outposts manned by Milobs, most of the staff had been pulled into Monrovia. Within a few weeks, I became the National Senior of the Indian Contingent. We had rented a house collectively in Monrovia, which we named India House. This became the logistics base for Indian Milobs, for those deployed outside to fall back to.

First Impressions

A beautiful but totally war-ravaged country. Except for very few buildings / houses left standing in Monrovia, the entire country had no infrastructure at all. There were visible signs of abject poverty everywhere. Who would believe that all houses, buildings, infrastructure were bare bones without even the roof or any windows or doors! They had obviously been ransacked. People lived in thatched shanties and even basic shops and small eateries were in mud/wooden/thatched structures. A few relatively imposing structures were scattered around which belonged to the war lords and their cronies. There was no piped or even potable water and electricity supply in entire Liberia. The UN logistics unit had set up its own water treatment plant from which we all drew water and which was naturally protected 24X7. It would not be an exaggeration to say that most 7 to 9 year old children would not have seen an electric bulb lit up. Indians are used to seeing some degree of poverty, but what I saw and experienced in Liberia was truly staggering. Surprisingly the few roads, mainly the four cardinal laterals were still in good shape with few pot holes, possibly due to quality construction by US companies.

There was a small residential area which was occupied by Embassies, their personnel and UNOMIL HQ. This area

being high profile was protected by ECOMOG. UN missions are generally plush, with large number of staff in the various departments like the SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary General) Secretariat, administrative, logistics, finance and the Military Wing headed by the Chief Military Observer (CMO – at that time a Major General from Egypt). But due to the first Civil War, the mission was quite pared down already. Alongside were based various agencies of the UN like WHO, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR etc and many international NGOs who frankly land up like flies wherever there is a crisis, and money to be granted to be up and kicking, allowing their staff to make a very good living. My considered impression was that they were white elephants with scant contribution; and whatever physical activities like camps, medical check-ups, displaced persons and refugee camps, vaccination drives, and later rehabilitation centres for fighters and especially child fighters, were conducted / built, it was invariably done by the local staff who got local rates of pay.

UN Post at Kakata - Caught in the Buffer Zone

In March 1996, I was the post commander of a six officer Milob detachment at Kakata which was the buffer zone between two warring factions. Another detachment came to relieve us and so we became 12 Milobs for three days carrying out handing / taking over of tasks. There was a company of Nigerian troops from ECOMOG deployed close by providing prophylactic security. One night, the two groups had a shoot-out, prompting the Nigerian troops to open fire. The whole night there was



Liberia Map

indiscriminate firing including mortars with an odd tank main gun also opening. This lasted till first light. While we were not targeted deliberately, we were deployed in the buffer zone in two barracks which were hit by 100s of bullets fired indiscriminately. I moved off and on between the barracks to check on Milobs in the other barrack, till a kind Uruguayan Milob handed me his bullet proof jacket. I experienced the uneasy feeling at the nape of the neck and between the shoulder bones frequently that night. All Milobs, especially the two Chinese present were deeply traumatized, scared and virtually in tears, and in turn I had to physically console the Chinese and another disturbed Milob. It was apparent that they were not at all acclimatised to such actions. I take it as a lesson for today and tomorrow when we face the Chinese along the Line of Actual Control.

Civil War reaches the Capital, Monrovia

During the first week of April 1996, fighting erupted between ethnic Krahn fighters loyal to Roosevelt Johnson and

those loyal to Taylor and another faction leader, Alhaji Kromah. Johnson and members of his breakaway faction of the United Liberation Movement holed up in barracks in downtown Monrovia. It was not a classic street to street, house to house urban warfare between various rebel groups, but more a case of sudden spurts of violence with rebels of one group storming into a street or house firing mindlessly, and the rival group carrying out a tactical retreat; but it was certainly barbaric. A sub-group who called themselves '*Butt Naked*' obviously fought naked and believed they had super-human powers and no bullets could hurt or kill them as they would cut out the heart of a captured rival and eat it: obviously they

learnt the hard way. Fighters caught by the rival group were mercilessly killed by any and all means (guns obviously, but machetes, spears, swords were equally useful weapons). A lot of this was witnessed in parts by most Milobs including those of us who were isolated in India House. UNOMIL had got split up and various staff personnel were spread around in Monrovia. Most UN personnel including many Milobs fled into nearby jungles and slowly made their way to the ONLY standing and functional embassy (USA) which for quite a few days was surrounded by Taylor's fully armed rebels. In small groups we made our way near the US embassy compound, and were allowed access into the embassy compound in dribbles while wild firing continued intermittently outside.

The US had flown in Rangers and later an Army battalion to protect their premises and they performed outstandingly in a professional manner. The UNOMIL personnel were airlifted in the dead of night by helicopters (day flying was stopped by the US forces after a few rockets were fired at their helicopters) to Freetown, Sierra Leone which refused to accept us. Within a few hours, US transport aircraft flew us into Dakar, Cote D' Ivoire (Ivory Coast), where we recouped and rested for a few days. The only possession that all UN personnel had were the uniform clothes we were wearing (some did not even have that as rebel soldiers would frequently demand we hand over our uniforms which they could use). The Indian Milobs carried Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) which proved more valuable than gold as enumerated later. There was talk of the UN mission being wound down immediately, and the entire mission including the other Milobs were listlessly hanging around the hotel - many badly traumatised enough for UN to send trained psychologists for trauma counselling (less the Indians naturally who genuinely were

unfazed). The Indian contingent sensed that their foreign escapade was ending abruptly, we decided to explore Dakar and in the evening split into the B&C group (bar and casino groups).

UNOMIL Returns in Phases to Liberia

After about a fortnight, seven Milobs including myself returned to a house in Monrovia. We were a contingent of two Indians, two Pakistanis, a Kenyan and a couple of others. We were there to show the UN Flag, and slowly start patrolling Monrovia, observing the cease fire and return of normalcy. An interesting aside; in Monrovia, while ensconced in the lawns of the US embassy, without food I may add, as it was in short supply all over, the Indian contingent helped out the UNOMIL personnel including the Chief Military Observer (CMO) rationing MREs.

When Indian Milobs were moving around seeking secure places before entering the US embassy, I had insisted that absolutely NO personal belongings should be taken except for all the MREs lying around for just such a contingency. Somebody wisely packed a pack of cards. While other Milobs contingents were sitting around traumatised and disconsolate, there was laughter and an easy attitude amongst us enriched by playing rummy. All UN personnel plus military contingents (including from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China) barring the Indian, including the Deputy Force Commander wanted this volatile, violent mission to close, and demanded immediate repatriation to their parent nations.

Based on repeated requests from everyone collectively and individually from my Indian colleagues, I made an offer to the SRSG (also living in the embassy lawns!) that the entire Indian Milob team is willing to stay on. It was gratefully accepted and this offer was wired to UN Headquarters

(HQ) and UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations, but was turned down, as it would not meet the requirement of an international force, being a single country representation. A gracious note of appreciation addressed to me and signed by the UN Secretary General himself, thanking the Indian contingent was handed over to me. I never felt prouder in my life, and I attribute this attitude to the ethos and training of the Indian Army, and our experience being deployed along our active borders, which had conditioned us well to withstand stress and strain. In a lighter vein, the rather frugal daily allowance in dollars also helped.

Initial Phase of Demobilisation and Rehabilitation

The initial phase was largely a hit and miss affair with experimentation on the terms for demobilisation, rehabilitation and contents of the relief package, which will attract and encourage fighters to surrender themselves with maximum number and variety of weapons, munitions and war like stores like rockets, mortars, gun

powder, explosives and detonators and mines. The package was a mix of remuneration, rations and offer of free lodging to them and their family in an organised camp, with an added incentive to teach them some livelihood skills and means to start a small enterprise. Till I left, it was almost like a trade-off, with the raw soldier coming in with old rusted equipment or ammunition to get the package.

Once they got it or finished it, they vanished and re-joined their group. The Milobs were responsible to receive the fighters, collect, collate, log and store the war like stores in containers (which were locked and sealed every day, and keys were with UNOMIL Milobs to prevent theft or corruption) at designated demobilisation centres. Unfortunately, the Second Civil War put a stop to it and serious steps started once again only in 2003. Interestingly, the child soldier could strip and reassemble weapons in the blink of an eye with practiced ease, and were quite happy to show off; frankly we marvelled at their proficiency and often kidded each other.



Indian Formed Police Unit heading to join UNMIL, Liberia



Col Black Diamond, a woman rebel commander (centre, in red cap), with fellow women soldiers in Tubmanburg, Liberia (Photo credit Saurabh Das/AP)

Role of Senior Liaison Officer (SLO) and Secretary, Cease Fire Violations Committee (CFVC)

Both the roles were extremely interesting and challenging. As SLO, I had to interact and coordinate with ECOMOG, UN affiliate offices and NGOs and most importantly with the rebel groups, who had their own internal and external dynamics. As Secretary, CFVC, I handled complaints and investigated them tactfully, impartially but I was firm on instances of human rights violations, inter and intra group fighting, violence, massacre or rape of the civilian population. The groups to be fair were generally cooperative, and interestingly behaved civilly with their opponents during the meetings and investigations. I burnt the most gruesome set of photographs handed over to me by rebel groups as evidence before I departed.

Relevant Perceptions and Observations

- The Liberian people are simple, carefree, enjoy the small things on offer, with very little needs. Being frank, forthright and amiable with the

ability to speak English (their mother tongue) they were a delight to interact with. Like most Africans they loved music, food, dance and a party. I can never forget the sight of malnourished two year olds swaying so naturally with the 'dance gift' just hearing radio music. Despite abject poverty, small bars mainly offering beer and basic food with blaring African music would be active late into the night. To just survive and feed their families, women were promiscuous.

Liberia and later Sierra Leone became infamous for their child fighters. 10 to 16 years old, mostly abandoned or abducted were in plenty. They were exploited, scared, malnourished and succumbed to drugs and drinks (some even used to split a bullet and use the gun powder like tobacco). A few became actual gun toting veteran fighters who took part in actual combat. Just observing them, one could easily understand Mao's famous quote that 'power

flows from the barrel of a gun'. Power is addictive, and they could terrorise villages and the local population, and found it difficult to adjust to normal life. All without exception were traumatised. Women faced the tough end of the stick and one admired their remarkable courage, fortitude, calmness, spirit and even sense of humour in the midst of humiliation, chaos, poverty, war and destruction.

- **The Colonial Effect.** Without elaborating, it was everywhere. Small children will follow you around addressing us either as 'Boss Man' or 'White Man'. They were born with the notion that colour of skin is important.
- **Indian Milob:** Best in the World. Knowing that this sounds rather pompous, I would still reiterate it. It actually starts with UN HQ wanting Indian troops and officers participating in every critical, hard mission, having witnessed the professionalism, selflessness and hardiness of Indian troops to meet any and all challenges. In the mission area, the SRSG and CMO and senior Milobs or staff officers demanded an Indian officer in their team, as he takes care of all staff work, administration, logistics and even cooking all by himself (one man army). Officers used to approach me relentlessly to influence posting of Indian officers to their detachments. I would not be amiss in saying that for us the toughest day in a UN mission is comparable to an easy day at work back home. Almost all of us have seen some form of combat either on the Line of Control / Line of Actual Control / counter insurgency or counter terrorism operations and it does not faze us. Since we go through a very strict selection process, the officers are thorough in their staff and field work. In my experience in UNOMIL and having interacted with other colleagues from other missions, I realised that rarely does any other nations Milob do the critical staff or field work. Other South Asian colleagues sharing the

same British legacy would pitch in too. Most of us had initial adjustment issues mainly regarding our tasks. We found that it was rarely defined, and we had to define it for ourselves, and we would invariably be all encompassing in taking on responsibilities, be it operations, logistics or field work.

- **ECOMOG.** The troops and officers, barring the Ghanaian contingent and some exceptions, were unprofessional in their conduct while carrying out their mandate. Most were indisciplined, improperly dressed, casual and lackadaisical in their tasks and kept local women with them in their camps openly. The probable reason was certainly poor leadership, but could also be poor pay, perks and infrastructure, and lack of attention from their national HQs.
- **Patrolling the Streets.** While it was one of our routine tasks both in the hinterland and Monrovia, it became particularly tricky and dangerous post-return from Dakar. To add to it, Milobs from other nationalities refused to patrol especially at night. After moving out as a team for a few days, we (my Indian counterparts) decided to patrol alone, as going double was not sustainable over a long period. We faced many an unpleasant situation from both ECOMOG and rebel check posts, more so when they were either drugged or drunk or both, and threateningly demanded some dollars which they felt we UN folks were loaded with.
- **Task by Mr Kofi Annan.** During the latter half of my tenure, I was tasked to go alone to Sierra Leone and tour some portions, as a UN military representative and meet up with government, security, police officials, and bureaucrats to assess the prevailing and political security situation and send a report on

the feasibility of deploying a UN mission there. A civil war was developing in Sierra Leone. The report was appreciated and I was invited by Mr Kofi Annan to UN HQ at New York to present my views. It gives me satisfaction that an Indian Lieutenant Colonel was thought fit enough to provide such strategic inputs. Later I was part of the team from UN HQ which visited Sierra Leone and finalised the deployment of a UN mission there. During this task, I understood that finally everything is about finance and funding.

- **Interaction with Pakistani and other Milobs.** There was total bonhomie between Milobs as all of us were in a volatile area and knew that we had to depend on each other. The South Asian bonding was special, with Pakistani and Indian officers going out of their way to be cordial and friendly to each other. It struck us that *'we are the same people from the same stock, history, culture, food, and region'*. I can say with complete assurance that man to man, every Pakistan officer had heard, seen and knew more Bollywood movies, songs, artistes and celebrities, than any of us. We had already heard about it, but still experiencing it live, their fondness and knowledge of our

art, especially Bollywood surprised us. When seven UNOMIL Milobs redeployed to Monrovia from Dakar, we stayed for about 6 months in a three bedroom house protected by ECOMOG troops initially, as the situation was very volatile. As I shared accommodation with Pakistan officers, I got to know them, their families and way of life intimately. It was a wonderful experience, showcasing the professionalism of both Armies, where there was nothing personal, despite the rather inimical relations between both countries.

Signing Off

The tenure with UNOMIL was a 'once in a life time experience' which taught me many lessons on life and professional soldiering. One made many friends and got to understand, respect and love Africa. A beautiful and resource rich continent exploited for centuries by the 'Haves'. I am glad that Liberia went on to become one of the rare UN success stories. Above all, my exposure in UNOMIL taught me what a great civilisation India is, how professional, sound and rich in values our Indian Army is, and how we intrinsically imbibe its values and ethos.



Lt Gen PR Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery and served in the Indian Army for 39 years. He has been DG Army Aviation and DG Military Operations prior to his retirement in end 2015. He continues to write and talk on international and regional geopolitical, security and strategic issues. He can be contacted at prkumarsecurity.wordpress.com and kumapa60@gmail.com



Lt Gen PR Kumar

KEEPING PEACE

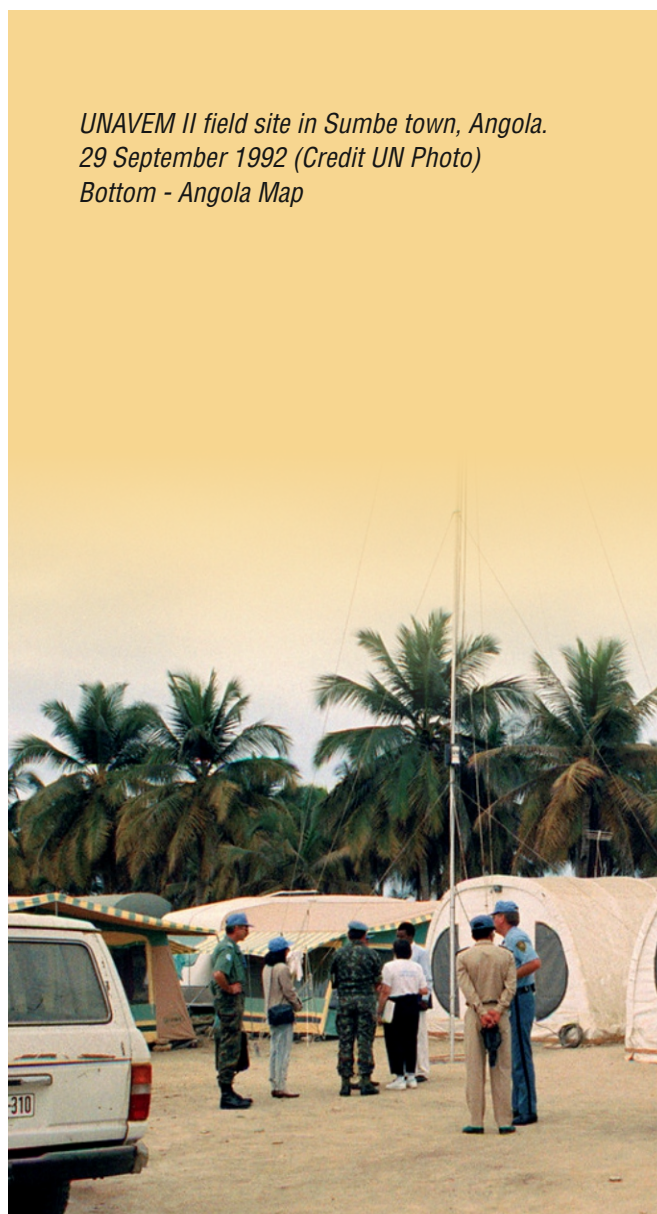
IN ANGOLA - UNAVEM

Indian Military Observers (Milobs) have formed part of many UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. This narrative describes the type of tasks undertaken by Military Observers in a Verification Mission.

It was a balmy day in the winter of 1988 at the Army Cadet College Wing of the Indian Military Academy (IMA), where I was enjoying the perks of a platoon commander when I was summoned by the IMA Adjutant, Lieutenant Colonel MS Balhara, KC, SM, a redoubtable personality and a war hero to boot. Wondering where I had slipped up, having been the Academy Duty Officer the previous week, I reluctantly crawled into his office, apprehension written all over my face.

Fully expecting a load of extra duties for the as yet unknown omission, I was pleasantly surprised to be greeted in an almost pally fashion. "Do you know where Angola is?" Seeing my blank look, he happily said, "Neither do I! But then we must quickly find more about it as we have been called for an interview at Army Headquarters by this weekend!" Adding that whatever material, I could cobble together in the short time available should be shared with him, I was dismissed to my own devices. I rushed home to find a distraught wife who had already been informed of the happenings by well-wishers along with graphic details of the dark continent and its unending bush wars.

UNAVEM II field site in Sumbe town, Angola.
29 September 1992 (Credit UN Photo)
Bottom - Angola Map



In those pre-Google days, there was not much I could collect despite many fruitless hours spent in the Academy Library's reference sections. The Encyclopaedia Britannica briefly mentioned an ex-Portuguese colony rich in resources and sharing a vast coastline with the Atlantic Ocean. With visions of a Goa-like place, I went happily for the interview (albeit without much material that I could share with the Adjutant). We both had a vague idea that this oil-rich region of Southern Africa was in the middle of a bloody and long-drawn conflict that was typical of the Cold War era with many players and proxies and spread over a wide swathe of real estate.

To cut a long story short, I was pleasantly surprised to have made the cut, as did Mahavir Singh Balhara, our combined lack of cheat notes notwithstanding. We were sent back to IMA by the Staff Duties Directorate to get our home front in order before we were marched off to the African bush as UN Milobs in a mission named UN Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM).

It was a small team under Lieutenant Colonel Balhara, comprising of three majors (Anil Gupta, a Gunner, Narinder Singh from Maratha Light Infantry and AK Pathak, a signaller) and two junior captains (Deepak Ahuja, a suave sapper and the solitary bachelor, and self).

The Angolan Story

The Angolan conundrum was a unique one, inextricably linked to Southwest Africa (now Namibia) to its South, originally a German colony which was handed over to South Africa after the Great War under a League of Nations mandate. Since the early 1960s, when a wave of armed independence struggles swept over Africa, a freedom movement against the apartheid regime was born

called the Southwest African People's Organisation (SWAPO).

Angola, independent from Portuguese colonial rule since 1975, gave an impetus to this fledgling movement turning it into a hard-hitting insurgency. All military and financial support to SWAPO flowed through Angola, mostly from the communist bloc (although I did see SWAPO combatants driving around the Cueto Cuanavele area in Southern Angola, close to Namibia, in Indian Nissan one-ton four-wheel drive vehicles and Mahindra jeeps mounted with 106 mm RCL guns wearing our camouflage tunic and trouser!) Angolan troops, supported by Cubans, were meddling actively in Namibia, which attracted the South African Defence Forces (SADF) into the melee, along with their CIA supporters and mercenary hanger-ons.

Angola was undergoing its own share of troubles. After a bitter and bloody fight for independence, the pro-Soviet People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) had come to power, trumping the National Union

for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) financed and armed by the Western powers through the SADF. However, Jonas Swavambi, the UNITA honcho, was not one to give up easily and amply encouraged by the West, continued to wage a desperate struggle, many a time coming close to capturing the capital Luanda in a ding-dong battle that ravaged the countryside. Then the Soviet Union stepped in, sending its protégé Cuba with its ground and air component (reportedly over 100000 strong) to prop up the Luanda regime of President Santos. The battle raged on for almost a decade, swinging from one side to another, with the professionally minded Cubans turning the tide gradually in favour of MPLA.

The turning point came in 1987-88 in the now famous battles of Cuito Cuanavale, where the MPLA forces were supported by Cuban troops and airpower, SWAPO guerrillas, and African National guerrillas along with military advisers from USSR and Vietnam. They faced the SADF, the



Surrender of UNITA troops (Photo courtesy indianarmy.nic.in)

best fighting force in Africa and UNITA guerrillas armed with the best that the West had to offer. It was a conventional battle with one of the largest tank-to-tank engagements in Africa after World War II. It ended with a stalemate (although everyone celebrated victory). However, all sides came to a realisation that they could not afford to finance such a costly campaign for very long, and the UN was able to bring about a tripartite peace agreement.

The 1988 Agreement laid down the timetable for independence to Namibia, subject to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, a precondition set by South Africa for relinquishing its hold on its possession. The agreement was contingent on the closely monitored withdrawal of 50000 Cuban troops from Angola by sea and air, and this was to be done by the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM, later dubbed as UNAVEM 1), of which the six of us were pathfinders.

Concurrently, a sister mission was set up in Namibia called The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), deployed from April 1989 to March 1990 to monitor the peace process and elections there. Captain Devraj Anbu was a proud member of the said mission, and we occasionally ran into their Indian Milobs during border verification missions. Sanjay Bhide of the Parachute Regiment was one of those (a decade later, I was to take command of 14 Rashtriya Rifles that had been raised by him).

These were interesting times in the global sphere as UNAVEM marked the start of a climate of declining Cold War rivalries. UNAVEM was to suffer the typical mission creep that multinational peacekeeping efforts tend to slide into, as there are huge funds involved and money wise, it's a win-win situation for everyone.

The mission lasted from 1989 to 1998, when it was finally closed after a drawdown to a pure observer mission. But during its lifecycle, it saw one of the Indian Army's largest peacekeeping contributions, including the rotation of several infantry battalions, engineer and mechanised companies and scores of youthful Milobs and staff officers (including a few Colonels as Sector Commanders). The lucky participants got their first taste of UN peacekeeping in the Angolan bush and its sun-kissed capital of Luanda on the Atlantic coast, aptly named the Paris of Africa by its Portuguese founders. In such a large and complex mission, Indians were able to establish their reputation as efficient operational and logistical staff officers, although their self-assurance and refusal to kowtow to the Caucasians (who hold all the strings in the highly rigid UN peacekeeping bureaucracy) did not add to their popularity. But the Angolans loved us!

Life in the Bush!

For us in UNAVEM I, life was good. By March 1989, we were fully functional in Monitoring Team sites established at the seaports of Cabinda, Lobito, Luanda and Namibe and the international airport at Luanda. The UN, in an effort to keep everyone happy, despite the cost involved, rotated teams (nine members under a Lieutenant Colonel) from one outlying location to the capital Luanda every fortnight. Even in the outlying stations, the UN had hired comfortable Portuguese era houses, the most impressive one being in Lobito (a huge double-storey mansion perched on top of a hill, surrounded by sprawling gardens with a commanding view of the countryside and an Angolan Army BRDM armoured personnel carrier parked at the gate). Only the northernmost outpost of Cabinda, close to the border with Democratic Republic of Congo, was in a prefabricated shelter powered by generator sets.

The teams were transported in a Spanish F-27 Fokker Friendship painted in UN livery and manned by Spanish air and cabin crew. This antiquated aircraft (even our venerable Indian Airlines used it for a long time), although mostly reliable, had the tendency to lose power in one engine and drift away from the runway into the boggy grass. Thankfully, the Spaniards were good, and we never lost anyone, although there was not much revelry during the long flights. The flight to the northern outpost of Cabinda was especially interesting as it was in a single-engine Islander type aircraft with a single aircrew. You sat in the co-pilot seat, and if the captain was in a good mood, after a couple of cervezas during the refuelling stop when you had got on board, he might hand over the stick to you over the Atlantic Ocean. Our only aviator, AK Gupta, must have enjoyed these moments, not the rest of us non-flyers who were hard at prayer most of the long flight. The only briefing which we were given was to keep the Angolan coastline oriented continuously so that in case of ditching at sea, we would know which direction to paddle towards, if we did not want to head for Brazil.

Our job was to count every single Cuban man, woman and child entering and departing the country so that their total numbers in-country could be tracked. A certain percentage of withdrawal had to be certified by a deadline so that Lieutenant General Diwan Prem Chand (the Indian Force Commander of neighbouring UNTAG who was in his second command of a UN peacekeeping mission) along with Captain Devraj Anbu and his friends based in the beautiful windswept city of Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, could go ahead and unfurl the Namibian flag. We succeeded quite well because on the due date, Namibia celebrated its independence (within less than a year), and Anbu and company were back home with bags and baggage. Fortunately for us, the Angolan sojourn was to continue for almost 16 months (thanks to the magnanimity of Staff Duties Directorate and a little string-pulling by our well-wishers in the Indian Embassy in Luanda who were frequent guests to our comfortable UN Headquarters with perhaps the only functional swimming pool in Angola).

The most complex part of the verification was the physical inspection of the border regions where the Cuban / Angolan forces were locked in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with the guerrillas/mercenaries of Jonas Swavambi, and the battle-hardened Boers of the SADF. The area was ill-served with roads, and thus all verification had to be carried out by air with short drives over mine infested jungle tracks in four-wheel drives.

Since ours was an observer mission only, there being no formed troop contingents or air assets under UN command, we had no choice but to use nondescript Soviet-era helicopters piloted by Angolans whose idea of a pre-flight inspection was viciously kicking the tyres before take-off. While waiting for the pilots

to arrive, we used to mark 'UN' in as large letters as possible with white masking tape on all sides, including the belly of the aircraft. However, since the Angolan pilots insisted on carrying loaded rocket pods on both sides of the stub wings, I wonder if the UN logo made any difference in our proclaimed neutrality. We were acutely aware that the Angola Army had little control over the countryside around the airfields, including in the capital Luanda and the UNITA would bring down an aircraft from time to time, using the toys supplied by the yanks. The pilots were understandably even more concerned as they went straight up on take-off to gain a safe height and for landing, put one wing down and came spiralling down almost on top of the runway itself. We learnt very quickly to avoid hearty meals before any trip in an Angolan Air Force aircraft lest we ejected the contents in a gross manner in the already stuffy cabin.

The Cuban Army was a wonder to watch. Manned almost entirely by conscripts, many of them university graduates, it had a large number of superbly confident female soldiers at all levels. They were armed with the phased-out equipment passed on to them by the Soviets, including functional petrol engine T-34 tanks, which till then I had only seen in Hollywood war movies. Before any piece of equipment was put on board a ship for the long journey to

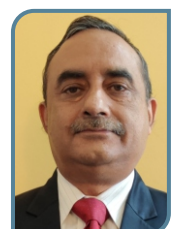
the Caribbean, every vehicle/AFV was dismantled down to its bare chassis, cleaned, painted, and put together with loving care and sanitised, all by hand with many women mechanics working shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts.

Serving with professional soldiers from a variety of countries like Brazil, Spain, Norway, the then undivided Yugoslavia, undivided Czechoslovakia, Jordan, Algeria, and the UN international staff from all corners of the globe was an experience by itself. While we may pride ourselves on our professionalism, we have much to learn from other nations too. For one, the adherence to Standard Operating Procedures which other countries rigidly adhered to, was an eye-opener; 'on watch duty', even in a remote outpost, meant being dressed in uniform with boots on and seated on the table next to the HF radio set, and not lying down comfortably on the nearest cot in your lungis with the handset placed strategically on the pillow.

The experience gained in this international work environment was to hold me in good stead when I got my second UN assignment in Sudan as the Chief Operations Officer almost two decades later. But then that's another story, perhaps for some other time.



Major General Ajay Sah (Retd) was commissioned into 5 GARHWAL RIFLES on 07 June 1980. He is a reputed professional and attended the Command and General Staff Course at Fort Leavenworth, USA. He commanded a Rashtriya Rifles Battalion and a Rashtriya Rifles Sector and has served twice in UN missions - in Angola as a Military Observer and in Sudan as the Chief Operations Officer. He is presently settled in Bengaluru.



Maj Gen Ajay Sah

THE INDIAN BRIGADE IN SOMALIA

Some UN Missions don't achieve their planned objectives, but the Indian troops have not been found wanting in their conduct in such missions. The author highlights the Somalia situation, which led to the mission being wound up.

The last flight carrying Indian Army personnel from New Delhi landed in the afternoon at Mogadishu airfield on 3rd October 1993. That night the Mogadishu skyline flashed incessantly with streaks of tracer fire and heavy explosions were heard all over the war-ravaged city. The American operation was in progress, later depicted in the movie *"Black Hawk Down"*. An American Black Hawk helicopter was shot down and the pilot was dragged through the streets of Mogadishu and shown to the whole world on television by the militia led by the warlord Mohammed Farrah Aidid. The Indian peacekeepers, concentrated in Mogadishu were alert in their tented camps located between the airfield and the sea. This was the third Indian Brigade inducting for UN peacekeeping after Korea in the 1950s and Congo in the 1960s.

It had taken less than a year for 66 Mountain Brigade located in the East of India to transform itself into 66 Independent Infantry Brigade with an organization tailor-made for the UN mission in Somalia. With three infantry battalions, a mechanized infantry battalion, a squadron of T-72 tanks and a light artillery battery, it was a formidable combined arms formation. Having shed its legacy vehicles like the Nissan One Tonner, the Jonga and Shaktiman Three Tonner, the Brigade was equipped with a new generation of heavy, medium and light vehicles such as the Maruti Gypsy, the harbinger of change in the entire fleet of vehicles in the Indian Army. Units and personnel came from all over India with about 40 military special trains carrying personnel to New Delhi and vehicles,



Somalia has been a problem state for decades, with rampant lawlessness, violent strife and civil war conditions prevailing. UN interventions too have failed to restore peace and calm.



tanks and equipment to Mumbai. The personnel with their baggage flew in from Delhi to Mogadishu and the equipment was shipped in five cargo ships from Mumbai to Mogadishu Port with RO – RO (Roll on – Roll off) ships for the vehicles and tanks.

Mohammed Siad Barre, the military dictator of Somalia had been overthrown by clan-based militias, plunging the country into a bloody civil war in 1991. In this internecine warfare, clans fought with each other leading to destruction and famine. Food and medicines coming as international aid was looted and sold by clan militia. Due to the unacceptable humanitarian situation, the USA launched ‘Operation Restore Hope’ to enable safe passage and distribution of aid. Under UN Security Council Resolution No. 794, the UNITAF (Unified Task Force), a coalition force led by the USA, was to create a safe environment for conduct of humanitarian operations. The UNITAF transitioned into UNOSOM – United Nations Operations Somalia.

As the Indian Brigade prepared for its operational tasks at Mogadishu, clan warfare was raging all over Somalia. As part of their scorched-earth policy, the clan militias would even destroy or poison each other's sources of water, leading to deaths due to lack of water. Areas in and around Mogadishu were controlled by Mohammed Farrah Aidid of the Hawiye Clan; he was Somalia's Ambassador to India in the 1960s. In the South Western Bay – Bakool Region the Rahanweyn clan ruled under Ibrahim Mohamed, the Malak Mukhtar. The Southern Region of Kismayo was controlled by the warlord Mohammed Said Hersi Morgan, son-in-law of Siad Barre, the erstwhile dictator. He was infamous as “Butcher Morgan” due to his cruel and violent ways. The clans targeted all movement of food and medicines. Since the main seaport and airports were at

Mogadishu and Kismayo, these became primary targets of the warlords. To the interiors, a 240 km long road connected Mogadishu to Baidoa, (the biggest town of the Bay-Bakool Region), along which clan militias would ambush international aid convoys. The situation in Kismayo was insecure as the deployment there consisted of small teams of Belgian Paratroopers who could not effectively counter Butcher Morgan's militia. The French Foreign Legion Brigade deployed in and around Baidoa, faced severe water scarcity and despite drilling 15 borewells could manage only 25000 litres of water per day, which was barely sufficient for its troops. About 100 km Northwest of Mogadishu was Baledogle (on the road to Baidoa), with an airport which was used for landing aid supplies.

With 5500 personnel and 700 vehicles, the Indian Brigade required a large amount of water. The entire water requirement of Mogadishu was met by desalination done by American ROWPUs (Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units). During the month long stay at Mogadishu in its concentration area in tents, each person including the Brigade Commander, Brigadier MP Bhagat (later Major General), had to survive on ten litres of water per day, for all purposes.

The Force Headquarters (HQ) for UNOSOM headed by the Turkish General Cevic Bir, issued operational orders for the deployment of the Indian Brigade in November 1993. The Brigade HQ with support elements and 3rd Battalion Mechanised Infantry (3 MECHINF) was earmarked to Baidoa, the main town of the Bay-Bakool Region. 2nd Battalion of the Jammu & Kashmir Light Infantry (2 JAKLI) was deployed in the Bakool Region in Guf Gudur. 5th Battalion of the Mahar

Regiment (5 MAHAR) was located near Baledogle airport, roughly halfway between Mogadishu and Baidoa. To control violence in the South by Butcher Morgan, 1st Battalion, the Bihar Regiment (1 BIHAR) with an Independent Squadron of 7 CAVALRY and a company of 3 MECHINF were deployed in Kismayo. The seaport and the erstwhile international airport at Kismayo were held by the Belgian Paratroopers, the hinterland and town being under the control of Butcher Morgan. The Indian Brigade was thus deployed over an area of about 300 by 400 km.

The UN Force HQ and the Indian Brigade had a major logistical challenge - that was to provision for sufficient water. 25000 litres produced by the French Brigade with much lesser strength would not suffice for the Indian Brigade. Having anticipated this, the Brigade had come fully equipped to drill wells. The Field Engineer Company of the Brigade was equipped and trained to drill seven deep bore wells. Before moving the major part of the force, the Engineers moved in to drill wells. The main concern was to find the right spot with sufficient water. The UN helped by providing a satellite-based hydrographic survey of the area. The erstwhile head of Somalia Water Works shared his knowledge of the water table of the region. After considerable reconnaissance and planning, a spot was selected 60 km North of Baidoa. Apart from the need for water, it was also a matter of national pride that the first “Indian Well” should produce enough water. The Engineers were optimistic as the drilling rig commenced operations. Within a week their optimism was vindicated. The first Indian Well yielded



Captain Rajesh Menon of the Indian Brigade with the warlord Mohammed Farrah Aidid

60,000 litres per day compared to 15 wells of the previous forces, providing a meagre 25,000 litres per day. Sufficient storage capacity was developed and water transported day and night over the 60 km to Baidoa from the well, before the Brigade moved to Baidoa. Subsequently, seven 'Indian Wells' were set up all over the Area of Responsibility (AOR) of the Brigade yielding a total of 250,000 litres of water per day. This enabled distribution of water to the civilian population in areas where people had died due to water scarcity.

During the road movement from Mogadishu to Baidoa, the clan militias tested the Indians by firing at convoys. Years of civil war had ensured sufficient supply of Kalashnikov weapons (AK-47) amongst the population and even young children knew how to operate them. The clan leaders only had to provide ammunition and "Khat Money" to militiamen. Khat (*Catha edulis*) being a leaf which the locals chewed to get a high, euphoric feeling. Before the arrival of the Indian Brigade, the Pakistani Brigade deployed in Mogadishu had lost 25 soldiers killed in action on 5th June 1993.

The main operation for the Indian Brigade involved securing the 240 km road from Mogadishu to Baidoa for movement of international aid. This task was given to 5 MAHAR located at Baledogle. To prevent casualties, the UN provided some M-113 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs), these were used effectively by 5 MAHAR. The Indian Contingent had an aviation element with five Chetak helicopters of the Army Aviation and two of the Indian Air Force. Few of these were fitted with Medium Machine Guns (MMGs). In an ambush on the road to Baledogle, the protection lead vehicle of the convoy was fired upon by a "technical" (pick-up van fitted with an anti-aircraft gun). One Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) and seven soldiers of 5 MAHAR were killed in action. Two MMG-armed Chetak helicopters took off and followed the 'technical' which had vanished into the surrounding bush, after the ambush. The helicopter hunt for the 'technical' continued for a long time with the MMGs firing at high intensity. Finally, the 'technical' was hit by incendiary rounds. A ground force rushed to the area, guided by the helicopters and recovered the 'technical' fitted with ZU-23 anti-aircraft cannon and the charred bodies of the militiamen who had ambushed the protection vehicle of the Indian convoy. This was the first time that any UN contingent had succeeded in destroying a 'technical' and personnel involved in an ambush since operations began in Somalia. This was widely covered by the international as well as Indian mass media, as a successful operation.

In Kismayo, 1 BIHAR dominated the areas beyond the seaport and airport and limited the activities of Butcher Morgan. By extensive patrolling and surveillance in the Bay – Bakool area, 3 MECHINF and 2 JAKLI battalions controlled clan violence and enabled the distribution of aid by international agencies. The distribution of water to the population and the running of an orphanage in Baidoa fetched the Indian Brigade a lot of goodwill that helped in the operations.

In all, there were 28 countries whose troops were deployed in UNOSOM. While the focus of some of the larger contingents was on elimination of militia, the Indian Brigade focused on creating a secure environment to facilitate humanitarian operations. The following activities earned the Brigade a lot of credit and goodwill:

- **Security of Roads & Markets.** Effective patrolling and area domination, rendered movement along roads and markets much safer as the clan militias could not perpetrate violence. The local population, after years of civil war violence could lead normal lives with their agriculture and livestock.
- **Sharing of Water.** In a water-scarce area, the generation of sufficient water from the Indian Wells and sharing it with the local population earned immense goodwill. This was particularly true in Baidoa, where thousands of people had died earlier due to water scarcity.

- **Kick-Starting the Economy.** The violent civil war had halted major economic activities. The Indian Brigade encouraged the locals to start firms that bid for UN contracts such as road construction, water and food transportation, rejuvenation of market places and so on. This ensured a reasonable flow of UN expenditure to the local population which otherwise was going to well-established international contractors. This kick-started the civil war ravaged economy.
- **Medical Care.** In a country where thousands of people had died or suffered from famine, disease and water scarcity, medical care was very necessary. The Indian Brigade had come fully equipped with a full-fledged multi-speciality hospital, sufficiently stocked to look after the civilian population. Even the clan militias ensured that the Indian medical facilities were not attacked; such was the reputation of the Indian Hospital.
- **Cultural Revival.** Death and destruction caused by the civil war and famine had made the people forget their music, dance, literature and cultural roots. The Brigade encouraged such activities and revived music groups and helped them broadcast their music and programmes over FM radio. This cultural revival earned the Brigade tremendous appreciation from the local population.

After 'Black Hawk Down', President Clinton decided to pull out American Forces. By March 1994, the US Forces pulled out in a major amphibious cum air evacuation. Contingents also made their own plans for de-induction, as it was not

certain how long the mission would continue. While movement to Mogadishu and de-induction from there by sea and air had its own challenges, it did not pose as serious an operational challenge as Kismayo did. The seaport and airport at Kismayo had a creek in between, besides being about 20 km apart. The seaport linked to the mainland through a narrow isthmus, dominated by a hill called "Hamburger Hill", for its shape. Evacuation would involve pulling out the troops from the airport to the seaport and sailing off in a cargo ship with all the personnel, vehicles including tanks and equipment. The main threat was that Butcher Morgan would try to interfere in the evacuation by controlling the isthmus connecting the port to the mainland. Hence, the Hamburger Hill dominating the isthmus had to be held till the ship sailed off. The troops holding the high ground would have to be heli-lifted to a ship. In short, a classic amphibious withdrawal, for which Naval support would be essential. All major Western Forces had their Navies and Amphibious Forces on the horizon, to evacuate their soldiers. Despite many discussions and plans, as is usual in such international situations, no help was forthcoming from any other country. Finally, the Indian Government

approved a Naval Task Force to support effective de-induction. Rear Admiral (later Vice Admiral) R N Ganesh commanded the Naval Task Force that arrived. The flotilla consisted of a destroyer, a tanker and a Landing Ship Tank (LST). The de-induction from Kismayo went as per plan. The platoon of 1 BIHAR guarding the isthmus from Hamburger Hill was heli-lifted on the INS Ganga and the RO-RO cargo ship sailed off from Kismayo safely, with all Indian elements. I felt extremely proud to see the Indian 'grey hulls' off the coast, as the brigade de-inducted, assuring safety to the whole force. By Christmas Eve, 1994, the brigade was back home in India.

In many ways, the Indian Brigade's experience in Somalia laid the basis for joint operations, with the Indian Army, the Navy and Air Force operating jointly in an effective manner, on foreign shores. While UNOSOM as such may not have succeeded in its political mission laid down by the UN Security Council, the Indian Brigade ensured a secure environment and development in its AOR. UNOSOM earned an excellent reputation for the Indian Armed Forces internationally.



Lieutenant General Cherish Mathson, PVSM, SM, VSM, (Retd) was commissioned into 7 GARH RIF in June 1980, went on to command the same battalion. During his service, he held several challenging assignments and took over as an Army Commander on the Western Front in 2018. He is currently offering consultancy services to different Government organisations.



Lt Gen Cherish Mathson

INDIAN NAVY'S SOMALIA OPERATIONS

Adding to his personal recollections, the author has consulted some dramatis personae as cited. He has also drawn from *The History of the Indian Navy 1991-2000* authored by the late Vice Admiral Hiranandani and Colonel Anil Shorey's *Sainik Samachar* articles in March 2006 and May 2008.

Background

The State of Somaliland gained independence in 1960 but internal loyalties stood sharply divided between clans. In 1969 a military coup followed the assassination of the President and the Somali Democratic Republic came into being. However, it brought no comfort to the faction riddled society. The regime was ousted in 1991 by a coalition of clan-based war lords. In the ensuing power struggle, the coalition and governance collapsed and famine was widespread.

The international community and UN rallied to mount a massive humanitarian Operation Provide Relief and sent emergency rations to be distributed under supervision of unarmed military observers. This was extremely difficult due to large-scale hijacking and looting of international food convoys. On 24 April 1992, the Security Council established the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). The ongoing efforts/available resources were not adequate to cope with the situation and the UN Security Council (UNSC) authorised the use of all necessary means to assure a protected environment for humanitarian operations. It also called on Member States to provide military forces and resources.

The Unified Task Force (UNITAF) became a United States-led multinational force of 37000 (including 25000 US troops) comprising 22 armies and 9 navies. It operated in Somalia from 5 December 1992 until 4 May 1993.

Indian Participation

In December 1992, the Cabinet Committee on Security approved India's participation in the international humanitarian relief effort. The Indian Army inducted an infantry brigade



UH3H Sea King 42C of the Indian Navy - performed the critical task of helilifting the last troops of 1 BIHAR from Malabar Hill near Kismaayo.



group, while the Indian Navy deployed a task group comprising IN Ships *Deepak*, *Kuthar* and *Cheetah* under the tactical command of Commodore Sampath Pillai who was designated Commodore Indian Naval Force (COMINF). *“Even as the Army component was assembling in New Delhi pending issuance of formal sanctions and mustering their vehicles, armour, heavy equipment and kit; the naval task group sailed for action”* recalls Rear Admiral Sampath Pillai (Retd).

The Indian Brigade group arrived in Mogadishu in October 1993 and deployed in the hinterland. They acquitted themselves very well and were respected for their professionalism, integrity and empathy.

Operation Muffet

IN ships were deployed for seaward security, Search and Rescue, escorting / transporting humanitarian aid from Mogadishu to Kismayo and for our own logistics. *INS Deepak* was withdrawn in January 93 and *Kuthar* and *Cheetah* were relieved on task by *Sukanya* in February 93. In turn she was relieved by *Subhadra*, *Sharada* and *Suvarna* over the next six months. To facilitate real-time communications and coordination, three officers on COMINF staff were positioned ashore in March 1993. Among them, Lieutenant Commander R Hari Kumar, presently Chief of the Naval Staff, headed the Indian Naval Liaison Organisation (INLO) to coordinate with the UNITAF, UNOSOM and NGOs. He represented Indian Forces at all meetings, intelligence briefings and was the nodal point for liaison cells set up by 22 countries.

The naval representation from ashore was withdrawn in June 1993 and IN ships returned in October 1993 on conclusion of *Operation Muffet*.

UNOSOM II

On 26 March 1993, the UNSC expanded the mandate of UNOSOM. The US military operation had been beset with difficulties from the beginning. They staged several strike and special operations but with limited success. On 03 October 1993, the US Forces staged a seventh attempt to capture General Aidid and his top lieutenants but the mission did not go as planned. Two US Army helicopters were shot down in quick succession. After 17 hours of continuous fighting, the surviving US troops were finally rescued by an international force. The battle left 18 US soldiers dead and 84 wounded. Some readers would recall the Hollywood movie *“Black Hawk Down”*. President Clinton withdrew US troops from Somalia in March 1994, followed soon thereafter by all Western nations. By March 1995, others too withdrew and UNOSOM II was wound up. The UN intervention in Somalia, which started as a humanitarian mission, failed.

De-Induction of the Indian Brigade

By November 1994, most nations had withdrawn their forces and Indians too were ready to leave. An international requisition was sent out inviting bids for de-induction of the Indian Brigade, on an urgent basis. But there were no takers. *“De-induction of the Indian Brigade on a UN mission, which normally should have been the UN responsibility, became an Indian Navy task. Contrast this with the US and other countries’ contingents whose de-induction, underwritten by the UN, was secured by US and Italian warships led by the Garibaldi which were a part of the UNOSOM II.”* recalls former Chief of the Army Staff, General Deepak Kapoor (Retd) who was Chief Operations Officer as a Colonel on staff of the Force Commander.

Flying his flag in the Ganga, with *Godavari* and *Shakti* in company, the Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet (FOCWF) Rear Admiral Ravi Ganesh, was tasked to ensure safe de-induction of the Indian Brigade. Both the two missile frigates carried two Sea King Mk 42 C helicopters each and the tanker *Shakti* carried two gun-mounted Chetak helicopters – one of them from the Army.

There were some concerns, of course. While the *Ganga* was fully worked, she was long overdue for a Medium Refit; *Shakti* had just emerged after a three-year Medium Refit but was not adequately worked up; the *Godavari* was somewhere in between. Given that the planning was for an opposed de-induction, the 57mm (2.7 inch) main guns of these frigates were not ideal for shore strikes when compared to the 115mm (4.5 inch) guns on some of the older Leander-class frigates. Today’s more balanced Navy provides for a much better mix of options.

Preliminary Movements

When the frigates made a rendezvous with the tanker *Shakti*, she was literally going in circles because her rudder was stuck! As even lay readers can imagine, for fuelling at sea, the tanker needs to steer steadily. A pin in the rudder had sheared and the connecting rod was bent. *“Shakti crew toiled valiantly, successfully disengaged the 30 ton rudder and freed it for limited functionality using secondary means”* recalls Commodore Vipin Misra (Retd), the then C.O. This was a great relief for the tanker crew but a nightmare for the frigate Captains who would no longer be able to fuel abeam and would for the remainder of the deployment be fuelling astern from a ponderously yawing tanker. The



INS Ganga (Photo courtesy en.wikipedia.org)

Fleet Commander was at his non-plussed best – with a cool *que sera, sera* attitude.

During passage, the ships worked up for the task ahead that included extensive firing from the 57 mm and 30 mm guns and some customary nautical fun and frolic like ‘Crossing the Line Ceremony’ when crossing the Equator etc. A joke doing the rounds below decks related to the possibility of ammunition being exhausted before the hostilities began.

There were other challenges, that space does not permit mention, which required us to repair weapons and sensors in challenging conditions underway. It still makes me proud to think of the diligence and innovativeness of our crew to keep the teeth of our ships sharp.

Once off Kismayo, we familiarised ourselves with the scene of action, planned and practised manoeuvres especially keeping in mind that the last of the withdrawing troops would be most vulnerable because there would be nobody on the ground to cover them. A

other moved at a high speed to be in position by the time the first ship completed slow run. With some practice and a lot of steely nerves both the ships’ command team, most ably supported by the engine room crew and indeed the entire ship’s company at Action Stations, mastered this manoeuvre.

Operation Shield

On 06 December 94, we flew all our helicopters over Kismayo in a show of force. The Brigade Commander and his staff from Mogadishu, were airlifted to the Flagship to call on the FOCWF and discuss/ finalise plans for the de-induction.

The Brigade units in hinterland had already withdrawn to Mogadishu after handing over charge to local Somali authorities and flew out in chartered aircraft. Meanwhile intelligence and radio intercepts by our ships indicated that at least three militant groups were planning to force their way to seaport. Accordingly, the plan was for the 1 BIHAR battalion to withdraw from Kismayo town and **concentrate itself in three areas** viz. **Marolles Complex**, a facility under the Indian troops’ control, for a quick retreat of personnel and armour to the Malabar Hill /seaport; **the airport** - for transportation of troops to Mogadishu by air; and **the seaport** - for loading the equipment packed in containers, armour and vehicles into the ships. The troops would move to airport under fire cover to be provided by a squadron of T-72 tanks of 7 Cavalry, for flying out. The tanks, and all heavy equipment would be embarked on two chartered merchant ships which would sail under the

hill dominating the port area *Hamburger Hill* by the Americans and renamed *Malabar Hill* by the Indians, was identified as the spot from where the last two helicopter loads of the rear guard would be airlifted. A race course pattern was drawn on the chart at sea which would be traversed continuously by the two frigates in such a way as to keep the *Malabar Hill* within range and in firing arcs of 57 mm of one ship or the other. It would normally be a taut but easy manoeuvre excepting that the very limited sea room available complicated further by a shoal, cross currents and gusty winds, made safe navigation a great challenge. The frigates practiced traversing a race track pattern in such a way that one moved past the target at slowest safe speed to keep it in gun sights longest and the

Navy's air surveillance and close weapon support. The rear guard of 40 handpicked ground troops would be air lifted from Malabar Hill by two Sea King 42 C helicopters under support from the frigates' guns. Vice Admiral Ravi Ganesh (Retd) recalls, *"The multiple-layer fire cover was elaborately planned because the Somali clan members had asked 1 BIHAR to leave all its weapons and equipment behind, which was out of the question. Intelligence indicated that, if it was not agreed to, the armed Somali militia had intended to take it all by force."* Their gun fitted lorries, called 'Technical's, visible at a distance from time-to-time lent credence to the threat assessment.

In the first phase, on 07 December 94, two chartered aircraft came from Mogadishu to fly out the main body of troops. The airport complex thereafter was handed over to the City Council and the troops guarding it moved across to the seaport under fire cover provided by four of the ships' helicopters as the ships themselves were poised to provide gunfire support. Meanwhile, MV Free Wave and MV Vinnitsa anchored at Kismayo.

In the second phase, the Battalion Commander handed over Marolles complex to a representative of the City Council and 208 troops headed for Malabar Hill while the armour/equipment proceeded to the seaport accompanied by the remaining troops. A large number of Somalis had converged towards the complex but were kept at bay by the four naval helicopters hovering over the approaches. As soon as it was vacated, the locals broke into the area and looted it.

In the third phase, merchant ships Free Wave and Vinnitsa completed loading troops and all their equipment between 08 and 10 December and sailed at dawn on 11 December from Mogadishu under cover provided by the watchful frigates, their armed helicopters and the 1 BIHAR rear-

guard. In a swift movement thereafter, the rear-guard regrouped at Malabar Hill. The local militia which had been vying with each other to take control of the seaport, were seen running for the UNOSOM rations /fuel left behind. We could hear their guns on board.

The Fourth phase was the trickiest of them all. After the two merchant ships sailed out, the scene shifted to Malabar Hill for the final de-induction. With the two frigates traversing their race course pattern ready with their guns, and their helicopter gunships providing fire cover overhead, the last 40 of the 1 BIHAR soldiers were picked up by the two Sea King 42C.

Immense relief and great satisfaction were writ large on all faces as the ships left confined waters, recovered their respective helicopters and shaped course for Mogadishu on conclusion of Operation Shield on 11 December 1994.

Operation Bolster

Matters were not over yet. The task group was again off Mogadishu on 12 December and anchored less than one nautical mile East of the airport. By this time, the remaining UNOSOM II troops including Indians had concentrated in and around Mogadishu airport. Equipment of the Indian Brigade, including 3 BMPs had already been positioned in the port and was being guarded by Egyptian troops.

Loading the chartered ships began immediately. The Vinnitsa, Free Wave and Atlantic Lily sailed on 13/16 and 18 December 1994 respectively.

All Aboard!

The Naval task group continued to provide offshore security, air cover and coastal patrolling for the chartered ships as well as UN chartered aircraft as the

elements of Indian Brigade left Mogadishu for home. On 23 December 1994, as the task group weighed anchor, a loud cheer spontaneously went up as the ships' companies saw the last airliner take off with our remaining troops. The Admiral ordered the formation to shape course homeward at best speed often called "Bombay revolutions" for the engines.

The Indian Navy's *Operations Shield* and *Bolster* had concluded without a shot having been fired or any lives lost. It is worth acknowledging here that the Army-Navy jointmanship demonstrated in Somalia was not without some hilarious mismatches. Recalls Capt KK Agnihotri (Retd), then Gunnery Officer Godavari. *"Air Observation Post officer embarked in the helicopter was armed with Army Grid Maps to indicate spotting in Northings and Eastings. These bore no correlation with the standard naval charts which were to be used for naval gunfire support. It was entirely fortuitous, therefore, that no shots needed to be fired because those would have tested the boundaries of our jointmanship"*. The cartographic disconnect notwithstanding, it was a part of the plans to blow up with naval gunfire the causeway leading to the jetty in case the Somalis tried to advance during the last phase of Army de-induction.

Anticipating casualties in an opposed de-induction, the *Godavari* had been assigned an additional role as hospital ship. Accordingly, she also embarked Medical and Surgical specialists, an Anaesthetist, Operation Theatre equipment and appropriate medical stores. In fact, one of the cold rooms which is normally used for stowing frozen meats etc, was earmarked as the mortuary.



INS Godavari (Photo courtesy en.wikipedia.org)

Conclusion

The IN's deployments for *Operations Muffet* and *Shield/Bolster* reaffirmed to the international community of India's resolve to play a meaningful role in UN peacekeeping efforts and, for the first time, demonstrated India's ability to hold its own when the UN failed to deliver on its commitment to de-induction. For all the participants, the surgical precision of *Operation Shield* was immensely satisfying. For our Navy, this out of area deployment of ships for extended durations, autonomous operation of integral helicopters and innovative tasks performed by both were invaluable experiences. Self-sufficiency of India's defence services to undertake national and international missions across the seas was the biggest take-away for our own selves, for well-wishers as well as any adversaries who closely monitor our capabilities.

Epilogue

Let me end by mentioning two asides, one of how the services find ways

of relieving tedium and how we take setbacks in our stride.

The FOCWF temporarily transferred to *Godavari* and proceeded to Mombasa for an Operational Turn Round. To break the ship's company's ennui of being at anchor less than a mile from land and being unable to set foot ashore, I organised inter-departmental fishing and cooking competitions and our crew feasted on fish. Addressing them, I cited this example to illustrate how the natural resources within a nation's Exclusive Economic Zone can be exploited by outsiders when there is no unity in that nation.

One fine morning, the steering gear rod ordered by *Shakti* arrived by air from Mumbai in a large crate. All

excited eyes on board the task group were peeled as a helicopter took off from Mogadishu airport with the much-awaited package slung underneath in a cargo net, and headed for *Shakti*. The flight was watched yard by yard and somewhere the heat must have been felt because suddenly the package was seen to disengage from the helicopter underbelly and head towards its watery grave with a huge splash. There was stunned silence everywhere. Possibly, the release button had been pressed erroneously. When reality dawned, there was not much to do except to shrug and move on. It is not likely that the despair that was felt would have been articulated in the Loss Statement raised.

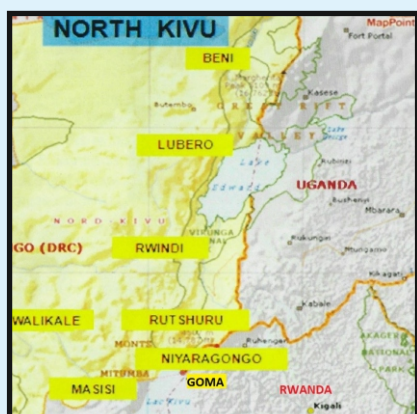
In every sense, it was **"Mission Accomplished."**



Vice Admiral Pradeep Kaushiva, UYSM, VSM (Retd), commissioned in January 1968, commanded four ships. He was the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, Deputy Commandant National Defence Academy and retired as the Commandant National Defence College, New Delhi after 40 years of naval service. He also held many key staff and instructional appointments. Post retirement, he was Founder Chairman of the Oceans Beyond Piracy - India Working Group and the Director, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi.



**Vice Admiral
Pradeep Kaushiva**



MONUC Parade - Members of the Indian contingent ready to receive medals, in recognition of their service. (Photo courtesy UN India)



(This article is an abridged and edited version of 'Countering Volatility and Instability in Democratic Republic of Congo', an article by the author published by the Centre for UN Peacekeeping, New Delhi in "Blue Helmet Odyssey – Edition 2022 Volume 1").

Challenging Times

in North Kivu Province

Peacekeeping tenures are rarely peaceful, as the contingents have to deal with violent groups and many other spoilers. Risks have to be taken in such operations. The author highlights some action stories from his tenure in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

2010 - 11 was a difficult time in DRC. The predominantly Tutsi National Congress for Defence of the People (CNDP) had brokered a precarious peace with the government after a serious insurrection. Its cadres were concentrated in the Eastern part of the DRC in the Kivu province. Despite having joined the government forces, troops loyal to CNDP continued to covertly support their own set of leaders.

On the other hand Eastern DRC continued to be flush with Hutu refugees from Rwanda, settled in villages in the remote jungles of the Kivu Province. This led to a large presence of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) militias in these areas as well.

Post the Rwandan Civil War, while Hutus and Tutsis had their own interests in Eastern Congo, there were a number of other smaller armed militias who wanted their writ to run in their own local areas. These were Mai-Mai militias, created for protecting their own communities, yet often preying on their own people.

It was in this volatile environment that I took over the command of North Kivu Brigade on 01 September 2010. The brigade comprised four Indian Battalion Groups (INDBATTs), a Battalion Group each from Nepal, South Africa, Uruguay (motorised), Jordanian Special Forces and other supporting contingents.



The author interacting with locals in North Kivu Province

Hitting the Ground Running

On the day of my assumption of command, there was a high level visit of Mr Atul Khare, the Additional Secretary General at UN Headquarters (HQ), the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and the Force Commander to my Brigade HQ at Goma. While I was busy with the visit, the Commanding Officer (CO) of the South African Battalion informed my staff that there was less strength in his Temporary Operating Base (TOB) at Kalembe and there was an urgent requirement of sending additional troops to the TOB from the Battalion HQ located on the outskirts of Goma. This helicopter, flown by international contractors, took off in the late afternoon with fifteen South African unarmed soldiers including five women soldiers.

Sometime after dark, the South African Battalion Commander reported that their troops had landed at a wrong place, Kilambo instead of Kalembe, and were surrounded by armed rebels. Hearing this, there was a shocked silence, as Kilambo, where the South Africans had

landed, was the stronghold of Janvier, leader of Mai Mai Janvier; a brutal and unstable leader who was expecting that he would be targeted by the UN.

Colonel Sanjay Singh, the Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff contacted Colonel SK Mandal, CO 5 JAK LI (INDBATT 3) at Sake, who had built excellent contacts in the area. He gave a call to Janvier on satellite phone, telling him that the South Africans had landed in his area as a result of a navigational error by the pilot and not as part of any larger plan to harm him or his group. After some difficult negotiations he managed to defuse the situation, asking the armed group to release the soldiers and assured them

that they would be extracted by helicopter in the morning. However, there was to be no rest for the night. After dark, the UN Sector Public Information Officer informed us that the Americans had received a satellite phone intercept of some problem brewing. Meanwhile the South Africans were also worried, since they had been receiving telephone calls from their country to bring back the soldiers immediately. It was clear that if the South African soldiers were not brought back at night, the situation would become international news by the next morning. I decided to launch the helicopters at night itself. The South African Air Force contingent volunteered to fly the Oryx helicopters to recover their soldiers. Now began the long vigil.

Much credit goes to the South African pilots who flew through the dead of the night using Night Vision Goggles, landed in a football field at Kilambo with the corners lit up by fire to indicate the location and rescued their soldiers sometime by 0130 hours after one failed attempt to land. I offered a silent prayer to Lord Krishna whose birthday it was; for having brought back the soldiers unharmed.

Securing the Rebel Commander in a Heliborne Operation

There had been a brutal incident of mass rapes of around 300 women carried out by Mai-Mai Cheka in the area of village Luvungi in the month of August 2010. A large scale operation code named Operation Shop Window had yielded no result. These mass rapes had been carried out by a group of militia under the Chief of Staff of Mai Mai Cheka, 'Lieutenant Colonel' Mayele. The 'Chief of Staff' and his militia lived deep in the jungles of Eastern DRC near village Irameso.

In October 2010, a very deliberate plan was devised and put into place. This involved giving credible and clear warnings to the leader of

this group (Cheka) to give up his own Chief of Staff, Mayele to the UN to face trial or face the consequences. The most dangerous part of the plan involved going right into the heart of the rebel stronghold located some seven days walk from the nearest road head. It was decided to execute the task by heliborne troops of the Indian Contingent along with interpreters and few UN civil staff.

The task was extremely complex and required coordination amongst pilots from India and South Africa flying a combination of reconnaissance, transport and attack helicopters. It also involved coordination and training of our soldiers including Ghataks of INDBATTS, UN civil staff, logistics and many others agencies. The degree of risk was enormous, as we expected 250 to 300 armed rebels in the area; and that the UN helicopters could only carry about 15 people. The ratio against the UN Military was overwhelming. This required detailed contingency planning, preparations and rehearsals which was painstakingly carried out by the Chief of Staff.

I oversaw the operations from a Cheetah helicopter based Airborne Command Post; with Indian Attack Helicopters providing continuous combat patrol over the target area. The ground forces were led by the Deputy Commander, Colonel (now Major General) Sanjay Singh, a Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) Officer. We flew low over dense primary forests, through thunder and lightning to land in an improvised football field in the remote village; arrested the Chief of Staff of the armed group and flew him out to justice in Goma. The lesson the Indian contingent sent out was loud and clear. There could be no tolerance for rape. The Rule of Law was supreme. This unparalleled effort by the Indian peacekeepers was spoken of

very highly by no less than the Secretary General of the United Nations. The Special Representative to the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflicts, Miss Margot Wallstrom, visited the mission from New York to laud the gallant action by Indian peacekeepers.

Our contingent in the Congo carried out at least six more such heliborne missions deep into rebel areas with a view to prevent adverse incidents. All these missions used the broad pattern evolved against Mai Mai Cheka; with me leading the missions on board an Airborne Command Post; and Colonel Sanjay Singh physically leading the ground troops comprising Ghatak Platoons and other troops of Indian Battalions. We conducted operations deep into the jungles at Oninga, Lukweti and Omate Gold mines. Enormous risks were taken by the Brigade in such pre-emptive operations; defusing problems before they occurred.

Trek to Nyaragongo – It was not all work

The Brigade HQ and officers posted around Goma decided to take a trek up to the mouth of Nyaragongo Volcano. Halfway up the mountain someone's hand brushed against a beehive located low and below waist level. All hell broke loose. There were

thousands of bees all over. We had to light a fire to drive the bees away. The bees had gone into the shirts & jackets of soldiers and officers. Colonel Sanjay Singh who was just ahead of me had borne the brunt of the attack and was critical. There was no option, given the possibility of anaphylactic shock due to multiple bee stings, but to call for helicopters. Our gallant Indian Aviators led by Colonel Sreedharan (now Brigadier), flying Cheetah helicopters, came to the rescue. They flew a number of sorties and airlifted all the casualties on low hover over lava rocks on slopes of Mount Nyaragongo to the Indian Level 3 Hospital at Goma. It was truly a test of their flying skills. Our Level 3 Hospital under Colonel Sanjay Gupta at Goma too rose to the occasion. Needless to say, everyone survived and in fact went back to the mountain and summited it the next month.

Having interacted with Armed Forces of many countries during my service, I know that the professionalism, commitment, dedication and compassion of the Indian peacekeepers is undoubtedly many a notch above other nationalities and they carry out their task well beyond the call of duty; rising to every challenging situation. My chest swells with pride when I stand before our troops.



Lieutenant General CP Mohanty, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd), an alumnus of RIMC Dehradun, NDA and IMA was commissioned into 6 RAJPUT in June 1982. The General Officer has attended DSSC at Wellington, HDMC at College of Defence Management and National Defence College. In an illustrious career spanning nearly 39 years, the General Officer served in varied roles encompassing all possible operational and terrain profiles. The General Officer is highly academically oriented and has researched extensively on China and South Asia & North East India making him a domain expert of these regions. He was the Vice Chief of Army Staff before his superannuation in January 2022



Lt Gen CP Mohanty

GOMA UNDER ATTACK: NORTH KIVU BRIGADE HALTS THE REBELS

This article is a tribute to Late General Bipin Rawat, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, Chief of Defence Staff who as a Brigadier led the North Kivu Brigade during a volatile and violent standoff and skirmish with rebel forces as they advanced towards Goma in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). His Deputy Commander pens down a brief account of the challenging times during the two conflicts where the North Kivu Brigade was involved in 2008-09

The Prevailing Situation

The Indian 301 Infantry Brigade Group (North Kivu Multinational Brigade) comprised four Indian Battalions, Air Force components of Mi-17 and attack helicopters and a flight of Cheetah helicopters. A Uruguayan Battalion and a South African Battalion were also under command the North Kivu Brigade. The brigade was also training the Congolese Government Forces (FARDC) with the two fold aim of enhancing their professional acumen and preparing them to undertake operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a hostile armed group of Rwanda present inside DRC.

Brigadier General Bipin Rawat assumed command of the North Kivu Brigade on 14 August 2008. Fragile peace prevailed

The Eastern part of DRC has been turbulent for the last two decades, with rebel forces trying to overthrow the Government. In addition, the ethnic clashes in neighbouring Rwanda between Hutus and Tutsis also resulted in large number of refugees in Eastern DRC, with their militia. The Indian Brigade in Goma has been a bulwark against such armed groups.



Brigadier Bipin Rawat as Commander of North Kivu Brigade, MONUC

in the North Kivu province where the Indian Brigade was deployed after the signing of the Goma Peace Accord in January 2008. Hostile Armed Groups (AGs) like National Congress for Defence of the People (CNDP) under Laurent Nakunda and Mai Mai groups continued to indulge in minor incidents of violence like looting and extortion. The CNDP continued to consolidate its economic and military strength. Operations against the FDLR were to commence from 01 September 2008.

Evolving Conflict

The cease fire signed between FARDC and various armed groups remained in place till 28 August 2008, though punctuated off and on with some cease fire violations, mutual suspicion and exchange of fire between the CNDP and the FARDC. A growing feeling of insecurity prevailed among the local population. Brigadier Rawat emphasised on physical and psychological preparation and training of all troops for any contingency. Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye, the Force Commander (FC) visited the North Kivu Brigade and was briefed by Brigadier General Bipin Rawat. After the briefing the FC remarked *'General Bipin, you are a thorough professional, having been here for just two weeks you have familiarised with every aspect of the mission and grasped the situation so well. I admire what the Indian Generals are made up of'*.

The Conflict Commences

The conflict started on 28 August 2008 near Rumangabu, North of Goma (HQ of North Kivu Brigade) and spread to several other areas with a rapid advance by the CNDP who pushed back Government Forces. The area of conflict was initially in areas bordering Rwanda, like Rutshuru and areas around but it soon spread

Northwards towards Rwindi. The fighting was intense in areas closer to Rutshuru and Rugari. The CNDP opened another front near Nyanzale by launching swift attacks on the FARDC. The FARDC panicked and withdrew in a disorganised manner, allowing the CNDP to capture their HQ as well as a large quantity of arms and ammunition. There were reports of atrocities, loot, arson and rape of women and young girls. The security situation rapidly deteriorated with an increasing influx of IDPs (internally displaced people) in thousands, who camped and moved to the vicinity of the Company Operating Bases (COBs) and posts of North Kivu Brigade units.

Bipin Rawat visualised the impact on the security situation, protection of civilians (PoC) and the UN assets. He briefed the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) and the FC and made certain recommendations. All additional forces were placed under operational command of North Kivu Brigade (URUBAT, RSABAT and Special Forces). One battalion was redeployed from South Kivu to North Kivu in Rwindi to reduce the gap between Goma and Beni. Rutshuru and areas of Nyanzale, Rumangabu, identified as flash points were reinforced. Escorts for logistic convoys and UN civil officials and medical teams were planned and coordinated which prevented loss of lives and essential supplies. Brigadier Rawat spelt out a clear concept of operations, based on anticipating the threat and events, developing cogent situational awareness and ensuring security of the bases and UN assets. Simultaneously, actions were to be taken to protect civilians.

The Indian Battalion (INDBATT) quickly reacted to the challenge and

halted the advance of CNDP. The Indian peacekeepers were also able to prevent a large quantity of ammunition of FARDC falling in CNDP hands. The CNDP launched attacks to capture Numbi for interdicting the Sake-Minova axis. The CNDP then attacked Rumangabu. The FARDC and units of North Kivu Brigade employed BMPs in the areas of Rumangabu and Nyanzale. Heavy losses were inflicted on CNDP and a unilateral ceasefire was declared by Laurent Nakunda on 11 September. Negotiations were carried out by MONUC for separating the warring factions.

Zone of Separation. The UN Mission in DRC (MONUC) proposed Zones of Separation between the FARDC and CNDP and the North Kivu Brigade ensured the redeployment of CNDP and FARDC to create a zone of separation for implementing the disengagement plan. Though both parties agreed, the zones of separation were not fully implemented.

Operational and Logistic Challenges. The North Kivu Brigade had to work out joint plans with the Congolese Army (FARDC), who were not transparent in their actions, dealings or plans. Information was not readily shared by these local partners. The difficult terrain, lack of roads, under-developed communication made vast areas inaccessible in a viable timeframe to the Blue Helmets. Protecting the population was the biggest bugbear, as the UN troops could not be everywhere. The people expected MONUC to have unlimited resources and expected them to resolve all their problems, failing which they tended to show their frustration



Brigadier Bipin Rawat discussing the plan with Lt Gen Babacar Gaye, the Force Commander at Goma airfield

through aggression, resentment, processions and stone pelting. There was a glaring shortage of troops for the large area of responsibility, which was further complicated by a complex politico-military situation. Induction and logistics sustenance was only by Mi-17 helicopters. Inclement weather and inadequate air resources posed constraints on operations as well as logistic support.

Anti-MONUC Feelings. North Kivu areas were full of rumours to malign the North Kivu Brigade units on inaction by MONUC Military and their failure to protect the civilians. There were violent actions and agitations by the local population against MONUC Units, UN officials and humanitarian agencies, possibly with the support and participation of rebel groups. The Second in Command of an INDBATT received injuries due to stone pelting. Brigadier General Bipin Rawat had been indicating the changing role of **'Peace Keeping' of the Brigade gradually transiting into 'Peace Enforcement'** for which there was a need to modify the Rules of

with conviction to safeguard the name and reputation of our country and interest of Indian peacekeepers. His analysis of the prevailing situation and recommendations were well taken by the UN.

Several brainstorming sessions were carried out by Bipin Rawat with the Air Force contingent commanders, FARDC (on required basis), MONUC civil section heads for PoC, maintaining lines of communication, reviewing deployment, optimisation of resources and use of helicopters as a force multiplier. The Indian Air Force contingent was taken on board to employ attack helicopters against the rebel groups as a show of force and to employ them to prevent genocide of the civil population, protection of important towns and communication centres of Goma, Sake and Masisi. Adequate safety measures were taken to prevent collateral damage. **This important decision proved to be a critical factor in breaking the advance and strongholds of CNDP and other rebel groups.**

War Drums Beat Again

The hostilities between CNDP and FARDC recommenced on 18 September 2008, with the CNDP better prepared with heavy weaponry including tanks and multi barrel rocket launchers (MBRLs) captured from the FARDC. The CNDP advanced towards Masisi and entered several villages in the area, resulting in a heavy exodus of locals concentrating outside the Masisi COB. All humanitarians and MONUC civil officials took refuge in the COB as FARDC was losing ground to the CNDP. At this stage on 19 September, attack helicopters were launched initially as a show of force and as a warning to CNDP and then rockets were fired on the advancing and entrenched CNDP cadres. This halted the CNDP advance and brought cheers to the civil population

Engagement and equipment of the Indian and multinational troops. The resources of the brigade were totally stretched with the requirement of PoC, escorts for humanitarian activities, essential supplies, logistic support for air maintained bases and casualty evacuation of several injured soldiers of FARDC. In the operations, yeoman service was rendered by the Indian Level III hospital at Goma in treatment of FARDC soldiers, civilians and Indian peacekeepers.

Brigadier Rawat kept the Indian Army HQ, SRSg, Force HQ and the Indian permanent mission in UN HQ in full picture and candidly put across his views in verbal and written form

who hailed the MONUC and Indian peacekeepers. This success spread like wildfire in DRC, UN HQ and the international community. It became evident to the CNDP that the North Kivu Brigade was serious about PoC. Thus the fall of Masisi was prevented. The SRSG and FC visited Masisi and were briefed on the operations. CNDP now occupied the heights along areas of White House and Celtel Tower. Heavy fighting and firing of Artillery, MBRLs and tanks took place between the FARDC and CNDP.

The INDBATT posts and Sake came in the cross fire of CNDP and FARDC causing damage to the COB and some injury to soldiers. A threat was now building up and Sake could fall to the CNDP. At this stage the INDBATT sent a strong message to CNDP on use of force if they violated the Buffer Zone and tried to advance towards Sake. Three BMPs were deployed on the approach to Sake. This worked and CNDP ceased their advance. FARDC regrouped to occupy the heights and the Buffer Zone was restored. The correct assessment, preparations and will to use force by Brigadier General Bipin Rawat prevented the fall of Sake and Ceasefire was again announced by the Defence Minister of DRC and CNDP on 22 September 2008.

CNDP Enters Rutshuru

Because of FARDC abandoning areas occupied by them mostly without fighting, setbacks occurred. A large number of IDPs converged around the COBs. Rutshuru had been one of the primary objectives of the CNDP. In September 2008, the local population was instigated and a South African patrol was surrounded and their APC (Mamba) was burnt.

In October 2008, when the CNDP resumed attacks towards Rutshuru, the NGOs and MONUC civilians were

rescued and brought inside the COB Rutshuru. CNDP moved close to the COB merging with the local population. Two strong patrols which were out of the COB for area domination and in support of FARDC, could not enter the COB due to huge crowds of locals and IDPs blocking all routes. The CNDP and other groups carried out loot and killings in the town, creating a massive humanitarian crisis. The COB had limited reaction capability, troops could not move out to provide protection to some IDPs.

This incident was exploited adversely by the negative and inimical forces, and anti-Indian media reporters. Statements by senior DRC Government officials were made that Indian peacekeepers did not respond to protect civilians and no more Indian peacekeepers were required in Congo. Under international pressure, a UN enquiry was ordered on the incident which later brought out the best possible response and reaction of the COB, under the circumstances and failure of the Government machinery, troops and local administration.

CNDP occupied Rutshuru on 27/28 October 08 pushing FARDC towards Goma. The attack helicopters and BMPs were again used against the CNDP advance towards Goma. During the operations one of the Mi-17 and Cheetah helicopter suffered damages due to ground firing. The Commander North Kivu Brigade had appreciated that the next offensive will be towards Goma and CNDP will attempt to capture Goma from two directions. He passed orders, for strengthening the posts, defence of Goma Airfield and UN assets and even entrenching of troops in case of cross fire and to retaliate with fire if the posts were

threatened. The military observers were integrated with the COBs and posts for protection, thus ensuring their safety.

Defence of Goma

INDBATT and some South African troops were deployed along approaches leading to Goma along with BMPs, air surveillance by Cheetah helicopters and support of attack helicopters. Some elements of CNDP and other rebel groups and some rogue elements of FARDC joined hands and entered Goma town carrying out looting and indiscriminate firing on 27/28 October. **The entire Government machinery collapsed and the Governor took shelter in INDBATT.** Attack helicopters and BMPs took on the CNDP cadres and FARDC was also motivated to occupy defences for protection of Goma. A stern warning was sent to CNDP, not to advance into Goma town. The deployment and use of force along with negotiations had a dramatic effect and CNDP halted its advance and **the fall of Goma** was prevented. A Buffer Zone was created and patrolled by UN troops. This remained for a few months after declaration of cease fire on 29 October 2008.

Operation Necktie II. The CNDP had exploited the gap between Masisi and Goma after their failure to capture Masisi and had advanced towards Minova (Pakistan COB) in South Kivu thereby cutting off the land route between North and South Kivu. This created panic in the Government at Kinshasa, UN HQ and in the international community. The SRSG and FC visited us and a requirement of



Brigadier Bipin Rawat inspecting a Guard of Honour in INDBATT

additional forces was projected. Brigadier Rawat along with the Commanding Officers and staff planned a bold operation by creating an ad-hoc Force of Indian and South African troops supported by BMPs and attack helicopters to advance South along the Sake-Minova Axis. This Task Force advanced swiftly with BMPs and used attack helicopters against the CNDP positions. The CNDP and other rebel cadres fled and the North Kivu MONUC troops linked up with the Minova Pakistan COB restoring connectivity and movement between North and South Kivu. This brought much relief to the Mission, Government of DRC and was an accomplishment of North Kivu Brigade. The credibility of UN peacekeepers, India and Indian soldiers was redeemed and restored, removing the negative and anti-India feelings and sentiments among the UN community and local population.

Impact of operations. The Cease fire after inflicting losses on CNDP brought in stability in the region, creating Buffer Zones and a suitable environment for negotiations. Talks between the warring

factions, CNDP, FARDC and international facilitators took place. Mr Obasanjo, the former COAS and President of Nigeria visited Goma twice in October and November 08 as the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General. He was briefed by Brigadier Rawat. He recalled his stay in India while attending DSSC course in Wellington and indicated his great regard for the professionalism of the Indian Army. He also met Mr Laurent Nakunda, the CNDP Chairman.

Visit of Mr Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary General to Goma

The UN Secretary General visited Congo and Goma to get a first-hand account of the political, social, security situation, derailment of the peace process and humanitarian issues. The anti- Indian stand of the Government of DRC, negative and false propaganda against Indian peacekeepers was discussed at Kinshasa with the President and Government officials. The Secretary General was briefed by Brigadier General Bipin Rawat on the operational and security situation and dedicated efforts of Indian peacekeepers beyond the call of the UN Mandate were highlighted. Much to the surprise of the Congolese Government officials and the Governor of Goma, the Secretary General spent almost three hours against the scheduled time of 40 minutes for interaction with Indian Contingent Officers and MONUC officials. In his address, the Secretary General lauded the contribution of India and Indian troops to the UN peacekeeping missions and sacrifices made by them to maintain peace in several war torn regions of the world and in Congo. He even mentioned that *"Congo has remained integrated due to the Indian troops and Indian government in 1961 and now"*. He recalled the supreme sacrifice of Capt Gurbachan Singh Salaria in Congo and thanked the Indian government, the North Kivu Brigade and other troops for bringing stability in North Kivu.

After the Ceasefire with CNDP and establishment of buffer zones in November 2008, the preparations to train FARDC for operations against FDLR were planned. This period saw readjustment of locations by FARDC, CNDP and resumption of humanitarian and NGOs' activities. There were several visits by EU country ambassadors and military chiefs, African Union Military, Egyptian Army Chief of Staff and others to assess the situation for troop contribution to the MONUC Mission. **It is pertinent to mention here that after seeing the ground situation, no one wanted to send combat troops but only logistics, communications, medical and air support elements.** We later learnt

that the Special Envoy of the President of Congo was sent to meet the Indian government requesting India to continue contributing troops, thanking and appreciating the role of Indian peacekeepers in Congo.

Rwandan Armed Forces (RDF) Operations against FDLR

The uneasy peace prevailing in North Kivu in December 08 was disrupted with calls on 20 January 2009 from border posts along the Rwandan border, that large scale movement of Rwandan troops crossing into Congo was noticed. Brigadier Rawat tasked me to ascertain the situation and movement. Flying in a Cheetah helicopter along the border, we observed four columns moving into Congo from the Rwandan side along the Road Goma-Rutshuru. The matter was reported to MONUC HQ and Force HQ. There was panic all over, as fears of mass killing and loot were expected. Once again IDPs started concentrating closer to the UN posts. The Commander made a quick analysis and plan of action putting aerial surveillance in place, and reorganising and establishing Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) for PoC. The RDF moved on three fronts in columns towards Rutshuru-Kinshasa, Rutshuru-Sake, Tongo-Nyanzale and later towards Walikale in the far Western Kivu along with some Task Forces of FARDC. Thankfully to the relief of all, the RDF maintained discipline and the fears of people were laid to rest. They neither set up bases nor launched any operations against FDLR. There were no major clashes and the FDLR melted away into the bush without confrontation with the joint RDF-FARDC Forces. It was **more of a Show of Force to demonstrate the political will and capability of RDF to flush out FDLR when required.** Finally on 25 February

2009, the FDLR returned back to Rwanda along the Goma-Rwanda highway amidst a warm send off and fanfare. Conditions for peace and stability once again dawned upon North Kivu and the planned rotation of troops and Military Observers and staff commenced. The integration of CNDP into FARDC started after screening. Some armed groups surrendered and joined the main stream and political process.

OP KIMIA II

The North Kivu Brigade then assisted operations of FARDC against the FDLR by training, mentoring, redeploying and providing air and logistic support to them. Consequent to some FARDC operations against FDLR, there were reprisal attacks against the civil population and PoC strategies were again put in place.

The North Kivu Brigade under Brigadier General Bipin Rawat and other multi-national troops along with the Air Force contingent continued untiring and dedicated efforts to maintain stability and peace. Bipin Rawat was called to the UN HQ to make a presentation on the Peace Keeping Role and recommendations for Peace Enforcement, which he had visualised

and apprised the SRSg, FC and Indian Military hierarchy. He completed his command of North Kivu Brigade on 13 August 2009 and de-inducted from the mission area with a feeling of great satisfaction, accomplishment and contribution to UN peacekeeping, wherein we saw a paradigm shift from **Peacekeeping to Peace Maintenance and Peace Enforcement.**

As a tribute to our (Late) CDS General Bipin Rawat, I would say that *'General Rawat (Then Brigadier Rawat) along with the Indian Brigade, redeemed the honour and rightful place of Indian peacekeepers steadfastly, amidst most challenging and adverse situations. Standing tall with conviction and courage, he played a crucial role in restoring stability in North Kivu and made an immense contribution to the peace keeping efforts of MONUC in Congo.'*

(This article is an abridged and edited version of 'Changing Dynamics of Peacekeeping in MONUC', an article by the author published by the Centre for UN Peacekeeping, New Delhi in "Blue Helmet Odyssey – Edition 2022 Volume 1").



*Lieutenant General JS Negi, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, VSM**, Pbd (Retd) was commissioned in 16 DOGRA in 1981 and commanded his unit in OP PARAKRAM. He has also commanded an ASSAM Rifles Sector in North East India, a Division in High Altitude on the Line of Control and then went on to command a Strike Corps. He was the Commandant, Indian Military Academy Dehradun prior to his superannuation in September 2020. He was the Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the North Kivu Brigade during the command tenure of Brigadier Bipin Rawat.*



Lt General JS Negi

PIPPER ON TARGET - FIRE!

Attack Helicopters were the most potent combat element during the operations against Armed Rebel Groups, who wanted to take control of Goma in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and played the crucial role of breaking the rebel attacks.

An attack helicopter pilot narrates his experiences in DRC.

Getting down from the high cockpit of my Mi-35 attack helicopter, I was barely able to take my weight on my legs, and my knees were atremble. With shaking hands, I removed my chamois leather gloves. I had just returned from a *live* mission, there was an adrenalin rush too. As an attack helicopter pilot, I had practiced firing weapons of differing hues from the platform a hundred times before, but, at inanimate targets. For the first time in my life, I had just fired my weapons at live human beings. The import of this started sinking in only after the engines of my helicopter went silent. I walked to the aircrew room in a daze, my mind numb. My nerves calmed as I sipped a cup of coffee.

It was the year 2006-07; and we were participating in our first major operation. Our helicopter contingent was located at Goma, an important town near the Eastern border of DRC as part of United Nations Mission in DRC (MONUC). Our duty



*A Mi-35 Attack Helicopter takes off
from Goma Airfield*

entailed maintaining peace by ‘use of force’. Goma was on the Rwanda border and was a gateway to Uganda and Kenya with whom a large volume of trade - both legal and illegal, flourished.

The weather was salubrious and the place so beautiful. But that was it. We operated amidst tension and strife in the politically weak and war-torn country where no one knew who was fighting from which side. Ironically again, the UN Contingents included Chinese, Pakistani and Indian troops - adversaries at home, working shoulder to shoulder to maintain peace in this foreign land, a mission that hadn’t found much success for many years.

DRC had once been a rich country, with the Congolese currency stronger than the US dollar. It was still rich, but the riches were being siphoned off by illegal exploitation, with the economy of many a nation thriving on the spoils. Consequently, the local people struggled in this nation locked in the middle of Africa. The Congolese Army had underpaid and poorly trained soldiers who brandished their weapons to exploit poor locals who could barely feed themselves. Within this army, were dissident groups, who would often break away from the so called ‘regulars’ and fight for supremacy. Sometimes, we, the UN troops, would be caught in the crossfire; and some UN peacekeepers had been killed in the past. Not much could be done to stop this brutal war, till some kind of stability was established in the region.

The town of ‘Sake’, close to Goma was the scene of recent fire fights. A self-styled “General”, Laurent Nkunda, was leading a large breakaway faction of the army, fighting the regulars. As per intelligence inputs and our reading of the battle, we visualized that the fighting would peter out near Sake and the militia disappear into hiding, as they normally did.

But in life, and more so in war, things do not generally happen as we think they will. One night, we were woken up from slumber by sounds of gunfire. It appeared as if Nkunda’s militia was closing in on Goma. This was soon confirmed by intelligence reports.

We learnt that as many as 10,000 rebels were advancing towards Goma. If they managed to take over the town, blood would flow and many innocents would die. The UN HQ in Goma would also be vulnerable. Withdrawal of the UN establishment from the area was discussed at meetings and a plan for de-induction finalized. The UN peacekeepers, over the years, had created excellent infrastructure and facilities albeit in temporary structures and had many assets that would be lost or destroyed if such a contingency were to happen. In a larger perspective, Congo would slip back into darker times of chaos and civil war.

The situation was grim and there was only one option - the warring faction *had* to be stopped, and stopped short of Goma, whatever the cost. We went into a huddle to plan what needed to be done.

Having been inducted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, we were allowed to use ‘force’ to maintain peace. But in this situation, since a large number of lives were involved, we needed a formal ‘go ahead’ from New York. Thankfully, the communication to and fro was quick, and a workable plan arrived at for execution.

Our action to stop the ‘enemy’ had to be swift and sharp. The Indian Army’s Brigade at Goma sent out their Infantry Combat Vehicles (BMPs) just outside the town to block the approach along the major road into Goma, should the militia manage to come that close. We were tasked to stop them much before they came within killing range of these BMPs. A simple, yet practical plan considering that the militia was armed only with rifles.

The BMPs rolled out to deploy along the road, in mutual support of each other. Our helicopters were ready for take-off, loaded with rockets and guns. As part of regular missions, we used to fly in pairs in the disturbed area and carry out what was termed as “*Show of Force*”. Just the sight of our



Attack Helicopter flight personnel standing in front of a Mi-35 at Goma, DRC



Heavily Armed Rebels with RPG Launchers and belts of machine gun ammunition

helicopters orbiting overhead swivelling the guns ensured that the fighting militia disengaged. But this time, this tactic was not going to work due to the sheer numbers involved.

We decided to use single aircraft for the ensuing missions so as to have aircraft available over the target area for longer periods. The plan was to threaten the militia by firing a few warning shots, and if that didn't work, fire a salvo of two rockets. The brief was to aim a little away from the 'targets' whilst firing these warning shots and see if it had any effect. And if the situation so warranted, we were to shoot to *kill* to stop them as a last resort. We were acutely aware that we were fighting a 'war' in a foreign country, a war that was not ours, against an 'enemy' who actually wasn't our enemy, and without clearly defined strategic aims or objectives. We were also mindful of the fact that we would cause much bloodshed if we went in for the last resort.

I was on a mission planned to Sake where intense fighting was on, late in the evening. Our infantry unit located there had been caught in the cross-fire and

on to them, and transmitted to the commander on ground, *"Request identity of people travelling in camouflage pickup truck heading South, out of Sake..."*

Pat came his reply on radio, *"Roger sir, stand by"*, and after a few seconds his voice crackled again, *"That is the local commander of the militia with his men, and he seems to be heading towards the hills to regroup"*. After a pause, he added, *"Request neutralize them, sir"*. My crisp reply of, *"Roger, Over and Out"*, conveyed my understanding of his plight and my determination to address the problem. The jeep was travelling at breakneck speed, billowing plumes of dust on the "kutchu" (dirt) road. As we went closer, we were spotted. This forced the jeep and its occupants into hiding into the thick foliage. The cat and mouse game had begun.

We orbited some distance away, with my sight fixed on the road where we had lost them. When they thought that we were out of sight, the jeep reappeared into the open and onto the road. We tried to get a shot at them this time. As we neared for the kill, he repeated the procedure of disappearing into the thicket. These guys seemed to be good at the game. The chase was getting exasperating and the tension building up in the cockpit. With fading light and fuel levels reducing, our mission would be a failure if we didn't get them in the next 10 to 15 minutes. With all the modern gadgetry on board, it was simple for us to keep track of the road as I did, and we had them on our screen as a moving blob of white and grey on the Infra-Red sight. However, to target them, we needed to get physically close to them, in a stabilized dive and put our 'pipper' on them - and that required at least a couple of minutes of exposure time. We decided to go further away from the area and ducked to very low heights over a grassy field. I assessed that if we

confined to their camp. They had asked for augmentation of troops and attack helicopter 'air support'. Reaching the area, I first decided to carry out an aerial reconnaissance to get a *'bird's eye view'* of what was happening around the town. We secretly hoped that the militia would run away seeing the armed helicopter and we would achieve our aim of diffusing the situation without causing casualties. But that was not to be.

Flying with me was a young pilot in the captain's seat, and both of us were keen to get into action. While we scoured the area, a pickup truck with 8-10 militia was spotted speeding away from the town towards the hills. Feeling that it was unusual, I focused my sights

allowed them to climb a small hillock just ahead of the point from where they had gone into the bush, we would have them out in the open with nowhere to hide. This would give us the time to aim and shoot at them. I briefed the crew of my plan and pumped them up. "Let's have some good shooting today! Recheck all switches on". It was the moment of reckoning for all of us in the cockpit. We *had* to deliver the weapons on target.

Predictably, the jeep came out of hiding and commenced its climb up the hillock. It would soon be travelling 90 degrees to us and clearly seen against the backdrop of the high ground. We zoomed up to 700 feet and commenced a shallow dive towards the target.

"Three kilometres; check Rocket Master 'ON', switches to 'Salvo'", I started the count down.

"2.5; Confirm sight selected to Auto".

"2 km; Steady. Hold her steady".

"1.5; Standby to fire"

"1.4; 1.3".

As we got into firing range, I yelled- "Three- Two- One...FIRE" over the intercom, as if adding to the boost of the rockets!

The aircraft seemed to stop in mid-air as rocket after rocket left the pods whooshing away to their destination, in a stream of smoke. The target did not stand a chance with a volley of 16 projectiles. I looked for impact through my sight. Amidst a cloud of smoke and dust, the rockets seemed to have straddled the target. We heard the explosions one after the other and saw the bright flashes of light as they impacted around the vehicle. We decided to do another run to do damage assessment. We had to be ready to fire another salvo if required.

As we came in for the run, we could see the target more clearly as the smoke and dust had cleared. Through my sight, I saw that the jeep had been reduced to a mass of

contorted steel. I saw that the driver was dead in his seat while the others had jumped off and died due to the flying shrapnel. There appeared to be no survivors. We flew back to base, after giving a call to the infantry unit commander, "target neutralized, returning to base...".

We did not get any sleep over the next three days that the fighting continued, flying by day and night. Our helicopters had been recently modernized with systems and gizmos which made using the weapon platform at night as easy as day. We had the infra-red sights, low light TV cameras, lasers and what not to look for potential targets. I remember how we could count the number of dead by just using our infra-red equipment. The dead would show up as cold objects while the live militia would show as 'hot'. The modern fighting equipment fitted had proved its efficacy in actual operations.

When our missions finally ceased, we were on the verge of collapse. It was black coffee and the 'josh' of the men on the ground that made us carry on, overcoming our stress. Our squadron

doctor also was of great help. He was there throughout, checking us out and seeing to it that we were fit to go up for the missions.

The fight had lost its momentum with the local leaders out of action. Soon they were trudging back into the hills where "General" Nkunda had ordered them to regroup. When the guns became silent, bodies of the men killed in battle started arriving for burial at the graveyard located right next to our camp at Goma. We saw truckloads of them. Some of them, of course, had been killed by our action. It was a sad sight, and my stomach still churns when I remember the episode.

The one year we spent in Congo as peacekeepers was full of action. There were lessons to carry home on almost all aspects of soldiering, something that was useful for us as we grew in service. The Indian contingent, especially, excelled in any task that they were entrusted with - be it operational, administrative or technical. We proved to the soldiers of other nations why our Armed Forces were a cut above and the best of the best.



Air Commodore Nitin Sathe (Retd), a helicopter pilot of the LAF with 35 years of commissioned service, has been a part of many a life threatening and lifesaving mission, both in India and abroad. He has flown almost all the helicopters on the LAF inventory and has 5500 hours of flying experience. He has been Director Training at the National Defence Academy and the Senior Instructor at the Defence Services Staff College. Nitin Sathe retired from the LAF in Mar 2020 and is presently settled at Pune. He is a keen adventure enthusiast and does long distance cycling for fun. He has authored three best-selling books. Presently he is the Officiating Director of the Armed Forces Preparatory Institute at Mohali, where he is involved in soft skill and SSB training of young candidates.



Air Cmde Nitin Sathe

VIGNETTES OF INDIAN AIRPOWER IN UN PEACEKEEPING

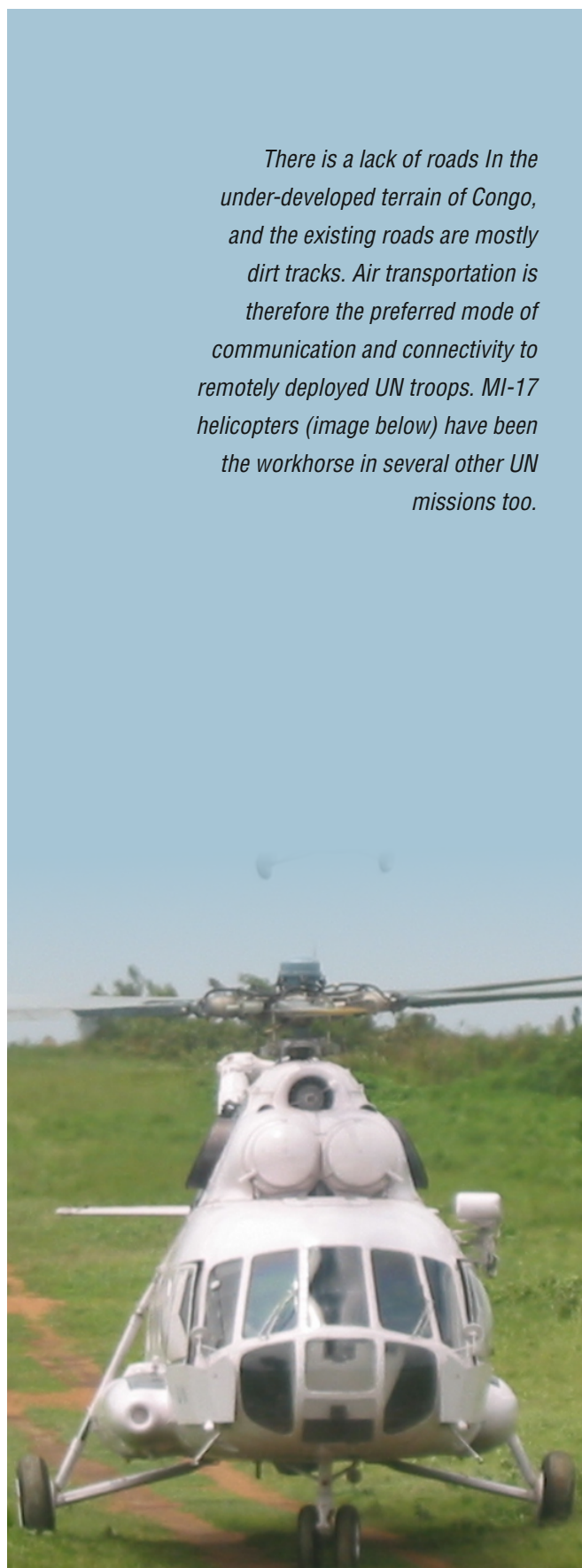
The Indian Air Force (IAF) has joined the Indian Army regularly in UN peacekeeping, and took part in the Congo operations of UN in 1961. Thereafter, the IAF returned to Congo in 2003. One of the Squadron Commanders highlights some of the helicopter operations.

Background MONUC

Following the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, there was a rebellion against the incumbent ruling dispensation for the next several years. The involvement of the neighbouring nations from the side of the rebels or the government of the day, saw a period of brutal violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Security Council stepped in, called for a ceasefire, withdrawal of foreign forces, and urged other states not to interfere in the country's internal affairs. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed in July 1999 and the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) was established by the Security Council Resolution of 30 November 1999. Besides troops from the Indian Army, the Indian Government agreed to provide helicopter assets to MONUC. I was one of the Squadron Commanders who deployed to DRC in July 2003.

I start with a salute to the people of Africa in general, and Congolese in particular. Despite facing historical wrongs at the hands of colonial rulers, and the adversity of war-like conditions ever since, these simple people epitomise the resilience of the human race. The various armed militia neither understood nor respected any rules and norms about civil liberties and the value of human life. One witnessed the brutal tactics of the war up close, such as rape as a weapon of war and usage of child-soldiers. But one also saw many positives and the lighter side of operating in Congo.

There is a lack of roads in the under-developed terrain of Congo, and the existing roads are mostly dirt tracks. Air transportation is therefore the preferred mode of communication and connectivity to remotely deployed UN troops. MI-17 helicopters (image below) have been the workhorse in several other UN missions too.



IAF Deploys Helicopters

In July 2003, the IAF began their second engagement in Congo, after the first one in 1961. The IAF was tasked to provide Mi-17 utility helicopters along with Mi-25 attack helicopters to MONUC, to be based at Goma and Bunia, as Indian Aviation Contingent -1 (IAC 1). I was the Squadron Commander of the Equatorial Eagles, one of the Mi-17 Helicopter Units.

My personal inspiration to put my heart and soul into genuine peacekeeping was a chance reading of *'King Leopold's Ghost'* (1998) by Adam Hochschild, which documents the misrule of the Belgian King from 1885-1908 that resulted in unmatched cruelty, slavery and deaths of more than 10 million people. It makes Leopold one of the greatest tyrants on earth. Every officer of my squadron was made to read this book, and we were all moved.

Preparing for MONUC

The Squadron Commanders of the three helicopter units selected for deploying to Congo under MONUC were briefed by the Chief of the Air Staff. During the discussion, the Chief highlighted that all earlier IAF deployments with the UN had ended prematurely for various reasons, never completing the assigned tenure. He described in some detail the experiences of the IAF deployment to Congo (early 1960s), Somalia (1992-93) and Sierra Leone (1999). His direction to us was to display commitment and effectiveness of such high standards that the world in general and UN in particular would sit up and take notice. He also promised of consequences if our mission did not fare well! With that message and a starting line-up that boasted of the best in human and material resources of the IAF, we were all set to deploy to Congo in July 2003.

Initial Shocks – Palam and Kigali

The deployment to Congo was to be undertaken by the gigantic Russian aircraft, An-124, which has a payload of up to 150 tons. The massive aeroplane is managed by a small crew, and is capable of hauling large quantities of freight, provided the freight is made available in standard cargo containers. The aircraft is equipped with motor winches, pulleys and cables for efficient handling of containers.

Somehow, this detail about the load being packed in containers was omitted while planning our deployment. As a consequence, our helicopter unit landed up at Palam airport (New Delhi) with thousands of items of equipment of varying sizes, loaded on trucks. The disbelieving An-124 crew just gave up, told us to load the aircraft in whatever manner we wanted, and retired to their hotel rooms to rest. By midnight, all the cargo had been loaded into the cavernous cargo hold, thanks to the ingenuity, experience, and sweat of the personnel. The crew of the An-124 came

back at midnight, surprised to see that the freight had been loaded. They secured the load and took off, still shaking their heads.

At Kigali in Rwanda, there was more excitement awaiting us. The off-loading party consisted of just one lifting crane with an operator, and eight flat-top trucks with one driver each. Expecting to off-load standard cargo containers, they saw an aeroplane full of thousands of individual items, and flatly refused to touch our load. Fortunately, our personnel also reached Kigali at about the same time. It was *'All Hands On Deck'*, with each one of us working relentlessly, till the entire cargo was loaded on the flat top trucks. A similar exertion awaited us at Goma for the off-loading. That was the toughest time in our entire stay, including incidents of actual combat, which is saying something! We learnt our lessons, and urgent calls to Air Headquarters (HQ) ensured emergency procurement of containers in Delhi for subsequent flights. It took a



The author with a young Congolese boy



Casualty evacuation of an FARDC soldier on 24 December 05 to Bunia in DRC by Mi-17 helicopter

total of thirteen sorties of the An-124 to complete our deployment. Kigali is the site of a famous Genocide Museum dedicated to the victims of 1994 massacre of mainly Tutsis by Hutus. A visit to the Museum is emotionally poignant. Rows and rows of skulls and other such artefacts bring home the reality of how cruel man can get when aroused by racial or tribal passions.

Mi-17s: UN Lifelines

Our unit, the Equatorial Eagles, commenced flying operations in Congo in July 2003 and very soon realised that flying in this desolate country was a very different cup of tea. Though roles and missions remained essentially the same, the going was never easy with nature playing a big role in queering things. It threw unique challenges at aircrew in terms of both weather and terrain; rain, clouds and turbulence were regular companions on most sorties in the Congo. To make matters worse, the area is dotted with mountains and volcanoes that stretch across the Great Rift Valley. As any aviator would affirm, mountains and weather

make for a deadly mix especially for helicopter operations. I must also mention the hundreds of aircraft of various shapes, sizes and colour that flew around in an uncontrolled Congo sky, up to all kinds of legal and illegal activities. That many of these pilots had imbibed a tot or two, was quite evident from the strong smell of vodka on their breath.

If the skies were unfriendly, the thick foliage below made the thought of any in-flight emergency necessitating a put-down rather scary. But the Congolese loved soccer, and consequently, soccer fields of various sizes and shapes broke the canopy of foliage here and there. These were the

few places available to force land. The combined wisdom borne of experience in the densely forested Northeast India, allowed us to devise procedures that ensured operations without any major compromise to flight safety.

The grave situation in DRC necessitated that we commence our flying operations at the earliest. Our sorties ranged from mundane passenger and cargo sorties to challenging missions like troop insertion/extraction under hostile fire, logistic support, communication, medical and casualty evacuation. We quickly moulded into the international environment, displaying exemplary collaboration with other contingents, the common objective being protection of civilian population. All peace initiatives and processes adopted by our two Army brigades were ably supported from the air by the helicopter units. With enhancement in the mandate of MONUC to include Joint Operations with Congolese troops, the squadron revised its Standard Operating Procedures to mitigate risks with relatively untrained troops. This included removing all live rounds from rifles before embarking. During one such operation, we inducted 146 Congolese troops in 16 sorties within a short duration of four hours, utilising all our five helicopters. For our good work in support of ground operations, we were awarded a unit citation by the Force Commander of MONUC, a first at that point of time.

Mi-25s: UN Lifeguards

While Mi-17s provided the non-violent component to the UN, our squadron of Mi-25 attack helicopters, the Vipers, represented the sharp end of Blue Berets. The armed rebel in Congo was afraid of only two things- his God and an attack helicopter. This was very evident when

flying convoy support missions; a mere movement of the front gun turret of the attack helicopter, and the militia ran helter skelter ducking for cover. The Vipers, with their credo, *"Lethal When Provoked"* were kept busy, mostly in the Itturi sector, providing support to UN ground troops and utility helicopters. There were numerous occasions of fire support being provided in dire situations. Post-attack assessment by UN troops almost always revealed considerable damage inflicted to the militia, both to their muscle and morale. During the period of deputation, the Vipers carried out various missions like escort to Mi-17s carrying ground troops, combat air patrol for ground operations, show of force and area domination missions in support of various campaigns.

Shabunda: Show of Strength

One of the first operations, and a landmark one, took place around the town of Shabunda. A situation was unfolding in this remote gold and diamond mine town. Apparently, no MONUC member had set foot in the area for the past two years. The last attempt had resulted in all Military Observers (Milobs) and helicopter crew being manhandled and kept as hostages for three days. So we were breaking new ground for MONUC. This time around, the UN had the muscle to do it; muscle in the form of a Mi-17, escorted by a Mi-25 (Allen and Dutta). Armed with a deadly load of rockets and guns, Allen overtook us four kilometres short of the airfield, and buzzed the town of Shabunda. Once he was sure that all appeared to be okay, he gave the all-clear for us to land. As we landed, four South African troops jumped out of the Mi-17 and took position around the Mi-17 helicopter. Another four took position around the Mi-25. When all appeared to be calm, save the milling citizens of Shabunda, four Milobs got out

and drove off for negotiations. The local militia leader wasn't willing to play ball and was peeved at not having been informed of the landings. So the Milobs came back and we returned to Kindu. But the intent and resolve of UN had been demonstrated to the militia. A few weeks later, after an even more deadly deployment, the Mai-Mai leader relented and agreed to compromise.

Use of Weapons by the Helicopters

Initially, when the Vipers deployed to Congo, severe restrictions were in force on firing aircraft weapons. For a long time, there was no firing except for warning shots because of UN bureaucratic procedures. The authorities insisted that every firing had to have their clearance and any incident of firing would inevitably be followed by an enquiry. But one day in late 2003, the HQ Camp was getting surrounded by a certain militia group, whose leader put up a challenge in an extremely menacing way. The camp was soon surrounded and the leader was strutting up and down the road in his open jeep, challenging the UN in front of the entire town. A couple of the militia made the mistake of firing at the compound wall of the camp. That did it! A Mi-25, which had buzzed these guys earlier as a warning, aimed at the vehicle and let go a burst of just three rounds. Two of them found their mark, including one that went through the leader's heart! The entire militia army melted away faster than a slab of butter on a hot flame. While the element of chance and good luck was not lost on the pilots, the marksmanship of IAF pilots became the folklore of Congo for years.

Self-Preservation – the UN Way

We got a taste of hostile attitudes and intentions of Congolese militia

again in July 2003. We had gone for a sortie to Walikale with a high-level UN delegation from New York on board. Fortunately, we were also carrying some South African troops for security. At Walikale, after about an hour on ground, four Congolese army soldiers approached us and asked to see the written permission for our UN flight to land at Walikale. We shoo-ed them away. They then went across to the civilian delegates about half a kilometre away, and asked to see their passports. They further insisted that the flight would not be allowed to take off unless we obtained written permission. They were not ready to see reason and no amount of persuasion helped. A South African soldier (they all knew Swahili) guarding the Mi-17, quietly told me that rebel reinforcements were 15 minutes away. I realised that we were getting into a hostage situation. Things were getting out of hand and could rapidly turn nasty, if we didn't think on our feet. Seeing that there were only two militia personnel who were armed, I told all UN and civil negotiators to quickly get into the aircraft. The high-level team, ladies included, left everything and ran back almost half a kilometre to the helicopter, displaying exemplary self-preservation skills! I gave an ultimatum to the Congolese militia leader that the helicopter was taking off and if they tried to obstruct the helicopter, they could expect debilitating return fire. Seeing themselves outnumbered and outgunned, the Congolese relented and backed off.

As the helicopter took off, two trucks filled with fully armed militia could be seen speeding towards the helipad. It was a close call, but thanks to the intuition of the South African troops, we got away unscathed.



A Mi-17 on a table top helipad in Eastern DRC

Safe Sex Practices!

A lazy afternoon in February 2004 was hardly a befitting precursor to what was in store for us in the evening. A lady doctor from MONUC was to deliver an awareness lecture on HIV/AIDS for the benefit of the personnel. This lady from Ghana looked like any other local lady, only much more sophisticated and elegant. She spent the better part of an hour educating the uninitiated on the intricacies of the dreaded virus and its contraction, while the audience listened with rapt attention. She was completely at ease, holding a condom in one hand and a wooden replica of the male member in the other, lecturing a hall full of homesick men, on safe sex practices! The interactive talk was extremely effective, though her forthright manner did cause some discomfiture to our uninitiated brethren.

I finished my tour of duty in August 2004, with a sense of satisfaction that we had upheld the directions of the Chief. IAF contingents in UN Missions stood tall among all others in the endeavour of ensuring peace. We defined robustness in

peacekeeping as never before. By the time we finished, the UN was not only very happy with the outcomes, but requesting for more. The helicopter assets increased MONUC's credibility to enforce peace in Eastern DRC, and it was able to reach areas that had so far been outside its sphere of influence. Not only did our Goma mission continue for the next eight years, other missions sprang up, such as in Bukavu, Kindu and in Sudan.

I had started the MONUC detachment as a Commanding Officer, and as Principal Director at Air HQ, I was responsible for winding it up, a complete and I dare say, a satisfying circle!



Air Vice Marshal Rajesh Isser, AVSM, VM (Retd) is an experienced military aviator with extensive operational and combat experience in Sri Lanka (IPKF), Siachen Glacier, Kargil War and Congo (UNPK 2003-04). He has been a Task Force Commander in many rescue and relief operations all over India including Uttarakhand 2013, Ladakh 2010, Andhra-Karnataka 2009 and Arunachal Pradesh 2000. He has also done operational rescue work in South Asian and African countries. An author of three books, he has more than 50 articles to his credit in national and international journals on diverse subjects such as disaster response, peacekeeping, counter-insurgency, irregular conflicts etc.



AVM Rajesh Isser



Map of South Sudan

MISSION SUPPORT TO UN MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN (UNMISS)

Mission Support is that part of a UN Mission which deals with the finances, sustenance and administrative support to the Mission. The author has handled important posts in Mission Support in South Sudan and throws light on the UN logistics system.

‘An Army, like a serpent, goes upon its belly’ – Frederick the Great.

Logistics is a key factor in sustenance of a military force, especially in operations – a lesson amply learnt by the Russian Armed Forces in the current conflict in Ukraine. Logistics support to a military force near or within its borders is still easier than supporting expeditionary forces thousands of kilometres away from the shores of the nation. And there is even greater difficulty in supporting a multi-national force, where different weapons and equipment, diet and other hygiene factors add more complexity. Over a period of time, the UN has evolved and set in place a logistics support system which handles these complexities with relative efficiency.

South Sudan

Roughly the size of France, South Sudan is a land locked country in East Africa. The country lacks roads with the only asphalt road linking the capital Juba to Nimule on the Uganda border and with its nearest port being Mombasa in Kenya (1619 km away). In the six month long rainy season, road access to the Northern and Eastern parts of the country is cut off due to the nature of the black cotton soil. River Nile flows from South to North and is used for transportation of goods and people. Only Juba, Wau and Malakal have airfields with asphalt runways.

UNMISS

To consolidate peace and security and help establish development of the newly independent Republic of South Sudan, UNMISS was first established in 2011 under Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011). Since 2011, two outbreaks of



UNMISS air maintenance using helicopters

violence in December 2013 and July 2016 led to a reinforcement and reprioritization of UNMISS's mandate towards the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring and support for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Presently, UNMISS has a mission strength of 17982 deployed personnel including 13679 military, 1411 police and over 2600 civilians. The military component includes 13 infantry battalions deployed under six Sector HQs, seven enhanced engineering companies, five field hospitals, one High Readiness (Special Forces) Company and one Force Marine Unit.

The Mission Headquarters (HQ) located in Juba is currently supported by 10 field offices (including in Juba), two field office team sites in Yei & Pibor, six company operating bases and a number of temporary operating bases subject to operational requirements. The Indian contribution to UNMISS consists of 2385 troops in terms of two infantry battalions, one Horizontal Mobility Engineering Company, two field hospitals, a Signal Company and a Petroleum Platoon besides Staff Officers and Military Observers.

Logistics and Administrative Support Concepts

Provision of logistic and administrative support for UN operations is complex due to the requirement to support contingents deploying with widely varying levels of self-sufficiency, and the differing requirements between military contingents, civilian staff, police and military observers. UN operations are also subject to financial accountability procedures demanded by the Member States who fund the mission. UN peacekeeping operations function through a mix of civilian contracted services procured by the UN and military

support capabilities, provided through 'lease' arrangements between the UN and contributing Member States. When formed military units are deployed to a mission, the logistic support concept is based on the integration of UN-provided and contingent-provided resources to support all components of the mission.

UNMISS Mission Support Division (MSD)

Logistics and administrative support to a large integrated mission such as UNMISS is provided by the MSD which functions under the

MSD has three pillars as can be seen in the Diagram 1.

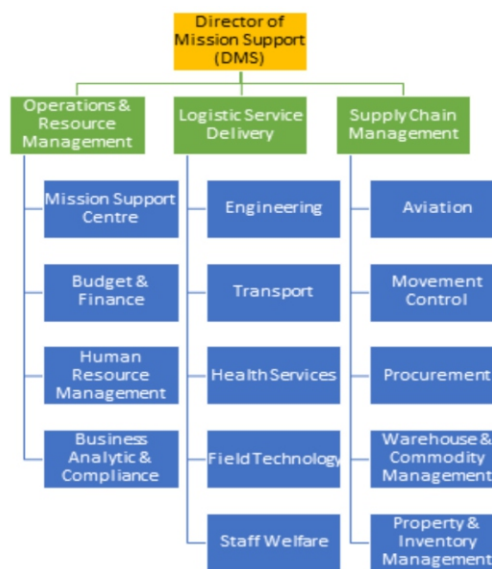
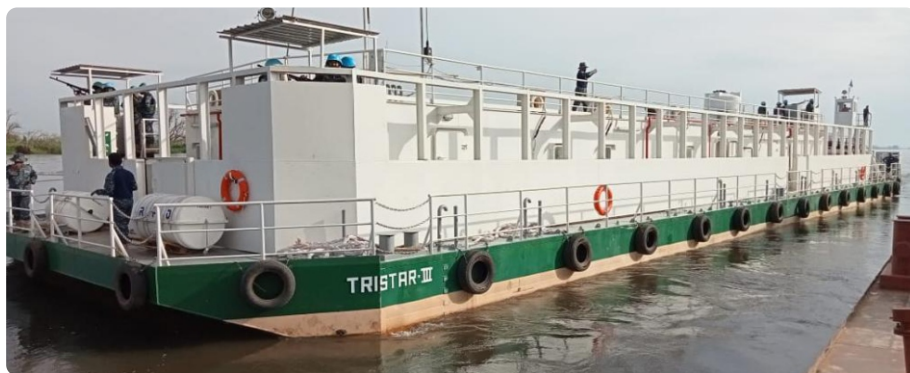


Diagram 1: Structure of the UNMISS Mission Support Division

Director of Mission Support (DMS). The DMS reports to the Head of Mission. The MSD consists of teams of civilian and military personnel integrated to provide logistics and administrative support to all mission components (military, police and substantive). The civilians (many of whom are from a military or police background) provide technical expertise, experience and institutional knowledge whereas the military staff officers ensure that force perspectives are factored into planning and concerns are addressed. While the Section Chief is a civilian, his/her Deputy Chief is a military staff officer. This integrated system functions exceptionally well and is worth emulating.

The consolidation and integration function of integrated support services is focused in the Mission Support Centre (MSC), which



Tristar fuel barge on the River Nile, protected by UN troops

procurement is sent to a HQs committee for vetting and approval.

To quote an example of the UN procurement process, recently a requirement was identified to provide the Bangladesh Force Marine Unit with a barge to transport their marines who were escorting the barges carrying fuel and rations on the River Nile. After a market survey, the proposal was included in the UNMISS budget which was subsequently approved. Thereafter, a requisition package including technical specifications for the services required was prepared and a procurement process initiated which was able to provide a suitable barge. The entire exercise was concluded within a year.

coordinates the logistical needs of all mission components. The MSC becomes a focal point for cooperation and mutual assistance on logistical issues between the United Nations peacekeeping operations, other agencies and NGOs.

The UN Budget Process

The UN follows the RBB (Result Based Budget) framework for determining field mission budgets. The RBB process is used by a number of public and private sector enterprises across the world and establishes a relationship in which needs for resources (budget) is derived from objectives and expected results.

The UNMISS Budget for FY 2021-22 was prepared under the RBB framework linked to Security Council Resolution 2567 (2021) under which the mission is mandated to help the Security Council achieve an overall objective, namely, 'addressing the impact of the conflict, in order to enable peace and reconciliation in the country'. Within that overall objective, UNMISS is expected to deliver key outputs, such as:

- Protection of civilians.
- Monitoring and investigating human rights.
- Creating the conditions for delivery of humanitarian assistance.

- Supporting the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (Peace Agreement).
- Support.

The budget apportionment of \$1.115 Billion was broken down in three groups as under:

- Group I: Military & Police personnel costs (for troops/police, Contingent Owned Equipment & self-sustainment reimbursements).
- Group II: Civilian personnel costs.
- Group III: Operational costs (for air operations, facilities & infrastructure, communications etc.).

UN Procurement Process

While the budget allots (appropriates) funds, the actual procurement exercise is undertaken by the mission, which has a Procurement Section for this purpose. Procurement of goods and services is undertaken by the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) in accordance with the UN Procurement rules and regulations. Under the 'Delegation of Authority', the CPO has the power to approve procurements up to \$250000 and the DMS up to \$1000000 for core requirements, beyond which the

Outsourced Supply of Fuel & Rations

The process of supply of fuel & rations in UNMISS has been entirely outsourced to two contractors based on a global procurement exercise conducted by the UN HQs.

In UNMISS, M/s TRISTAR provides all fuel functions including procurement, transportation, storage, and dispensing on a turnkey basis to 16 UNMISS sites. Diesel & Jet A1 are the standard fuel (only the boats of the Force Marine Units use petroleum) and for delivery across mission, TRISTAR utilizes 6x6 trucks and barges on the River Nile.

Similarly, a contractor M/s ESKO is responsible for supply of rations to troops and police as per the UN Rations Scale. An operational stock level of 42 Days of Storage (DOS) (Mission Food Reserve) and 28 DOS (Operating Rations) is maintained in rations warehouses operated by ESKO. In addition, UNMISS maintains CRPs

(Combat Rations Packs) and Bottled Water of 14 DOS each for troops and police and 5 DOS each for UN Civilians as emergency preparedness and response. The mission Fuel & Rations Unit functioning under the Supply Chain Pillar is responsible to manage the fuel & rations contracts respectively. An Indian Petroleum Platoon is also present in the mission area to support especially in case of crisis.

Movement

A large number of troops and material is moved by air, road and barge, a function handled by the Movement Control (MOVCON) section. While priorities are decided by the Mission Support Centre, the actual movement is undertaken by the Aviation Section (seven fixed wing and 18 rotary wing assets), the Heavy Transport Unit and by outsourced contractors for air, road and barge movement.

Facilities & Infrastructure Management

Given the lack of infrastructure in South Sudan, each of the 22 UNMISS camps is a virtual town with integral offices and accommodation. UNMISS is responsible for providing 24x7 water & power supply, maintenance and camp services and waste disposal. Military and Police contingents are self-sufficient for their own power supply and water treatment but UNMISS provides the accommodation prefabs and waste disposal services. For accommodation and offices, UNMISS relies on prefabricated modules which are purchased through global systems contract, however a recent initiative to provide hard-wall ablutions and kitchens is nearing completion. UN House in Juba is the only mission location that is fully hard-wall.

To reduce its environmental

footprint, the mission is focusing on renewable energy with two solar farms with a combined capacity of 2.25 GW being established in Juba and Wau. Waste water treatment plants are installed in the UNMISS bases to treat black & grey water.

Automation

The mission is entirely automated and relies on paperless functioning. Emails are the primary means of communication and every staff member is issued with a laptop and a UN email account on arrival. An Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution titled UMOJA enables integrated management of the UN's financial, human and physical resources and improving programmatic delivery.

Conclusion

Mission support to a large UN peacekeeping mission such as UNMISS is provided by an integrated team of military and civilian professionals working together in close coordination with the military, police and substantive verticals to effectively implement the mission's mandate. Analysis of the UN administrative and logistic support system yields a number of best practices which can be effectively applied to the Indian military. The large number of Indian staff officers who serve with the UN mission return with several concepts, which can be effectively channelized towards modernization.

(The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations)



Brigadier Rabul Batra, commissioned in the Corps of EME on 10 June 1989, is an alumnus of NDA, MCEME, DSSC and the Army War College, Mhow where he did the Higher Command Course.

During his illustrious career, he has held varied command, staff and instructional appointments. He has been an Instructor in DSSC, Wellington and has served in two UN Missions including a tenure as the Deputy Chief of Logistic Services with UNMISS.

The officer commanded 654 EME Battalion from 2008 to 2010. A keen sportsman, the officer has represented the Services in Cricket. Brigadier Rabul Batra took premature retirement while serving as Brigadier EME, HQ 15 Corps after a career spanning 29 years to join UNMISS where he serves as the Chief of Mission Support Centre.

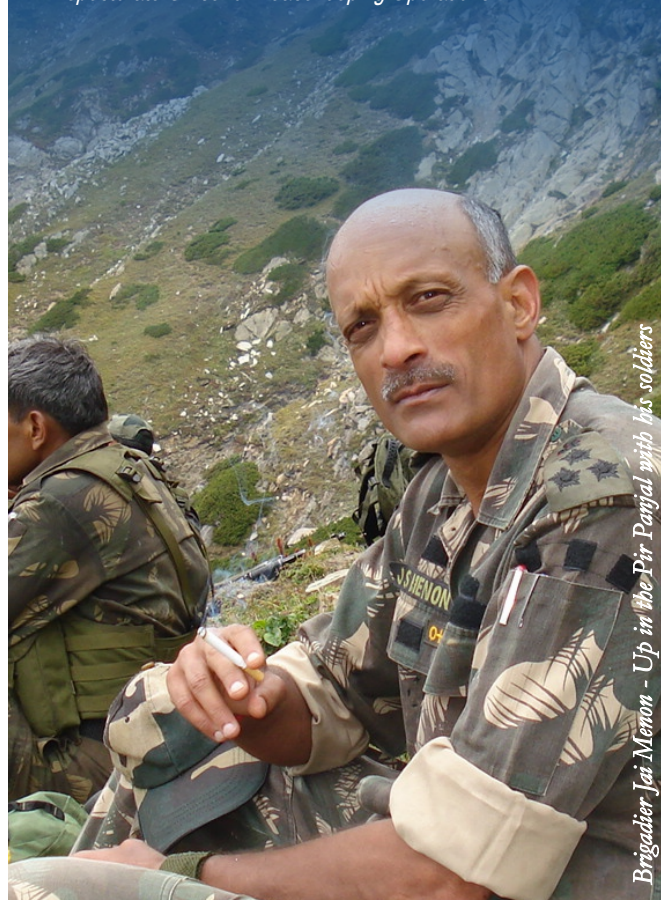


Brigadier Rabul Batra

It was winter at an altitude of 15,000 feet, with nearly 12 feet of snow. 2nd Lieutenant (Mr) JS Menon was with his soldiers in a very distant isolated post with hardly any sunlight, and an aura of darkness and gloom. A bubbling sportsman, he encouraged his soldiers to spend time playing games like rugby, climbing hills and being physically active. Soon, with all the activity soldiers toughened and their appetites grew, and they ran through the winter stock of atta and rum that was meant to last six months, within three months!

Realising he couldn't have troops dissatisfied with their ration (they were not rice eaters), he was enterprising enough to organise foot patrols to come up halfway with supplies, and would lead the patrol down halfway to collect them. In around three weeks, the entire atta and rum ration was back again! Of course, he was not spared the rod by the Second in Command of the old battalion!!!

It is this never-say-die attitude and the quest for unique experiences that define Major General Jai Shankar Menon, who is currently Director, Office for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Headquarters (HQ), New York. In simpler terms it is the Inspectorate Office for Peacekeeping Operations.



Brigadier Jai Menon - Up in the Pir Panjal with his soldiers

BONDED TO HIS MEN - MAJOR GENERAL J S MENON

AN EPITOME OF TRUST,
RESOLVE AND COURAGE

Major General Jai Shankar Menon (Jai), an alumnus of the 56th Course of National Defence Academy (NDA), Khadakvasla was awarded the President's Silver Medal when he passed out in June 1979. A year later he was awarded the Sword of Honour and the President's Gold Medal at the Indian Military Academy. On commissioning, he joined the 1st Guards (2nd Punjab), his father's battalion later commanding it from 2000 to 2002. A graduate of the Defence Services Staff College and the Higher Defence Management Course, he has the singular distinction of topping six Army Courses of Instruction. He has commanded a Rashtriya Rifles Sector and an Infantry Division.

However, his destiny lay in United Nations Peace Keeping operations. In the early nineties, as a young Major he was selected to be a Military Observer (Milob) in the UN Operations in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). In 2007, he served for two years as the Deputy Chief Integrated Support Services in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In 2016-2017 he was the Force Commander and Head of Mission in UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Syria- Israel. Thereafter, on retirement from the Indian Army he was appointed Inspector General for Peace Keeping Operations at the UN Headquarters (HQ), New York, an appointment he continues to hold today.

Considering his expertise, it is appropriate for us to interact with him on UN peacekeeping and also look at his career snapshots. Neeti Jaychander's chat with this dynamic leader follows.

Tell us briefly about your initial years in the Indian Army.

My father was in the Indian Army, and he was a great source of inspiration for me. He encouraged me to be an outdoor person and taught me sports. I actually joined the NDA by



On the snow covered slopes of the Pir Panjal as Commander Rashtriya Rifles Sector

chance. I was academically-inclined and keen to become a doctor. When I later told my soldiers this, they were grateful that I hadn't gone down that route – and often joked that I'd have probably killed them if I was the unit RMO! Once I joined NDA, I was in no doubt that I wanted to join the infantry, and my father's battalion – the First Battalion Brigade of the Guards, the oldest infantry battalion. There was a lot of tradition, history, valour and good practices attached to it. My whole life was dedicated to my battalion and men – I was driven by passion and commitment. In my formative years, even though I topped a large number of courses, I constantly refused staff postings and fought the system as I wanted to remain in the old battalion. Eventually I went on to command my battalion, the same one my father had also commanded. I finished my battalion command at 23 years of service in the Indian Army - 17 ½ of which was in my battalion.

But you also received a lot of opportunities to go abroad.

Yes, I was lucky. As a young Captain, I

did an anti-terrorist course in Italy. Out of my tenures outside India, I have done three tenures in uniform with the UN. When I was a young Major, I was sent as a UN observer to Mozambique in the 1990s. It was a tough mission because I stayed among the RENAMO rebels in a very remote assembly area. We were just three unarmed Milobs, but we managed to build up a rapport with them. Ultimately, we assisted in the demobilising phase of UN operations collecting weapons, accounting for them and also distributing food that the UN would provide.

I was selected as a seconded officer to UNIFIL from 2007 to 2009, with the mission support, the logistics

department of the mission. I was double hatted and served as a direct bridge between the military and civilians. Once I came back, I commanded a Rashtriya Rifles Sector in J&K and thereafter the Brigade of the Guards Regimental Centre. Later I commanded an infantry division, incidentally the same division that my father had commanded. I was selected as the Head of Mission (HoM) /Force Commander (FC) of UNDOF where I served for little less than two years in 2016-17 and then hung up my uniform - a duty fulfilled to the best of my ability.

In the initial years, UN peacekeeping was done largely with the willing consent of local governing forces, in a benign manner to achieve conflict resolution. Over time, peace enforcement became the greater demand, often with a non-cooperative attitude from local governments. Can you comment on the changing nature of peacekeeping operations?

The UN is now engaged in a wide range of what we call “*peace operations*”, and the spectrum of types of intervention, composition of missions, and scope of action has widened indeed. That said, UN peace operations are still based on the three basic principles of **consent, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate**. Strategic consent, in particular, is always required.

Building on the experience in Bosnia and Rwanda, UN operations have changed to become more proactively involved in protecting civilians from threats of violence, a priority for our missions. We have clarified, within the UN, what our peacekeepers can and must do to protect civilians, to use all necessary means up to and including deadly force, as the UN Security Council (UNSC) mandates us to do so. This includes *protecting civilians from local actors and governments – actually, from any source of threat, and I believe it is a core and noble task for UN peacekeepers*.

Additionally, the changing geostrategic environment and political processes, the current effect of the Covid pandemic, the changing conflict environment to include proxy wars, myriad of conflict actors and climate change, international responses to conflict including counter terrorism and peacekeeping, and parallel operations will be some issues to keep in mind on how the nature of peacekeeping operations will evolve.

Troop/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) complain that they do not have a say in the mission mandate and other major decision points about the mission. The Western powers run missions as per their vested interests and bias. Can the UNSC incorporate the T/PCCs in a bigger way in UN peacekeeping mandate decisions?

There have been a lot of efforts in recent years to strengthen triangular cooperation between UNSC, the Secretariat, and T/PCCs. T/PCCs are consulted in various discussion forums. In my own work as the Inspector General for peacekeeping, I engage with T/PCCs on a regular basis, brief them on the gaps identified on the ground, and listen to them if they have specific concerns about gaps on the side of the organisation (support issues, for example).

It is not true that only Western powers run missions as per their interests. The E10 (elected members in UNSC) have proven to be very influential. Within the C34 (committee on peacekeeping), everyone has a voice (financial contributors and TCCs) to influence how peacekeeping is defined, implemented, and evolving. There is always room for improvement, though. UNSC can more systematically integrate T/PCCs in the negotiations around mandates. But T/PCCs, too, should strengthen their efforts to speak out, which

is not always the case when they are consulted. Further, mission mandates are provided by the Security Council after detailed negotiation on the objectives and language. The composition of the UNSC provides a fair opportunity to every Member State in the Council to contribute to the major decision points of peacekeeping missions as per regional and global situations. The T/PCCs are represented through their Permanent Missions in New York and have used various forums including the Group of Friends network to participate in peacekeeping decisions. We have seen in the recent past, the commitment of most T/PCCs to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P) to strengthen peacekeeping and peacekeeping missions.

Protection of civilians (POC) is the responsibility of host Governments, but they are often unable to prevent ethnic violence. POC has thus become a major task for UN troops, but UN troops are mostly inadequate for this purpose. How

should peacekeeping units cope with such operational requirements in their areas?

I would not say troops are inadequate for this purpose. Our peacekeepers have saved many lives, on many occasions. In POC sites in South Sudan, they protected more than 100000 civilians on a daily basis for years. In Congo and Central African Republic, they have conducted robust operations against armed groups threatening civilians. Peacekeepers have mobilized troops, air assets, and used force to protect. In many areas, the local population does not want UN peacekeepers to leave because they are key providers of security. To protect civilians, units must have the right mind-set and training to prioritize protection in the decisions and allocation of resources, be mobile and flexible, and not hesitate to use all necessary means, including force, against any source of violence.

Peacekeeping, and POC, is not only a responsibility of uniformed units. Peacekeeping operations are



Jai Menon with his troops atop a peak on the Pir Panjal



Meeting Mr Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General in New York as HoM and FC UNDOF

integrated with civilian and police components as well, who are key contributors. Civilian peacekeepers broker local peace agreements, conduct mediation between ethnic groups and communities, strengthen the capacity of host states to protect, and document human rights violations. By closely working with the military, civilian and police peacekeepers can defuse tension, convince armed groups to respect humanitarian law, and build a protective environment.

Often military deployments take place in isolation in the deep field and have to take on responsibilities of POC alone and without the support of other pillars. While this is not recommended it is often a fact in mission operations. Commanders, often junior, deployed in such areas must be able to adopt the three hats (civilian, police and military) and work towards mandate implementation. This must form an important aspect of the pre-deployment training for junior commanders.

Many UN troops don't actively participate in achieving the mission objectives, but prefer

who do not respect the agreement especially in internal conflicts; complex mandates; vested interests of regional and international players, and so on.

But yes, definitely the role of the uniformed component is vital to achieve mandate implementation and for the success of the mission. The reasons for inactivity and under-performance of UN troops are many. One of the major reasons is the national interests of a participating member state in a UN mission. If the stakes are high, then the troops are more robust on the ground. If capitals impose caution of no risk to life or limb and to "come back safe" troops are going to be less robust. If it is a source of revenue for some member states then performance is going to be low. The key is the messaging to participating troops from their national capitals.

There are a plethora of other reasons too, such as inadequate training standards, non-compliance to the standards set by the UN in training and equipment, a low understanding of the mandate and what is required of a unit to assist in the mandate implementation - especially when there is a POC mandate. Selection of leaders is another crucial issue. It's an age-old adage, "a unit is good or bad based on its quality of officers... soldiers are all good".

Accountability is a definite requirement. On part of the T/PCCs they must ensure that their troops come in with the right mind-set with no restrictions imposed, ensure better training, equipping, do proper selection and training of leaders, ensure accountability for bad performance and reward for good performance.

The Secretariat and departments are working to improve accountability at both the individual and institutional levels. New standards have been promulgated. Assessment and evaluation tools

to serve their time without undue risks, and are comfortable with prolonging the mission over time. Can their accountability be improved?

Firstly, to clarify, it is not that UN troops want to prolong the mission over time. UN peacekeeping missions are deployed with the explicit mandate provided by the Security Council. Since 01st January 2013, the UN has lost 310 peacekeepers in peacekeeping missions to malicious acts which is a significantly high number, while many more have been injured in defence of the mandates. There are a large number of factors due to which missions prolong in time like the uncertain political situation; vested interests of the parties to the agreement; elements

have been revamped in the last three years and are now in place in missions. A comprehensive performance assessment system has been rolled out in all missions and is providing objective feedback on accountability to mission and UN HQ leadership. We are also exploring ways to use technology to better capture performance data for deeper analysis and accountability. It is important to ensure objective evaluation and to provide frank and transparent feedback to the T/PCCs and urge them for betterment, if found wanting in performance. A system of recognition needs to be put in place for peacekeepers who perform well especially with courage while they protect civilians or our own people.

Of late, regional peacekeeping forces have been assigned especially in Africa, under the African Union. But regional forces do have inherent bias and own national interests, vis-à-vis UN involvement and control. What would be the pros and cons?

Regional actors have a profound knowledge of the dynamics in the area. They have high incentives and motivation to find solutions to crises, as it can affect them more directly, and they can prove to be more proactive than other stakeholders. Their troops can also easily engage with local populations when there is proximity in culture and language. These are some of the pros.

As for the cons, it may be difficult for regional actors to act as purely impartial stakeholders given what is at stake for them.

Under the UN flag, everyone is expected to implement UNSC mandates in a professional, dedicated manner, and to refrain from pursuing their own interests. When both these things align (UNSC mandate and interest of regional actors), the partnership is a win-win and can

maximise impact. UN must hence continue to work closely with regional partners.

When you went to UNDOF, the situation in Damascus was volatile, and UNDOF had to temporarily shift to the Israeli side in the Golan Heights. You shifted the mission base back to the Syrian side, and often had to consider the security threats from the Al Nusra Front and other radical groups. Can you highlight the challenges you faced, important steps taken by you, interesting incidents and problems that you experienced?

The mission was forced to vacate its area of responsibility (AOR) on the Syrian side (B Side), except the strategic Mount Hermon location, and relocate to the Israeli occupied Golan Heights (A Side) in 2013 following the commencement of the Syrian internal conflict and remained so when I joined in 2016. The Syrian conflict was still in progress, and the Government Forces had slowly gained the upper hand by then. The HoM (the FC is also the

HoM).... a double hatted appointment unlike most other UN missions, was mandated to remain on the B Side while the major part of the mission was across on the A Side. This gave me an opportunity to reconnoitre portions of the UNDOF AOR which were still under Government control. I had to coerce my Syrian interlocutor, Brigadier General Mazin Younis, who kept telling me that it was very unsafe as it was really the frontline between the Government Forces and the rebel groups - it was a full-scale internal conventional war going on within the country. The good thing was that he agreed and supported me. After a couple of forays, I was confident that the mission must return to at least those parts of the AOR which were under the control of the Syrian Government forces. It was fraught with risk but we in the military are trained to assess risks, mitigate them and thereafter work in a residual risk environment.

There were a number of challenges or problems for me to



With General Eizenkot Gadi, the Israeli Chief of Defence



With General Mazin Younis, the Syrian interlocutor

achieve this. I had to get the stoic support and trust of both sides, Syrian and Israeli. These included the political and vexed interplay of the region; to get the member states - especially the UNSC members - to support such a move; the unpredictability of the armed or rebel groups in the area which also included the Daesh and the Al Nusra; to ensure the safety and security of my troops as they moved back; to ensure that the contingents under me had no hesitation or caveats and would move when ordered; to get the confidence of the UN HQ and convince them that this was a good option and so vital for the success of peacekeeping and the mission, despite the high risk involved; to overcome the psychological fears that were deep-rooted in my people as some of them had been through the 2013 trauma of fleeing, they were constantly talking of the incident even in 2016. It was like a pervasive fear in the mission; the logistics of resetting up the mission which involved movement of personnel and stores from Israel through Lebanon into Syria, reconstruction of the destroyed UN camp sites, demining the

area of operations as there were a lot of unexploded ordnance lying around due to the on-going conflict and the omnipresent danger of land mines, the need to get technology in, to mention a few.

The first thing I did was to get both the parties to the agreement (Syria and Israel) to support me. This I achieved through the three basic fundamental principles of peacekeeping - transparency, impartiality and consent of the parties. This was the key and I managed to gain their implicit faith and trust. I did not have any pressure on me from home and was given complete leeway by the Army HQ, in fact I never did report to our Army HQ on what I

was doing and I am extremely thankful for that. I had to garner support from the various influential member states, including the P5; and I met consistently with the Ambassadors of these countries in Syria and Israel as well as the Permanent Representatives in New York when I would visit and slowly gained their support. The Security Council unanimously agreed on the mission's return and that is what gave me the strength. We worked out conditions which would permit us to return along lines of politics, operations and logistics and fulfilled each condition to convince the UN HQ to give us the green light. It was difficult but with sheer doggedness and commitment we managed to get the confidence of the UN HQ in our abilities. I had to raise the issue of caveats of one of the contingents, which emerged at a crucial juncture, very strongly with the UN HQ and the country. This can be very debilitating for a FC as sometimes these issues underlie and emerge at critical moments. Thankfully this did get resolved over a period and did not affect my immediate plan to a large extent. It was unfortunate because this contingent was well trained, dependable, robust, my best troops and willing but were being held back by their national capital for some reason.

I was fortunate to have a dedicated and professional team of logistics civilian staff who under Mr Bernard Lee, the Director of Mission Support, supported me and we got the logistics ironed out well. The armed or rebel groups were always a danger in being and though I did reach out to them on a few occasions (it was out of my mandate though), they never could be relied on for the safety and security of my troops.

The success of this endeavour, I owe to the people who served with me in the mission both civilian and uniformed; my senior leadership and senior staff in UN HQ who trusted me; the nations who saw the good we

could achieve by going back to our rightful place on the B Side for peace and for trusting in our abilities; and of course, the support of Syria and Israel without whom this would never have happened. I thank my two interlocutors on both sides - General Mazin Younis and Brigadier General Eres Maisel who trusted me and helped me through huge challenges. It was a collective effort indeed. The return to our rightful place brought new life, vigour and motivation into the mission, thus overcoming the trauma of the past.

Mali is possibly the most volatile of the current UN deployments, with UN troops often coming under attack. How should peacekeeping units prepare when deploying in volatile conflict zones?

MINUSMA (Mali) is undoubtedly the most dangerous peacekeeping mission today and probably Somalia could also compare. The armed groups are in large numbers, most with jihadists background, and do not respect the sanctity of the UN and attack our peacekeepers at will with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), indirect and direct attacks and often with complex attacks. Future peacekeeping is increasingly going this way as it appears. You are no longer safe if you wear a blue helmet or fly a blue flag. In all probability, you will be targeted.

Units must be prepared to face these threats while they are implementing their mandates. A proactive mind-set and posture would deter the spoilers. This will involve correct selection of troops and especially leaders. Training for the environment and tasks at hand are essential. Troops from some countries come in ill-prepared and are consistently targeted. Scenario-based training on actual incidents during the pre-deployment training phase would be beneficial rather than just going through the given training

syllabus. There is a requirement to be ahead of the predictability loop. Most of our troops are being targeted because they are predictable in their activities, are watched by the armed groups and their informants and then targeted at an opportune time. The troops must constantly change their tactics, techniques and procedures. There is a need to operate cross country, off the roads and tracks where possible as a lot of Mali is desert, flat and featureless. Soldiers need to possess the skills of navigating and operating in difficult and harsh terrain. Convoys in Mali move as per a routine and are therefore targeted but there are ways how this predictability can be altered, and well-trained troops can defeat the designs of the armed groups even when protecting convoys.

It is important to use technology. Night operations with good vision devices, light drones, counter IED capability and training, seamless operation with air and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) assets available

within the mission as enablers, good communication systems, etc, can be extremely useful. Another weakness I noticed is the lack in Peace Keeping Intelligence (PKI) where a lot of our troops are blind when they go into operations. They lack the basic skills of collecting, collating and analysing data at battalion level to improve own situational awareness. They should seek information, carry out own threat assessments, set up early warning indicators and then operate. A lot of units think it is the responsibility of the higher HQs to provide them with information. The Rules of Engagement (ROE) need to be understood thoroughly by all troops especially the commanders.

The laid down ROE are robust, especially in Chapter 7 missions, and must be used to protect civilians and the mandate. Often units shy away as they lack in robustness and play safe despite the given ROE.



General Menon with General Mauri from Finland, Deputy Force Commander UNDOF They had the same heads... and were best friends



At Haifa, Israel - meeting Shri Narendra Modi, Indian Prime Minister and Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli PM

Previously, UN peacekeeping missions did not invest resources into gathering intelligence on the rebel groups or on the violent parties in the conflict area. There is a school of thought that believes that UN mission performance would improve if the mission was more aware of the plans and activities of the involved players. How should UN Missions go about improving their situational awareness and knowledge of inimical forces in the mission areas?

UN has traditionally not invested resources into intelligence gathering because of the nature of deployments and keeping within the UN principles of Impartiality, Consent of the parties and Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The situation has changed over the last 15 years where multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions have been operating in environments which require enhanced situational awareness for mandate implementation as well as safety and security of peacekeepers. PKI is the agreed upon term within the UN and it has some acceptance in peacekeeping when keeping within very

well-defined principles. The Secretariat has worked to strengthen PKI with strategic guidance for missions and has promulgated the Policy on PKI, Military PKI Handbook, Peacekeeping-Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Staff Handbook, Guidelines on Acquisition of Information from Human Sources for PKI and the Guidelines on UN Use of UAS Capabilities.

The Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping has an entire work stream dedicated to improving situational awareness by leveraging data and technology. Missions are implementing the ongoing work on improving situational awareness and we should soon be seeing

peacekeepers performing in more aware environments.

In the last four years or so, you have been visiting various UN missions, taking stock and doing an audit of the performance of the UN troops and mission support. You would have observed the performance of our troops vis-à-vis other troops in UN. What are your perceptions?

Indian troops are well trained and motivated. We have the advantage of being a professional standing army and the troops being deployed are selected and come from cohesive units. Having been in the Indian Army, knowing their standards, I frankly hold them to higher standards. Our contingents are strong in planning, green operations, situational awareness, understanding of POC and logistics support. However, some aspects need strengthening - a more proactive and robust mind-set, CASEVAC and medical support planning, gender mainstreaming and local language specialization.

There is also a perception in Indian deployments that the selection of a unit is a reward for good performance in operations back home and therefore sometimes is assumed to be a rest and recoup tenure for the unit. This has an adverse effect on the mind-set of our officers especially. Unfortunately, India is perceived in the traditional peacekeepers category that is akin to a Chapter 6 mandate mind-set. This is a brutal fact and must change. Contingents from certain countries are renowned for robust and proactive peacekeeping and are highly regarded within the organisation, including by the local communities whom they protect. Peacekeeping mission environments today are dynamic, risk intense and volatile. Indian contingents need to apply training, resources and the mind-set which they display in India

and which they have, in their deployments to peacekeeping missions. There is no scope for rest and recoup and that is something that needs to be drilled into our leaders and troops before reaching the mission area. The bottom line is that civilians and the mandate must be protected at all costs.

Training troops and observers before deployment has become an important ingredient currently, and India too runs several UN training courses. How would you rate the training given in our country, in comparison to the training in Bangladesh, or in African countries? Any improvements that you suggest.

Training and especially pre-deployment training prior to induction into peacekeeping missions is an essential prerequisite to operating in the dynamic security environment where Indian troops and police are deployed. I would be cautious in comparing training courses, infrastructure and methodology of different countries. India is not deployed in all peacekeeping missions and context of the mission greatly guides the training being imparted. However, we have been in peacekeeping for a very long time and therefore, Indian peacekeeping has become well institutionalized and we have also been supported by the national authorities for our infrastructure needs. Bangladesh has also invested heavily in training infrastructure and resources and their contingents come up very strongly in their deployments. African countries have also done well, especially with the support of interested nations who are aiding with training, resources and equipment. We must, however, understand the challenges faced by smaller militaries with lesser resources than what is available to the Indian contingents. Overall, I think there needs to be greater focus on blue training especially working languages, negotiation

and soft skills. Military and Police leadership must have a better understanding of the operating environment of the countries that they are being deployed in. I would also emphasize strongly on the need for First Aid and CASEVAC training.

India also has the potential to provide training and support to other participating countries and must step up their effort from running courses in India for selected officers to possibly sending training teams to selected and mutually agreed countries to assist in peacekeeping deployment training. There will be a cost involved but the goodwill and stature gained will outweigh the cost. Also, India needs to deploy more mission enablers and not just infantry units. The UN is increasingly looking for assistance from member states to step up their deployment of mission enablers. India could deploy more mission enablers like UAS, aviation assets, engineering assets, Special Forces and Quick Reaction companies and Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets. We have a good record of providing medical assets thus far.

Finally, what drove and inspired you through your years in the Indian Army?

My father was a proud soldier who wore his uniform with grace and pride every day and he loved the soldier, something I picked up from him. My battalion was my life, and I lived my life with the men I commanded. They were always central to me throughout my service. I loved the uniformed life, the camaraderie, élan, ethos, the excitement, sports, the mountains, deserts and the omnipresent dangers... an exciting life indeed. Passion, commitment and loyalty to my organisation is something that has been innate in me.

In the very formative years of my service, the senior officers of my battalion supported me strongly. Brigadier PS Mann, SM, VSM was my idol, mentor and father figure during my formative years. He was an officer of immense professional competence, integrity, stature, well read and a natural leader. I owe everything I am today, to the Indian Army, my parents, my wife and daughters, my battalion and the most wonderful soldiers whom I had the opportunity to lead.



Neeti Jaychander has over 18 years of experience as a writer and journalist. For over a decade, she was the Senior Regional Editor (Southern India) at FEMINA, the country's oldest and largest-selling lifestyle magazine. She has been the Editor of ET Madras Plus, the erstwhile lifestyle supplement of The Economic Times, and has authored books for children. She is a writer with the Deccan Herald, Zenger News (the world's first digitally native wire service) and teaches a journalism course at the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Bengaluru.



Neeti Jaychander

WORKING FOR PEACE IN DARFUR

UN peacekeeping is not just about military forces and deployment, but entails a lot of negotiations with the warring parties and steady peace building efforts. The author talks about his experience as Chairman Permanent Ceasefire Committee in Darfur.

Life is, but a rollercoaster ride of memories that we all carry - some imprinted permanently, while others fade as footsteps on the sands of time. As a “*Fanji Child*” growing up in India, visiting military establishments with my father was the norm, my opinion notwithstanding! A particular visit with my father to the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA), nestled in the picturesque environs of Khadakwasla, on the outskirts of Pune, on a bright sunny day in May 1979 stands out vividly. My father, a Colonel from the Corps of Signals, took me to the iconic building that defines NDA - the *Sudan Block*. This building is a testament to the valour and sacrifice of the brave



Map of Darfur



First PCC meeting at UNAMID Camp, El Fasher

Indian soldiers, who fought in Sudan during World War II. Standing with my father on the topmost step of the building's stairs, my father noticed that I was intimidated by the sheer grandeur of the building. He looked at me square in the eye and said *"Son, with hard work, you too will one day proudly walk down these hallowed stairs"*.

As fate would have it, I never got an opportunity to walk down those stairs as a cadet. But I still joined the Army, passing out from the Indian Military Academy. Destiny, however, revived my memories of the Sudan Block. Five decades after standing in front of the majestic Sudan Block, I walked down the steps of an Airbus A330, setting my feet on Sudanese soil for the first time - as a proud veteran who had served his country with dignity and honour. Like the brave Indian soldiers, who had fought in Sudan, I too had come on a mission; but only this time my mission was very different. I had come to help bring an end to one of the longest conflicts in Africa, as the Chairperson of the Permanent Ceasefire Committee (PCC), under the overall aegis of the United Nations Integrated Transition Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS).

Having hung up my uniform in August 2021, as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of a Division in the Eastern Sector, I planned to settle down in Chandigarh, hoping to lead a quintessential retired life of uninterrupted golf in the morning followed with some socialising with friends in the evening. But, I was surprised when I got an invite from the UN, asking me to head the PCC in Sudan, which had been recently approved by the Head of the Transitional Government of Sudan under General Al-Burhan in July that same year.

My linkages with the UN are not new. I had served as a Senior Military Observer (Milob) in the United Nations

Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) in the DR Congo and later on as the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 2017. The new assignment, which entailed not only chairing the Committee, but to also set up the entire oversight structure from the ground up, was just the new challenge required to stir my excitement once again. I understood both the gravity and the enormity of the task, which would come with the associated bouquet of hurdles. This new job would be devoid of the structured regimented life that I was accustomed to. Without a second thought I accepted the post, and shortly, with the blessings of 'Karni Mata' and my hierarchy, I was on a flight to Khartoum, the capital of the Republic of Sudan.

Setting Up The PCC : The Journey So Far

Since its independence in 1956, Sudan, an ancient land, continues to be

saddled by an endless cycle of violence, internal strife and humanitarian crisis, driven by an intense internal socio-politico-military power struggle, that has unfortunately, been the only constant in its modern history. With Sudan once again taking fledgling steps towards a democratic path, the UN stepped in with the establishment of UNITAMS. A key precursor to ushering peace was the need to oversee the implementation of the ceasefire between the various warring factions. Accordingly, the PCC was established, after the signing of the Juba Agreement for Peace by the five major Armed Struggle Movements (ASMs), the Government of Sudan as well as guarantors of South Sudan and Chad on 03 October 2020, in Juba, South Sudan. The Permanent Ceasefire Agreement called for cessation of hostilities and a permanent ceasefire amongst the ASMs, demobilisation of their forces and eventual integration of these forces into the future security architecture of Sudan. Accordingly, it



Discussion on setting up the PCC with experts from UN HQ, New York. The author is seated to the left.



The author with members of ASMs

called upon a third party (UN) to chair the Committee based in Darfur, headquartered in El Fasher in North Darfur, with Sector Committees in the five major provincial capitals of El Fasher in North Darfur, El Geneina in West Darfur, Zalingei in Central Darfur, Nyala in South Darfur, and El Daien in East Darfur.

The PCC mandate is enshrined in Chapter 8 of the Juba Peace Agreement and has 14 core responsibilities. Broadly, the PCC is the cornerstone agency responsible for planning, coordinating and overseeing all actions aimed at monitoring, verification, and implementation of the permanent ceasefire agreement on the ground.

With this vast and complex mandate, the setting up the Committee from scratch was indeed a herculean task. A basic structure, comprising five representatives from the Government of Sudan, one representative each from the five ASMs and a representative each from the Government of South Sudan and Republic of Chad, forms the heart of the Committee. The Committee's structure

has been kept as a scalable model, to meet the dynamic requirements. Furthermore, the basic composition and functions are replicated at Sector and Field Team levels, although the field teams are more mobile in posture compared to the Committees at HQ and Sector levels. The UN component to the PCC comprises experts in the field of Ceasefire Monitoring, Mediation, Police capacity, Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Rule of Law.

Operationalising the PCC

Initially, the PCC was located at Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. Given the distance of Khartoum from Darfur,

I decided to relocate the PCC Headquarters to El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. On reaching El Fasher, we thought that we were fortunate to find accommodation in the erstwhile United Nations and African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Logistics Camp. The erstwhile Mission, which was the largest Peacekeeping Mission in the history of the UN, was in its draw down phase when I arrived in Sudan. As per the agreement, the complete assets of the Mission, such as vehicles, cars, IT equipment and other infrastructure, were to be handed over to the local government. However, this was not to be due to the prevailing internal strife. With more than three decades of military experience behind me, I decided to once again re-locate my office - but this time under a tree with basic mobiles, WhatsApp and Google translate applications acting as my force multipliers!

My immediate priorities were to ensure that the PCC met on a daily basis and provided a working mechanism for addressing critical issues, which included confidence building measures amongst the members, getting the requisite recognition from the five provincial State Governors or 'Walis', getting funding and international aid, staffing and recruitment - which is a very laborious process! Concurrently, I had to spearhead and facilitate the operationalization of the Five Field Teams in the respective Sectors. The onus of drafting the Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) as well as bylaws for the PCC, also fell on me and it was indeed a task to write these documents after so many years of having competent staff produce the same while being in Service!

Achievements

The journey so far has been a huge learning process for me, filled with highs and lows. The adaptability and tenacity that I learnt during my

service years in the Indian Army, continue to guide me in this new assignment. Despite the demanding rigours of setting up the entire architecture from scratch, with limited resources available, the Committee has made laudable achievements, some of which have helped defuse potentially devastating conflicts between the various belligerents, thus, saving precious lives and properties.

Our unwavering efforts have been recognized by the Government of Sudan and highlighted by the Special Representative to the Security General (SRSG) during his address to the UN Security Council meeting in New York. The Committee continues to receive international support, albeit incrementally and with strings attached. Our biggest supporters, however, remain the poor Sudanese population, who with a silent prayer on their lips, see in us a ray of hope to the incessant cycle of violence and instability.

The DSSC Connection

When I embarked upon my new assignment as the PCC Chairperson, I had no idea that the long arms of our prestigious Staff College in Wellington, would come to my aid, over 5,000 kilometres overseas. On reaching Khartoum, I was received by Brigadier Hakim of the Sudanese Army, who was the government representative in the PCC. While exchanging notes, I was pleasantly surprised, when he in fluent English, asked me as to where I had gone for my FAT! It took me some time to register that he was referring to the Forward Area Tour (FAT) conducted during the course at the DSSC. He then proceeded to practice his Hindi on me and showed me pictures of his trip to Sikkim, where his blood pressure had touched 180/90 at 15000 feet. I light-heartedly informed him that both of us

were 'blood brothers', conjoined through common blood pressure issues in high altitude! Although on a side note, I fortunately retired from the service in SHAPE-1 medical category. To my surprise, the DSSC connect kept getting stronger with each passing week. One of my Sector Chairs, Colonel Masum from Bangladesh, another alumnus of DSSC Wellington, arrived in the Mission Area. We also have a Nepali officer, from the UN Standing Police Capacity, who too has walked the portals of DSSC Wellington. Another pleasant surprise awaited me when another Sector Chair from Nigeria, Wing Commander Dennis, informed me that while he had not done the Indian Staff Course, he was a proud graduate of the Nigerian Defence Academy, which is West Africa's premier Joint Military Training Institution. Incidentally, and a matter of immense pride for all of us, this institute was established by India, with Brigadier MR Verma being the first Commandant in 1964.

As India emerges as a major power on the global canvas, a large number of foreign officers are being trained in our

premier training institutions. These bonds forged in classrooms, in exercise areas and on the training fields, go a long way in bridging India with the global community. We must understand and capitalise on this key element of Military Diplomacy, which will also stand us in good stead in times of need.

Conclusion

My journey in the Army and now as a veteran, has taken me across the globe. I have been part of wars and conflicts, trained my men to fight and win them and yet also have been a witness to the ensuing human tragedy that often gets glossed over. As professionals, we must understand the complex nature of politico-socio-economic and military dimensions to any conflict and at the same time examine these very attributes to find the solutions for lasting peace and stability. Ironical as it may appear, this remains the real acumen of a true military leader. So my parting advice would be to understand that *'the hand that holds the gun, also holds the key to peace'*.



Major General Sandeep Bajaj, AVSM (Retd), commissioned into 2 RAJ RIF in June 1987 is an alumnus of DSSC, Wellington and College of Defence Management, Secunderabad. In his distinguished career, he has tenanted several important staff and command appointments. As 2IC of 2 RAJ RIF during the Kargil war, he took part in the historic battles of Tololing and Three Pimples. He has commanded a Rashtriya Rifles Battalion, an Infantry Brigade and a Mountain Division from where he superannuated. His UN tenures include being a military observer in MONUSCO (Congo) and Deputy Force Commander of UNIFIL (Lebanon). He is currently with the UN as Chair to the Permanent Cease Fire Committee in Sudan.



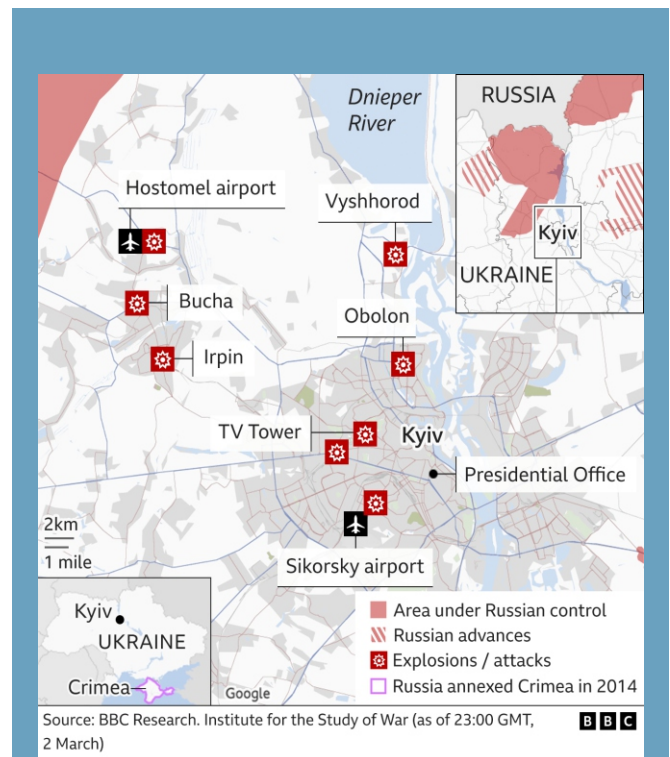
Maj Gen Sandeep Bajaj

RUSSIA'S SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION IN UKRAINE

PERSISTENCE vs RESISTANCE

The Russo - Ukraine conflict has garnered the attention of the global media, and the information war is being played out in the print, electronic and social media platforms to influence perceptions in favour of either of the belligerents. The author looks at some of the military dimensions of the campaign, the combat level actions, strategies of resistance and the offensives objectively.

There have been several debates and articles in print and other media discussing the strategic after effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Deliberations have also taken place on whether it was necessary for Russia to intervene militarily, did the Western powers instigate the Russian response, did the Ukrainian leadership ignore Russian concerns, etc. Armchair strategists have pontificated wisely and think tanks went on an overdrive. However, what interested me more was the conduct of the campaign at the military and operational level, and what lessons our Armed Forces leaders need to ingest. Not an easy task, given today's scenario of misinformation and perception distortions coming out from the war zone.



Battle for Kyiv



The Russian War Aims

Undoubtedly, the Russian leadership wants Ukraine to be politically aligned with Russia, militarily neutral with conditionally transparent borders to facilitate cultural and economic integration into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The Russian strategic objectives include recognition of Crimea as Russian territory, recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics as sovereign states and Ukraine's neutral status, as a future non-NATO nation. To achieve these war aims, the military campaign initially planned to trigger a collapse of the Ukrainian Government by threatening Kyiv, besides isolating Donbas and controlling the coastline along the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. In addition, the Russian Forces planned to capture Kharkiv too.

The Most Important Lesson

It is always difficult to analyse "war" conclusively until it is completely over, yet it is possible to draw out lessons as the events unfold. At the end, the story of the victor generally prevails as the story of the war, though an honest story would also reflect the valiant actions of the vanquished.

The Russian 'Special Military Operation' has entered the fourth month. So, the first lesson is that modern wars may not possibly be short, and political leaders must realize that the conflict will likely prolong. Even if the opposing force is far weaker, the resistance may not be weak. Why do I say this? Potent weapons are available today at low cost, and hence a weaker foe is capable of causing greater damage. Situational awareness of both sides has also improved, which results in better targeting. And you will invariably have other inimical nations who would add to the intelligence picture of the weaker foe. Potency and accuracy of target

information will combine to make the war more devastating. Also, the citizens of a nation under attack rally to their national call, and the patriotic fervour generates greater resistance. All in all, these aspects will slow down the progress of the attacker. Our senior leaders should bear these probabilities in mind when looking at our Western neighbour.

The Thunderous Opening

President Putin has often stated that if conflict is inevitable, be the first one to hit. The Russian Army surprised the world with the scale of assault and moved swiftly on the first day of the offensive. With the "shock and awe" effect of rockets, missiles and thunderous tank assaults from multiple directions and imposing air strikes on airfields, headquarters (HQ) and reconnoitred Ukrainian defensive positions, the dominance was overwhelming. However, the momentum could not be sustained.

Russia did not carry out follow up air operations to knock out Ukrainian airpower or anti-aircraft assets. Till date, Ukraine air assets have been able to operate with some effect. At Hostomel airport, the failed link up of land columns with the Airborne forces resulted in the Special Forces aborting the mission. The complete 'Combined Arms Operation' didn't sustain because the Ukrainians were able to interfere with the advance to slow it down and throw it off gear. Soon the "intelligence failures" showed up, logistical challenges surfaced, Ukrainian resistance grew, the media led Information War affected the psychological aspects of war-fighting. While limited use of air power may have been a reason to ensure the stated goal of minimum civilian casualties, the plan should have had an assured degree of success or a 'Plan B' to cater to contingencies. At some places along the Southern thrust (from Crimea to Kherson), initial victory did result in



Damaged Russian tank, after being hit by Bayraktar TB-2 drone (Photo courtesy abvalnews.com) near Kherson



Map of Ukraine showing Russian captured areas as of early June 22 (Courtesy en.wikipedia.org)

huge territorial gains, but at several places in the Donbas the initial gains were less than expected. The cascading effect of initial failures made this a prolonged war of attrition. And certainly, the costs, of either victory or defeat, will be much higher.

Battle of Kyiv – a Feint or The Main?

There are different opinions on the attack on Kyiv and how it unfolded. A combination of factors including geography, operational plans, defensive battles and tactical level innovativeness make an interesting combination of lessons. The mighty Dnieper River runs through the capital and the Russian plan involved two pincer movements to encircle Kyiv from both banks. The speedy assault was led by a heli-borne assault on Hostomel airfield, 30 km from Kyiv which was to serve as a staging area for subsequent encirclement. During the assault Mi-35 and Ka-52 attack helicopters softened the defences to enable Mi-8 transport aircraft carrying special troops to safely land. But Ukrainian air defence batteries were relocated in the adjacent

forests on receiving an intelligence ‘tip-off’ and casualties marred the heli-borne mission. Interestingly, since Kyiv was prioritized, Ukraine did not have air defences for other cities – a lesson in forfeiting a balanced profile over protection of a few important centres.

Later the Russians moved by road to take Hostomel city, followed by Bucha and battled at Irpin, at the gates of Kyiv. Wheel based Infantry Combat Vehicles with capability to move cross country emerged as the most suitable link up force. Ukrainian Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) teams used foam mats (called Kare mats costing \$ 1.5) over their heads innovatively, to conceal detection of human heat by

drones. This helped them move stealthily in small groups to hit the road bound columns. On the East bank of the Dnieper, the Russian advance was stalled at Skybyn when an armoured column was ambushed. On the West bank destruction of Kozarovychi dam on the Irpin River was a critical mistake - the plain between Hostomel and Moschun got inundated. Blowing up of bridges at Horenka restricted movement to small, single-track roads where troops were vulnerable to ambushes. Pontoons were attempted but with the rising water it was difficult for a large number of vehicles or personnel to get across.

Despite the reverses, the Russian assault from the North towards Kyiv was instrumental in pinning down a large quantum of Ukrainian troops. Many experts believe that Kyiv was a major feint planned to divert the adversary’s resources (including US/NATO efforts) from Donbas. A critical analysis of terrain reveals that there are swamps and peat ways to the South West of Kyiv. With the melting of snow, Dnieper River would expectedly experience high water tables and in the adjacent slushy ground, movement of heavy tanks and vehicles would be a challenge. Besides, siege/capture of a modern capital city like Kyiv having approximately 3 million people, necessitates guerrilla warfare tactics and places a huge demand on infantry troops. And the capture definitely would not be feasible in a few weeks if not days - as some experts envisioned. Most of the above would have been realized by Russian military planners.

Nevertheless, considerable resources were dedicated to this thrust from the North, indicating that Kyiv had been identified as the Centre of Gravity. There is also a school of thought that believes that withdrawal from Kyiv may have been due to an agreement reached on 29 March during talks at Istanbul between the warring parties. (The Russians

accuse the Ukrainians of going back on their commitment later). Only time will clarify if it was indeed a strategic deception.

Platforms vs Anti - Platforms

Another truism of the transparent battlefield is that what can be seen can be hit. The invisible infantryman is more likely to remain undetected, vis-à-vis the Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV); the submarine is likely to survive vis-à-vis the battleship. The sinking of the Moskva, the downing of several helicopters and the destruction of armoured columns is a pointer to the contours of future war. In future conflicts, the armed drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) will be the combat Force Multipliers. The anti-tank missiles, the anti-aircraft missiles and the anti-ship missiles have been the preferred weapons of the Ukrainians – the anti-platforms. And the platforms, namely the AFVs, the aircraft and the ships will remain vulnerable, till such time their protection systems are enhanced.

Logistics Comes a Cropper

The Russian “push model” of logistical sustenance proved inadequate. It was optimistically envisaged that the “short, swift and high tempo” of operation may not put heavy demands on ammunition replenishment, fuel, food and repair / recovery echelons; the phase post the first 48 to 72 hours self-containment period itself proved insufficient in preparation. The Russians rely heavily on their railway network for moving logistics. But that could fetch supplies only till the borders as all the connecting bridges inside Ukrainian territory were damaged / destroyed. Thereafter the unguarded convoys on the road – carrying tank and artillery ammunition, fuel trucks, food supplies etc were targeted by the Ukrainian infantry anti-tank missiles and small arms. The

absence of close support repair and recovery teams mired the capability of the Russian columns to advance. A few reports also emerged of poor quality of material supplied which included expired food products, faulty ammunition and poor quality of Chinese tyres for Russian vehicles. Apparently, the Russian forces had foregone stable logistic support in exchange for speed of advance assuming a lesser level of Ukrainian resistance. An old lesson is thus reinforced – logistics must be planned to support the operational reach.

The Russian Way of Doing Things

In joint training with the Russian troops, we have noticed that they always adhere to a particular way of executing combat drills and in unexpected battlefield situations demonstrate limited initiative to deviate from orders. The Russian Armed Forces command and control structure has evolved from the erstwhile “Stavka” of the Soviet Union era - successively known as the

High Command, Supreme Command and General Staff. This is a small group of senior officers who oversee all military operations. They are responsible for making decisions about strategy and tactics, and they coordinate the efforts of all the different branches of the military. Under a centralized command system, there is limited autonomy, the wheels of decision making move slowly, even in rapidly changing battlefield conditions. Battalion Commanders of different units continue to follow original orders, even when the ground situation changes. The problems are referred upwards and solutions awaited.

A more significant aspect of the Russian way of doing things is symbolized by their historical involvement in the Great Patriotic War (1941-45). Conversations about the 27 million Soviet soldiers and civilians killed in World War II or the present higher than expected casualties in the ongoing “**Special Military**



Women and children, fleeing from Ukraine, sleep at a makeshift shelter in the train station in Przemyśl, Poland. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)



Ukrainian serviceman walks next to a fighting vehicle, outside Kyiv, April 2, 2022. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda)

Operation”, generates a standard response. Extremely patient with struggles, Russians believe that the best laid plans often go awry and the slower you go, the further you get. Citing experiences of World War II wherein the Red Army turned defeat into victory, soldiers relate to the need to stay patient, augment efforts to achieve the goals, even at enhanced cost. This will possibly explain Putin’s response to the reverses on the Ukrainian battlefield – persistence to overcome resistance. And ultimately, unrelenting Russian persistence will result in the capture of the Donbas region, along with territorial contiguity along the coastline to Crimea.

Degradation and Fire Power

Precision long-range firepower employed in an integrated manner has been a plus point in this conflict. Rockets, cruise missiles, fighter aircraft and drones opened up space for manoeuvre and created conditions for progressing operations. They are clearly shaping the battlefield for Russia. However, integration of ground-based firepower with airpower has been amiss. Possibly,

seamlessly across the length and depth of the battlefield in an integrated manner is an important lesson for the future.

Countering The Drones

Countering the air threat is the primary responsibility of the Air Force, but air assets will not be able to neutralise the large number of drones which will enter the Tactical Battle Area. Difficult to detect because of their low radar signature, drones will need to be neutralised by ground-based air defence weapons. Our take-away is that we have to increase our ground-based air defence weapons and quickly develop counter drone systems. Since the air threat is going to be larger and more deadly, we may have to provide Stinger class of man-portable missiles and ZU23 type of guns to infantry units, with a rider that they will only engage drones/UAVs. Integrating the air picture and air defence resources under an Air Defence Command may therefore be a prudent step.

Innovations in AFVs

The Russian Land Forces employ their AFVs in task-oriented *Battle Tactical Groups* (BTG’s). The AFVs employed by the Russian Armed Forces consisted of approximately 30% Tank T-90s and 70% Tank T-72 (majority being T-72 B-3). With respect to firepower, the T-72 tanks on both sides reportedly used the High Explosive (Fragmentation) and MANGO ammunition in an innovative way. The High Explosive (Fragmentation) first hits the tank thus destabilizing its electronics and sighting systems and subsequent hits by the MANGO ammunition achieved a K-Kill. The much-improved T-72 B3 is a modern tank with almost 45% additional Horse Power, modern turret, fire control system and sight system, enhanced capability for communication, fire-fighting

this is a pointer towards the advantages of integrated theatre commands. There were gaps in firepower planning and delivery, which provided adequate windows of opportunity to Ukrainian forces to retaliate. Ukraine employed long-range firepower in an ambush role innovatively wherein they used the underground, protected parking of shopping malls as hides for Smerch launchers. This enabled quick redeployment to bring down fire upon advancing Russian columns as and when they entered prepared killing fields, which were kept under close observation by use of drones. The maxim that firepower must be delivered

and protection system. These features ensured better performance due to enhanced power of the power pack. Video and images in open sources indicate that the T-72 performed adequately as far as mobility is concerned. The major shortcoming was that most of the repair and recovery resources were not clubbed with the forward troops and a large quantum of equipment was stranded in the forward battle locations (up to 60% for want of running repairs) which caused delays besides avoidable casualties by Ukrainian UAVs and ATGMs. Placing these resources along with forward troops could have catalysed the operations and maintained the required tempo.

For protection, the T-72 tanks employ third generation explosive reactive armour (ERA) panels to provide omnidirectional protection to the vulnerable parts of the tank. Reportedly, *'Arena protection system'* was installed in a few of these tanks which is an advanced electronics-based protection system. Based on their operational exposure in Syria, the Russian Armed Forces also innovated a screen or canopy to minimise their losses to hits from top attack Javelin missiles. A lattice screen was placed 1.5 metres above the turret of the Tank T-72 which ensured ease of operation by the crew while effectively mitigating the effects of ATGMs like Javelin. Some pipes were seen around the canopy, which probably were heat traps for the homing heads of Javelin. These heat pumps reportedly use some chemical which keeps the heat traps hot when activated.

The Strongly Defended Cities

The defender is always at an advantage in urban terrain. Due to lack of any physical features with defence potential, Ukrainian defences were based on towns and cities. These defences were

fortified along all major approaches and strengthened by concentric rings of circular defences around them. The same were fortified by metal obstacles, mine fields and layers of sandbags and vantage points manned by elite troops. Soviet era construction of concrete obstacles ensured adequate defence potential to the buildings. The Ukrainian infantry, duly augmented by irregulars like the citizen force of all males above 18 years and below 60 years and militia increased the bayonet strength. Such preparations by the inspired local citizens would have surprised the Russians and disturbed their calculations of force ratios.

Information and Intelligence Operations

Before the commencement of the conflict, the US and the West created adequate battlefield transparency by publicly sharing information. This provided clarity on the Russian build-up and provided adequate intelligence to the Ukrainians regarding Russian dispositions. Despite being under constant US watch, Russia launched a sudden attack on 24 February 2022 and achieved a high degree of operational surprise. Future wars will be information and intelligence intensive, so the chances of planned offensives being leaked are high. Some troops indicated that they were surprised to learn later that it was not an exercise that they were participating in but a real battle.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has also been used extensively for precision targeting of military targets. Combining AI with heat signatures of soldiers, their digital profiles, social media posts and other cyber activities assisted in identification of soldiers. Focused messages were sent to soldiers and the

family members asking them to surrender by both sides. Similarly, a telegram chat-bot was created by security agencies where local Ukrainians used their smartphones to share details on spotting Russian soldiers. The Russians thereafter destroyed mobile masts to prevent Ukrainians from disclosing their positions. Along with 4G mobile transmission towers, smartphones and laptops were smashed to prevent information leakage. We must hence understand the unique combinations of communication, intelligence, cyber space and social media – which if played appropriately can act as a Force Multiplier.

The Men Behind the Machines

The Russian military relies heavily on conscripted men between the ages of 18 to 27 years old who are drafted into service. They receive two months of basic training; three-to-six months of advanced training and typically serve just a year. More significantly, the Russian military does not have non-commissioned officers (NCOs) - the subject matter experts who bring in years of experience to help officers lead their units. Absence of NCOs in the battlefield has resulted in officers spending precious time micro-managing routine details, no matter how small or mundane instead of focusing on planning or execution. Contrarily, it is argued that the Russian military has historically done reasonably well without NCOs. Perhaps heeding this drawback, China is working to develop its own NCO corps as part of its effort to make its Armed Forces a world class military.

Both sides have reportedly employed irregulars to bolster their

capabilities and capacities. Russia hired fighters from Chechenya, Turkey, Syria and Afghanistan besides using the support of the militia of Luhansk and Donetsk Peoples Republics; Ukraine reportedly involved international volunteers besides impressing all civilians in the age group of 18 to 60 years. The Mayor of Kyiv mobilized the general public to defend their city by distributing 18000 Kalashnikov rifles and publicly called on citizens to fight with Molotov cocktails. It was also reported that jailed convicts were given weapons to defend various cities. Coordination between these irregular militia or poorly trained civilian volunteers and the regular Army, Territorial Defence, Police or several other units of the security service resulted in new challenges. This sudden increase in bayonet strength also changed calculations on the Russian side. It is possible that our Western neighbour may adopt similar tactics in times of conventional war and we need to cater for such measures by the adversary in our calculations.

Reinforcements.

A major factor in the loss of momentum of the Russian offensive was the shortfall in reinforcements. As the Ukrainian Territorial Defence units made up their strength with volunteers and conscripts, the Russian Forces acutely felt the need for more soldiers. Putin faced the dilemma of calling for a full mobilisation or to go in for partial mobilisation, and chose the latter. A full mobilisation would have pointed towards an escalation. The partial mobilisation and movement of reinforcements took time, and the conflict prolonged. Herein is a lesson for our Army, that we cannot reduce our Army manpower levels given our vast and disputed borders. Post Galwan 2020, the Indian Army had to mobilise additional

forces to the Northern borders, and our standing force levels could meet the threat.

The Critical Lines of Communication

Mass movement of men and supplies is dependent on road-rail arteries. Railway stations, bridges and bottlenecks on roads became obvious targets. Yet during the initial days, major railway stations in Western Ukraine were spared to enable movement of refugees towards Lviv and onwards to Poland, Romania, Slovakia or Hungary borders. Maybe because minimum collateral damage to civilians was a stated goal. However, when the European nations began supporting Ukraine by supplying scores of military hardware to include tanks, howitzers, air defence equipment etc, the same railway stations were damaged to prevent easy augmentation of weapons for the Ukrainians.

Rising temperatures coupled with melting of snow made cross-country movement for armoured columns challenging, restricting them to black top roads. To ensure that roads are not blocked and kept open, extensive use of recovery resources was made. Numerous videos stand testimony that damaged equipment was systematically recovered and piled up on road sides. The Ukrainians too used the derelict equipment for blocking roads, damaged vehicles were booby trapped with explosives, debris spread on the road and ruined equipment was burnt.

End Note

When we look back in time, Field Marshal Manekshaw prepared the Indian Army for the 1971 Indo- Pak War, building up the logistics, preparing the troops and then launched the campaign. Therefore, wars must not be launched in haste, and it is not possible to keep troops on 'runway readiness' throughout the year, ready to attack in 24 to 48 hours. Even the punitive strikes launched after Uri September 2016 and Pulwama February 2019, were launched about 10 days after the trigger. And the enemy was in a high state of alert expecting a military strike, so we are unlikely to face '*unprepared enemy defences*'. We also need to be prepared for escalation after a punitive strike, hence partial mobilization after an offensive action should be factored in. Our 'Cold Start' and 'Pro-active' strategies should plan for higher levels of readiness and resistance from the enemy, lest the initial attacks fail to make the desired gains.

Information war would also be a reality in future, with both sides trying to swing the narrative in their favour. And, of course, armed drones and the anti-platforms should be prioritised in our capability enhancement. The required changes in our structures, equipment profile and plans must not be bogged down by the military bureaucracy and the status quo mind-set.

■ Lt Gen JS Sandhu (Retd) *Editor*



Baggage in line - evacuees carrying their essentials

INDIAN NAVY'S EVACUATION FROM A WAR ZONE

IN LEBANON: OPERATION SUKOON 2006

Evacuation of Indian Nationals from foreign countries in turmoil has happened regularly in the last few years. The first such endeavour undertaken by the Indian Navy was in 2006 from Beirut. A first person account from the Captain of the Flagship involved follows.

A biennial bilateral naval exercise KONKAN between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Navy (RN) ended in the Arabian Sea on 29 May 2006. It was an eleven-day, three dimensional interoperability exercise including an aircraft carrier and submarines. After the exercise and debrief at the Naval Base in Mumbai, the British ships set sail towards the Middle East and homeward through the Mediterranean Sea. Some IN ships in Mumbai then began to prepare for their next long deployment. It was a sheer coincidence that some of the participating ships from both navies met again in the Mediterranean in July 06 in what we came to call **OPERATION SUKOON**.

The Western Fleet sailed from Mumbai on 15 June on an overseas deployment (OSD). Before reaching the Gulf of Aden, the Fleet split into two groups. IN Ships *Mumbai*, *Brahmaputra*, *Betwa* and *Shakti* (a fleet tanker) continued on the OSD while the rest of the Fleet, having exercised intensively, returned to Mumbai. The Flag Officer Commanding Western



On Cruise for Goodwill Visit

Fleet (FOCWF) was embarked on board Mumbai (Flagship). I was then in command of *INS Mumbai*. These ships further split into two Task Units of two ships each; *Mumbai* and *Brahmaputra* were to visit Haifa in Israel and Izmir in Turkey; *Betwa* and *Shakti* were to visit Alexandria in Egypt and Tripoli in Libya. All four ships were to meet again in the Aegean Sea to make the last port of call at Piraeus (Athens) in Greece. The entire goodwill visit was a success and the homeward bound ships left the Aegean Sea on 13 July. They were South-bound in the Suez Canal on the midnight of 15/16th of July.

Let us step back in time a bit. IN Ships *Mumbai* and *Brahmaputra* had visited Haifa for four days from 28 June. During the mutual interaction with the Israel Navy, it was learnt that there had been some skirmishes between the Hezbollah outfits and Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) along the Israel-Lebanon border. Since IN ships had nothing to do with the on-going skirmishes, no particular attention was paid. In a turn of events, the ships were in the war zone two weeks later.

sank a Cambodian registered merchant ship MV Moonlight further to seawards. The fact that the Hezbollah had anti-ship missiles deployed in the proximity of Beirut became a real danger to Indian Naval ships when they began their humanitarian operations in what had become a conflict zone.

Reverse Your Course

The war in the Mediterranean had created a crisis in Delhi. The Government wanted that Indian nationals in Lebanon be evacuated urgently. As luck would have it, four Indian Naval ships were in the Suez and the Navy proposed to undertake this unprecedented task of evacuation of civilians from a war zone. While we were Southbound in the Suez Canal, Naval Headquarters (NHQ) had signalled that ships might have to return through the Suez for a possible evacuation of Indian nationals. The NHQ, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence and other departments of the Government were working in close coordination and getting the necessary inputs and approvals. The ships exited the canal and anchored in the Gulf of Suez in the evening. We were then ordered to reverse course and return to the Mediterranean. **OPERATION SUKOON** (Hindi word meaning succour in English) was launched on 16th of July.

The ships needed diplomatic clearance and had to embark some fresh provisions before joining the North-bound traffic. It goes to the credit of the Indian mission in Egypt, particularly to the then Defence Attaché, and Foreign Office in New Delhi that necessary clearances were obtained in quick time. But time was too short to get the provisions delivered to ships before they could join the North-bound convoy. With

IN ships at sea on long deployments publish their own daily newspaper. Our own "*Mumbai Times*" of 13 July had the flash news that the Hezbollah outfits operating from Lebanon had carried out raids, ambushed military vehicles and abducted two Israeli soldiers the previous night. On the same day, Israel declared war on Lebanon. The most shocking news came on the 15th of July. A very advanced Sa'ar 5 corvette of the Israeli Navy, *INS Hanit*, was hit by a missile fired from Lebanese shores. She was on combat patrol close to Beirut at that time. A C802 Silkworm missile of Chinese origin had hit the ship on her helicopter landing deck. Also a second missile, which probably was fired at the same time but missed *INS Hanit*, hit and

good liaison between the ship, Defence Attaché, and the ship-chandler, it was decided that *Mumbai*, while underway in the channel, would embark limited quantities of fresh provisions, and other stores required for contingencies in a hostile environment.

In an unusual (not by the book) seamanship evolution, our ship moving at 8~10 knots (15~18 kmph) took the supply boat alongside and embarked the stores. A highly dangerous and risky evolution in a confined waterway was conducted smoothly.

Prepared To Go Into Harm's Way

Flagship *Mumbai*, being the most powerful and best suited to enter the war zone first, was ordered to be in the highest state of combat readiness and make necessary logistics and administrative preparation for the evacuation. The Fleet Commander and his Staff were in constant touch with our missions in Israel, Lebanon, IDF, NHQ etc. Attacks due to mistaken identity or a terror strike were the most likely threats to the ships. It may be recollected that USS Cole was attacked by terrorists on 12 October 2000 while she was entering the port of Aden. Besides massive damage to the ship, the US Navy had suffered 17 dead and 39 injured in the incident.

Goodwill Pays!!

The Israeli Navy had set up a blockade around Beirut and the adjoining sea, commencing 13 July. The IDF had deployed submarines, ships and shore-based strike aircraft to ensure that the Western coast of Lebanon was totally cut off for ingress and egress of vessels. Any craft running the blockade was at risk of being attacked without warning. Here the ships' visit to Haifa just three weeks earlier was of immense value. The Fleet staff

could establish constant communication and update IDF when *Mumbai* entered the blockaded zone. Lebanese authorities were also informed by the Indian mission and necessary permission taken for the evacuation. By the night of 19 July, *Mumbai* was ready to enter Beirut Port.

Mumbai passed through the blockade in the highest state of combat readiness. The other three ships stayed to seaward on surveillance patrols and awaited further orders. The port of Beirut was deserted and all activities had come to a grinding halt. Port support was not available, particularly suitable tugs, berthing boat and personnel to take the lines, or fenders on the berth. With much difficulty and assurance to the port authorities that *Mumbai* would enter without assistance, a harbour pilot from the port embarked and we entered harbour at 8:30 a.m. It was a risky proposition but the ship embraced the challenge. We sent an armed advance party in one of our own boats to secure the jetty. Innovative and ingenious

methods were used by the ship's well worked-up crew to overcome the lack of required shore support. When the ship was in Beirut, the city and Rafic Hariri International airport, nine km to the South, were under attack.

Indian Diplomatic Missions and "Mission Possible"

Indian missions in Lebanon and Cyprus were working tirelessly to achieve some seemingly impossible tasking. The ships were informed that the evacuees were to be taken from Beirut to Larnaca, a commercial port in Cyprus. They were to be airlifted subsequently by Air India. It was a herculean task for our mission in Lebanon to organise transportation, safety in transit, security clearance etc for the evacuees. Many were without proper travel documents and some were actually not Indian citizens. Immigration through a sea port and entry at Cyprus without a visa were major hurdles. The evacuees therefore had to be taken directly from the ship to



Risky Replenishment in Confined Waters.



(Left) Naval Blockade by IDF. (Right) Mission Heads of Lebanon and Cyprus in Action

the aircraft waiting for them at the tarmac. An unprecedented diplomatic feat for India was possible because of its good relationship with these countries and excellent rapport established by the Indian missions. The Ambassador in Lebanon Smt Nengcha Lhouvum and the Indian High Commissioner in Cyprus Smt Neelam D Sabharwal were in full control of the developing situation.

The Evacuation

Meanwhile, bus-loads of evacuees arrived on the jetty. The sight of an Indian warship and the Tricolour fluttering at her peak gave them much relief. Some Indian Embassy staff and a small number of Lebanese immigration and security officials had already arrived at the jetty. The ship's crew were briefed on how to check travel documents, conduct security checks and assist the evacuees to embark the ship. It was interesting to watch how the ship's crew turned immigration officials, security handlers, meals providers, traditional Indian hosts, etc. while giving immediate attention to the traumatised. Embarkation with priority to

the most deserving started by early afternoon. The ship embarked everyone who had arrived on the jetty on that day. A total of 608 evacuees, mainly Indians, were taken on board. Among them were six from Nepal, two Americans (of Indian Origin), one from Sri Lanka and three Lebanese (spouses of Indians). A warship has inherent limitations in embarking additional passengers and over six hundred (larger than our crew by quite a margin) was certainly a challenge. An overnight journey with ladies, children and elders makes it even worse.

Ladies and children were taken to the mess decks vacated by sailors. Gentlemen stayed inside the helicopter hangar and safer parts of the helicopter deck. Medical assistance was provided to

those who needed it and it was time for them to smile again while in the safe and reassuring hands of Indian sailors.

Mumbai left Beirut port before sunset on that clear day and headed for Larnaca in Cyprus. The ship remained in full combat readiness till she cleared the blockade. Weather at sea is a very important factor during such missions. Fortunately it was calm weather. We entered Larnaca at 4:00 a.m. and awaited Cypriot customs officials and the harbour pilot to embark. The ship's crew had been on their toes for the previous 30 hours. Moreover, the ship's galley (kitchen) operated continuously to ensure that enough food was cooked for the evacuees and the crew.

In Cyprus, there was a tight timeline for our passengers to disembark along with all their belongings and to be transported to the Larnaca International Airport. The Indian High Commissioner at Cyprus had worked out the disembarkation and exit procedure with the port and local authorities. All the 608 happy guests of the ship went ashore by about 8:30 a.m. local time and headed to the awaiting Air India Jumbo jets.

Indian media like NDTV, Star News, Aajtak/Headlines Today, CNN-IBN and some international media covered the activities at Larnaca. Six Indian journalists, who had arrived there by the Air India flight, were taken on board *Mumbai* when she sailed back to Beirut. Some of them went ashore and reported from the war zone in Lebanon. *Mumbai*, followed by *Brahmaputra* and *Betwa* entered Beirut on the morning of 23 July to repeat what was done on the 21st. This time a total of 887 persons were evacuated including 57 Sri Lankans, 41 Nepalese and five Lebanese. *Mumbai* had 445, *Brahmaputra* 188 and *Betwa* 254 guests to care for. The third trip was delayed by a day to the 26th to ensure that

the evacuees from distant places could make it. A total of 374 people embarked *Mumbai* this time. This included 54 Sri Lankans (all ladies) and 16 Nepalese nationals. The fourth and final trip was carried out by *Betwa* which had stayed back to wind up the operation. On 30 July when *Betwa* left Beirut, she had 411 evacuees including 324 Sri Lankans and five Nepalese. OPERATION SUKOON was terminated on the 1st of August 2006. Every Indian who wanted to leave Lebanon was evacuated to safety and freedom. Men, women and children from India's neighbouring countries were extended all help and a total of 2280 persons were evacuated by the four ships.

Feather In the Cap

Any country which could evacuate its citizens did so with their warships, passenger liners, ferries etc. The Greeks were evacuated in their warships and Air Force planes; the French hired ferries; Americans used passenger liners and sea lift ships under escort of their warships, etc. The Royal Navy's Type 42 Destroyer HMS Gloucester (which had participated in Konkan 2006) was in Beirut on 19th July to evacuate British nationals.

The BBC News of Friday, 21 July 2006 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/5190816.stm), had published a British Foreign Office circular to its citizen: *You should bring travel documents, money/ credit cards and one small bag which would be considered hand luggage if you were boarding a plane. You will be sent home to repack if you arrive with larger luggage. Do not bring pets, household staff or non-immediate family or friends who are not British citizens, or larger bags and cases. None of these will be allowed on the ships under any circumstances. Many countries had asked their citizens to bear the cost of evacuation. For India it was an audacious and humanitarian mission conducted for*



In Safe Hands and Secure Environment.



the first time more than 4000 nautical miles (7400 km) away from home waters.

OPERATION SUKOON was the first sea lift from a war zone. The Indian Navy has carried out several evacuations subsequently. *Operations Safe Homecoming* from Libya in 2011, *Rahaat* from Yemen in 2015, *Samudra Setu* in 2020 during the peak of COVID 19 are some of the major ones. The Indian Army and Indian Air Force have also been part of such national endeavours to reach out and rescue Indian nationals from far off places. Many Indians may not recall that from 13 August to 11 October 1990, Air India had operated 500 flights from Amman in Jordan to evacuate

about 170000 Indian citizens and expatriates who left Kuwait after the Gulf War started there.

The Indian Navy is a powerful instrument to obtain enormous diplomatic mileage for the country. OPERATION SUKOON demonstrated that and added another feather in the cap for our maritime power. The best compliment came from an observant foreign journalist standing on the jetty in Beirut and looking at both INS *Mumbai* and HMS Gloucester standing at different berths. He said, "One sees a rising power and a declining power in a third country standing by their citizens."



Vice Admiral Ramakant Pattanaik, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd) is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy. In close to 40 years in the Navy, he has held seven sea commands besides many key staff and instructional assignments. His commands included one Corvette, two Frigates, two Destroyers, one squadron of Missile Vessels and the Western Fleet. He superannuated as the Deputy Chief and is currently engaged in academic and spiritual activities. He was commanding INS Mumbai in 2006 during OPERATION SUKOON.



**Vice Admiral
Ramakant Pattanaik**

ONUC IN KATANGA

CONGO-1961

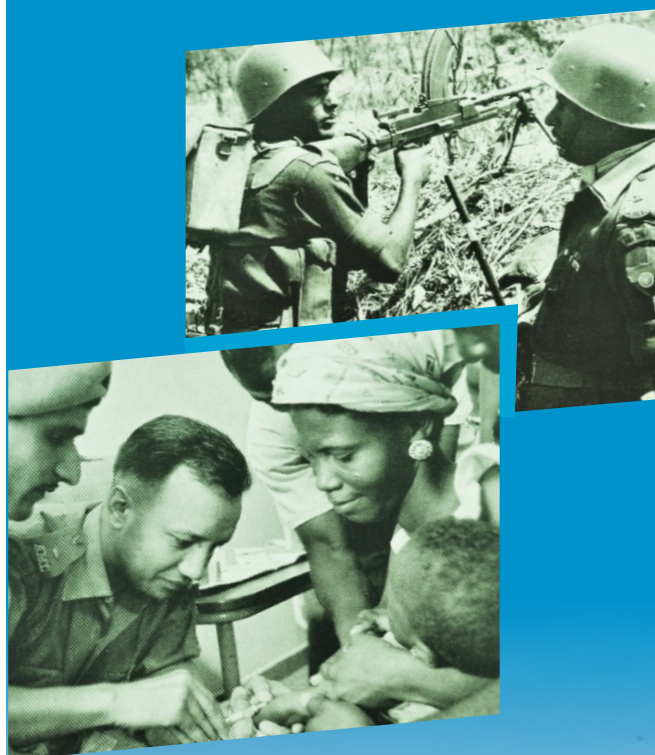
In this tribute to
Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria, PVC
(Posthumous), Brigadier CB Khanduri
of the same unit, namely 3/1 Gorkha Rifles
(GR) recalls the events in Congo leading
to the actions at Elizabethville on that
fateful day in December 1961.

History Recalled

In far off Katanga, then a breakaway province of the former Belgian Congo, 3/1 GR formed part of 99 Indian Brigade, as part of ONUC - Organization Nation Unies Au Congo. The Brigade commanded by Brig KAS Raja had 1 DOGRA and 2 JAT (both 150 year old units) besides a squadron of Armoured Cars, a 4.2 inch Heavy Mortar Battery and the normal component of Services. In the Congo itself, there were some 17000 UN troops, a squadron of MiGs and SAAB fighters, besides a large fleet of transport aircraft and helicopters. A brigade each from the Ethiopian and Nigerian Armies added to the 'ONUC's' punch.

Commanded by one of the most dynamic officers of the Indian Army, Lieutenant Colonel SS Maitra, the newly raised 3/1 GR arrived in Leopoldville (today's Kinshasa) in mid-April 1961, and soon shifted to Kamina, where it restored peace and tranquillity through careful cultivation and psychological operations involving the winning over of the blood-thirsty tribals. Maitra, the Commanding Officer (CO) made the local

*Indian troops in Congo, 1961
An Indian Doctor providing medical care to
the local people in Katanga, Congo*



Salaria Square named after the gallant Param Vir at NDA, Pune

chief Kasango Niambo a *'blood brother'* by presenting him a blood smeared *Kbukri*, the blood being from his own palm. This helped protect the water supply system at Kilubi, some 96 km off in the densest jungle, black river infested not only with wild life, but also mambas, the flying snakes and, not too friendly locals. Katanga had seceded from the newly independent Congo and was ruled by a very enigmatic man, Moise Tshombe. Completely supported by the European community and Northern Rhodesia, Tshombe had built up a well-organised and efficient military force, the *Gendarmerie*. Equipped with weapons of NATO origin and led by mercenaries who had fought during World War II, they were a lot committed to fighting and dying for the independence of Katanga. Then there were the tribals, constantly engaged in internecine wars against each other. The Balubas, in particular, were a target.

As the situation worsened in the Northern part of Katanga, the Katangese *Gendarmerie* clashed with the Congolese National Army. 3/1 GR, having been relieved by 2JAT, was shifted to the mining town of Manono, which was held by a Mobile Group (*Group Mobile*) of *Gendarmerie*. The Battalion captured and deported a large number of mercenaries, albeit, they mysteriously returned within weeks.

By September-end, leaving a Company Group to contain the *Group Mobile* at Manono, 3/1 GR headed for Elizabethville (today's Lubumbashi), the capital of Katanga. This company group (Major NS Thapa's) acquitted itself magnificently as it beat back several attacks virtually disabling the *Group Mobile*. The Brigade HQ with 1 DOGRA also concentrated at Elizabethville.

Elizabethville became the *battle royale* of the Third First. It supported the attack

of the DOGRAs in the town in September and pioneered the assault on a faraway garrison of the Irish at a town called Jadotville. Unfortunately, the mission, one of the worst conceived and planned with a company each of the Gorkhas, under Major Mangla and the Swedish Battalion failed even to reach its objective and suffered large casualties as it retreated. Added to this mayhem, Mr Dag Hammarskjold, the UN Secretary General died in an air crash in Rhodesia in September 1961 under mysterious circumstances.

In Elizabethville itself, the Battalion columns were constantly on the move to fight unending ambushes the *Gendarmerie* established in and around the capital interfering with the freedom of the UN troops and even the staff of the Secretary General. Soon, Third First concentrated at Lido-Castle area, from where columns moved to various assignments.

In one of the missions, the battalion lost Major Ajit Singh and his driver. The Swedish Liaison Officer was wounded and his driver killed. Added to the war-mongering Tshombe's army was the downing of UN helicopters. UN aircraft attempting to land at the airport were being shot at. Overall, Tshombe's government had begun the war against the ONUC without formally declaring the same.

By December 1961, the unit spread itself in well-known venues like the Lido Hotel area, the Post Office, the Museum and Castle where the Brigade HQ was located. Salaria was located in the Swedish Refugee Camp with a nominal strength of sixteen men. His mission was to help the Swedish Unit maintain peace in the Baluba Refugee Camp.

In early December 61, ONUC was forced to react as the *Gendarmerie*

blocked the main highway to the airport - the only lifeline of ONUC in the capital - and all other roads around Castle, Airport and began to harass almost all the UN posts including the Castle with their mobile mortars. The *Gendarmerie* began to bomb all important posts with its fleet of FUGA fighter aircraft which operated from Northern Rhodesia. In this state of affairs, while the DOGRAs strengthened the defences of the airport and the Swedes defended the Baluba Camp, Third First was ordered on the morning of 5th December "*to clear the strategic 'Round-About' and restore road communication to the airport as soon as possible, definitely by the last light*". Along with this immediate task, the Ethiopian Brigade, the Armoured Squadron, and Heavy Mortar Battery began inducting into the battleground of Elizabethville.

Bravery and Sacrifice Enshrined

The plan involved attack on the *'Round-About'* with Govind Sharma's Company, supported by two armoured cars and the mortar platoon. Gurbachan Salaria with his small force beefed up by two Irish armoured cars was tasked to move from the Refugee Camp to block the withdrawal of the *Gendarmerie* from the East and link up with the main force. The CO's Rover Group, of which I was a part, joined the main attacking force.

The operation started around 1400 hours 05 December 61 and while the Company Group from the West made steady progress, Salaria was caught up in *Gendarmerie* fire from unknown positions in the Old Runway/ Sabina areas. It was here Salaria added a glorious page of bravery and courage to the history of the Regiment and the Indian Army. The

saga of his bravery is summed up in the Citation for PVC **"on the spot"**. The CITATION, itself a piece of history, is reproduced in full:

"Captain Salaria on 05 December 1961 was ordered to clear a road block established by Gendarmerie` at a strategic round about at Elizabethville, Katanga, Congo. The plan was that one company with two Irish armoured cars would attack the position frontally and Captain Salaria with two sections of Gorkhas advance to this road block from the airfield to act as cutting off force.

Salaria, with his small force arrived at a distance of 1500 yards from the road block at approximately 1312 hours on 5th December 1961 and came under heavy automatic and small arms fire from an army undetected position dug in his flank. The enemy also had two armoured cars and about 90 men opposing Salaria's small force.

Salaria, appreciating that he had run into a subsidiary road block and ambush and that this force might reinforce the `strategic round about', decided to remove this opposition. He led a charge with bayonets, Khukris and grenades supported by rocket launcher. In this gallant engagement, Captain Salaria killed 40 of the enemy and knocked out two armoured cars. This unexpected bold action completely demoralised the enemy who fled despite numerical superiority and his protected position.

Salaria, was wounded in his neck by a burst of automatic fire but continued to fight until he collapsed due to profound bleeding. Salaria's gallant action prevented any movement of the enemy force towards the main battle scene and contributed very largely to the success of the Battalion action at the 'roundabout' and prevented the encirclement of the UN force in E'ville. Salaria died of his wounds."

Salaria was grievously wounded by the enemy fire, but continued to fight till he collapsed and subsequently succumbed to his wounds. His last words to his men were 'AYO GORKHALI.... AYO GORKHALI'.

I was fortunate to have been associated with this action and was instrumental in retrieving the body of Salaria from a trench where he, while assaulting the enemy, had been shot dead by a Katangese Sergeant. I found their bodies floating in a pool of blood - the blood of two brave soldiers.

As I look back, I reflect on what attributed to Gurbachan's bravery par-excellence, and his soldierly response to a task, which decidedly, called for instant bravery, howsoever reckless. I recall, he and I had been assigned to capture the head of mercenaries, a Captain Brown, one night. Brown managed to escape and when we returned 'empty-handed', Colonel Maitra 'bollocked and rollocked' us. In his opinion we were officers 'who played marbles' than did serious soldiery. We gulped it.

Yet, on another occasion, when the Gendarmerie was out 'to teach a lesson' to the ONUC, and to strangle us to starve, and possibly quit Katanga forever, Gurbachan had a big dressing down from the CO for leaving his post at the Baluba Refugee Camp. Gurbachan promised to me later that evening that he would never ever give 'any chance to be 'condemned', even if it were at the cost of his life...and howsoever great the risk'.... That opportunity appeared on the 5th of December. Anyone else in his place would have coined several excuses as how not to attack a well-entrenched enemy force over an open killing ground. But he continued to move forward until an entrenched enemy with an automatic rifle shot him in the throat but Salaria too bayoneted him dead before collapsing into the trench. The charge of the Gorkhas continued.

Gurbachan's another personal trait, besides his instantaneous bravery, was his firm belief in destiny. The star on his 'Mount of Jupiter' on his left palm inculcated and inspired him to believe that he was 'destined to acts in life' which would 'immortalize' him. It did.



Brigadier Chandra B Khanduri, FICHR, FABI, then a Subaltern, was also wounded during this attack at Elizabethville. He was 'Mentioned-in-Despatches' for bravery. During the 1965 Indo-Pak war he suffered extremely serious injuries. Notwithstanding, he joined his Battalion again in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. Upon retirement he has authored a dozen successful books. His repertoire includes biographies of Generals Cariappa and Thimayya. Among several evaluative military history books written, Brigadier Khanduri's latest are 'Essence of Hinduism', 'India's Military Experience and Future Perspectives' and a collection of short stories titled 'March of Fortune'. Brigadier Khanduri regularly contributes articles to military journals and magazines.



Brig Chandra B Khanduri

*The author with Brigadier Farukh Bashir,
Pak Army, the Deputy GOC at Goma*



THE PAKISTANI SOLDIER IN UN

In UN peacekeeping missions, we operate along with officers and troops of many nationalities. The author recalls his interactions with Pakistani officers and men during his UN tenure, and gives us his perceptions.

“Should I drop you till the Headquarters (HQ)?” he asked realizing that my vehicle hadn’t turned up at the airport. I accepted the offer hesitantly, seeing the accoutrements on his uniform. “Where do you belong to?” I asked initiating a conversation during the drive. “Sir, I am settled in Sialkot.” This was my first ever ‘friendly’ interaction with a Pakistan Army Officer of the Baluch Regiment.

One had always been inquisitive about the officer cadre and soldiers of that segment of the erstwhile British Indian Army now on the other side of the Radcliffe Line dividing the two countries. The opportunity came when I joined the United Nations Peace Keeping Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2008-09. The mission known as MONUC, an acronym of its French name - *Mission de l’Organisation des Nations Unies en Republique democratique du Congo* comprised of six brigades clubbed under a divisional HQ enforcing peace in the war ravaged country. Of these, one was an Indian Brigade, one a Pakistani Brigade and the rest were mixed brigades comprising of troops from Bangladesh, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, Morocco and a few other African countries. I was part of the Indian Brigade with Brigadier Bipin Rawat (Later India’s first Chief of Defence Staff) as our Commander.

Indians constituted the largest military contingent of MONUC followed by that of Pakistan. Being the two biggest contributors of troops in the mission, the senior appointments of the military were tenanted by officers of these two countries. The General Officer Commanding (GOC) our Division was an Indian Major General and his Deputy was a Pakistani Brigadier. If one branch of the Force HQ was headed by an Indian, the other would invariably be headed by a Pakistani. As luck would have it, even here both the armies shared a common inter



The author with a Pakistan Army officer in MONUC



The North Kivu Brigade HQ Team, Brigadier Bipin Rawat is sitting 4th from left

formation boundary, with the Indians deployed in the North Kivu Province and Pakistanis in the South Kivu Province. Troops of the two arch rival armies once again operated under a common flag; the Union Jack now replaced by the United Nations flag.

Despite the hostilities back home, working relations between the two contingents were cordial given their shared heritage of language, culture and military ethos. Given a choice to share accommodation, food or conveyance, while on duty or on R&R (rest and recuperation) leave, we would prefer Pakistanis or Bangladeshis over the Africans or Europeans. We could rely on each other for assistance, whether operational or otherwise. Whenever the Pakistani Brigade Commander visited Pakistan House in Goma, the capital of North Kivu Province, where our brigade HQ was located, the Pakistani Milobs would invariably seek administrative support from us. We would often organize guides and equipment for Pakistani soldiers desirous of trekking to the famous Nyiragongo Volcano located nearby. Similarly, Pakistani officers would invariably help out Indian 'colleagues' in places where we didn't have Indian staff.

However, there always loomed a threat of their ISI cell spying upon us. Likewise, they too carried a 'RAW baggage' and were hesitant in getting too familiar with us.

While most of the officers belonged to Punjab, mainly from Lahore, Rawalpindi and Lyalpur (now called Faisalabad) districts, there were many from Karachi, including some Mohajirs. The few Pathans I interacted with were not very outgoing or friendly. I found none from Baluchistan. Many of these officers boasted of owning 'hectares' of land; the Pakistan Army is an attractive career for the landed gentry. Their conversation in Urdu was very polite and courteous but their thought process and content

of talk was little different from that of ours. Many of them were not fluent in English and spoke the language with a heavy Punjabi accent. I would always start the conversation in English or Hindustani, depending upon the fluency of the other party. When the literary façade was over we would settle down in our lingua franca - Punjabi. Their Punjabi was rather sweet and polished sans the adjectives commonly heard on this side of the border.

Religion appeared to be deeply ingrained in the minds of their soldiers. While speaking on phone, a good about ten seconds would be spent on salutations and remembering Allah Talah. Even in their letters they used a lot of space for greetings and well wishes from Allah. Many of them carried a miniature copy of *Quran* in their pockets. Many officers and other ranks sported beards sans the moustache. Alcohol was not served in their messes and they avoided liquor in public. While conversing with them, Allah Talah would often crop up in their conversation. It was a common sight to see them pray kneeling along our walk routes when it was *Namaaz* time. They avoided partaking meat with us as they knew it was not halal (animal bled to death). On the contrary we often ended up having non vegetarian food in their company without bothering whether it was *Jhatka* (animal done to death in one stroke) meat or not.

Many of their Punjabi officers had roots in Indian Punjab from places like Ludhiana, Karnal, Jalandhar, Ambala and Faridkot to name a few. Punjabinity was amply demonstrated in the warmth and large heartedness displayed by them. There were many officers who had surnames commonly used by the Sikhs. I met officers by the names of Arif Gill, Irfan Ghuman, Zulfikar Gill, Farukh Cheema, etc. I was surprised to learn that they too followed the caste system (though not as rigidly as in India), something discouraged in Islam. Some took pride in their belonging to the '*Jutt*' (farmer) community while many claimed to have Rajput blood flowing in their veins. Though born in the post

partition era, they had tales to tell of the pain their elders went through when the land of five rivers was scissored right through the centre. Most of them spoke of the violence inflicted upon them but there were a few who had some good words too. I met a Colonel from Kasur who described how his grandparents and parents from Ferozepur were saved by the locals and how they were helped to cross Satluj River to their new born country in those troubled times. Pakistani officers did look upon us as a professional and an apolitical army. They would show the best they had to offer in order to impress us whenever we interacted with them professionally or socially.

Whenever our Commander visited their Brigade HQ, he would be given a guard of honour and a lavish banquet would be held in his honour on the banks of the great Kivu Lake. Pakistani jawans too were very respectful towards us. I was once transiting through Bukavu, capital of South Kivu province where the Pakistani Brigade HQ was located. While I was waiting for my connecting flight, a Pakistani Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) in-charge of airport security, walked up to me and saluted smartly with an '*Aslam Walekum*'. He asked me if he could be of any assistance. The same courtesy was however not extended to the officers of other armies travelling along with me which incidentally included a Bangladeshi Major also. I felt touched and conversed with him in Punjabi; he belonged to Gujranwala district.

There appeared to be a wide social gap between officers and the men they commanded. Arrogance and a snobbish attitude was visible in the demeanour of the officers while the other ranks were perceptibly overawed in the company of their officers. The Mess staff exhibited impeccable drills and the awe towards their

officers was perceptible. I also observed that their JCOs were very responsive and had good command and control over the men. One trait appreciated in their officers was the ability to say a blunt 'No' and not succumb to any pressure. They were certainly not 'Yes Sir types' and would be firm in refusing to operate beyond the laid down mandate. Their Brigade Commander seldom fell back on their General HQ (GHQ - equivalent of our Army HQ) for directions.

There were times when we got into awkward and embarrassing situations. In one of the farewell parties of an outgoing Indian battalion, military and civilian staff of MONUC were invited which included a few Pakistanis also. The Indian battalion gave a presentation of their glorious past to the august gathering. When it came to Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, they went overboard in praising the valour of their battalion and the disgraceful defeat of the enemy. It was uncomfortable for those of us sitting beside the Pakistani officers who were visibly upset. On another occasion, we had invited the Pakistani Brigade Commander and his staff officers for lunch to our officers' mess. It so happened that just a few hours earlier terrorists had laid siege at the Taj Hotel in Mumbai in the infamous "26/11 terror attacks". While it was evident that the terrorists belonged to Pakistan, we could not speak of the same in those many words. When the topic cropped up in our conversation, this time it was their turn to feel uncomfortable. The guests sensed our emotions and anger; they did not waste much time and took leave after a hurried lunch.

When our tenure got over, a few Pakistani officers came over to bid us

goodbye. They gifted us their famous *ladoos* of Rawalpindi. There was a strong urge to stay connected once we got back; but that was something next to impossible for us in uniform. If at all we got to meet hereafter it would not possibly be in a friendly environment. One couldn't fathom how we could nurture so much animosity back home in spite of belonging to the same stock with indistinguishable culture, language, eating habits and social customs. I opened the box of sweets they had gifted and the taste of ladoos was so much familiar. My eyes then fell on its cover and I read "*Ludhiana Sweets*" inscribed on it. A nation may have been partitioned but thankfully not its flavour or taste.



Col HP Singh

Col HP Singh, VSM, an alumnus of The Lawrence School Sanawar and NDA Khadakvasla is a fourth generation soldier commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in 1993. A graduate of DSSC Wellington, he is an experienced helicopter pilot with 1400 hours of flying to his credit. The officer has served with the Indian Army Contingent in DRC. A veteran of the Kargil war, he has had three tenures each in Siachen glacier and Kashmir valley. He was awarded Vishisht Seva Medal for his distinguished services while commanding his Regiment in Siachen Glacier. The officer is a prolific writer and can be reached on Email: harrypal71@yahoo.co.in.

PAIN HOMOING TORPEDO

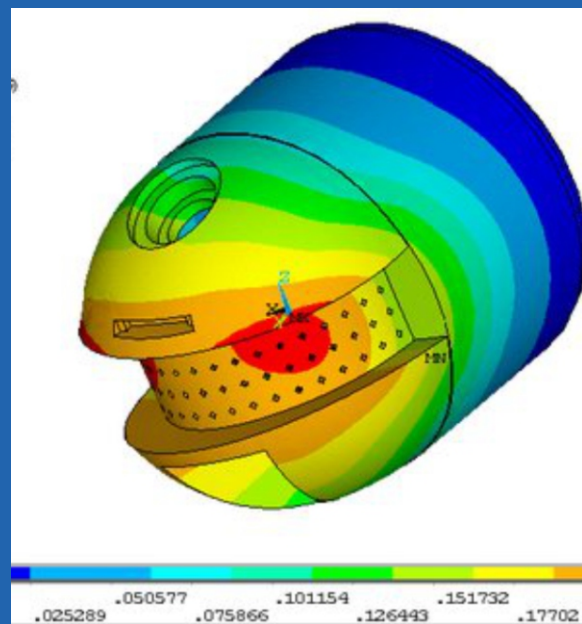
*(This is a sequel to an earlier article titled
Paper Seeking Missile, in our July 21 issue)*

The Armed Forces have a penchant for painting, and beautifully manicured and landscaped gardens with newly painted buildings give away military locations in satellite imagery. Drill Square type painting is indeed the enemy of camouflage. In this article, a typically irreverent look at one's own Service, the Indian Navy, the author takes a dig at oneself, brilliantly highlighting the paint passion on ships

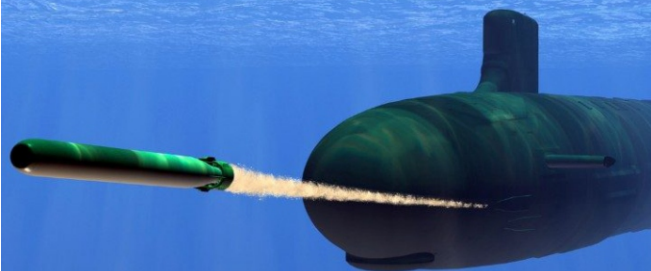
Kreptiy Oboron was an aerospace and defence technology conglomerate, globally recognized as a leader in the development and production of weapon systems and equipment for defence markets. The Company offered unique solutions over a broad spectrum of requirements in space, air, land, sea and cyber, and for more than half a century had delivered and supported advanced systems for demanding customers worldwide.

Over the last one year, the mood at Kreptiy Oboron was particularly buoyant with its Raketa Division having revolutionised maritime warfare by its avant-garde Paper Seeking Missile. This had the cash registers ringing and the order books had a healthy backlog with leading navies across the globe seeking to possibly arm every man-of-war with this highly accurate and lethal missile system against which there was no known countermeasure.

While for the rest of the company the sun was shining and spring was in the air, unfortunately for the Tarpeda Division the winter gloom continued to hang heavily in its corridors and hallways. This Division had long been acknowledged as the leading supplier of torpedoes across the globe, and had incorporated emerging technologies to make possible a new range of options for body design, rocket propulsion, seeker



A Torpedo Homing Head



*MK 48 Mod 7 Common Broadband Advanced Sonar System
(CBASS) Heavyweight Torpedo
(Photo courtesy lockheedmartin.com)*

heads, guidance systems and precision ordnance as smart payloads. Past glories were soon forgotten, and the present despondency at Tarpeda had been precipitated by what leading defence analysts were proclaiming as the final frontier in torpedo decoys, and had given it the moniker Bubbly. This new decoy had been conceptualised from advances made in futuristic technologies such as the internet of everything, big data analytics, robotics, and nano materials among others. So effective was the Bubbly that it could effectively neutralise any torpedo using any or all of the homing techniques known to science; even the state-of-the-art super-gravitating, terminally guided torpedoes were rendered inert and impotent by it.

This spelt potential doom for the Tarpeda Division, unless it was somehow able to get around this dreaded decoy. The submarine community too was visibly shaken by the advent of Bubbly. Submarines had hitherto enjoyed hydrological advantage over surface ships and a stealthy torpedo attack from below the waves could break the back of a ship and despatch it rapidly to Davy Jones Locker. Torpedoes were no longer going to be effective, making submarines vulnerable to counter attack. The hunter was in danger of becoming the hunted!

The War Council of Tarpeda had been assembled in the conference hall. Gears inside the heads of the best brains in the business were whirring frenetically. Faces turned red, not so much by the high octane activity in the frontal lobes but by the embarrassment that their collective IQ and experience had been defeated by the development of Bubbly. Unless they thought outside the box and came up with a new homing system hitherto unknown to the defence industry, the share prices of Tarpeda were definitely going on a long trip South.

When the meeting went on well past lunch time, the Admin Officer came in and urged the scientists to restore their tissues with calorific intake. No one was listening. After his second attempt to persuade the geniuses to partake of lunch failed, in his third foray he began by jesting that they should develop a Paint Homing Torpedo (PHT). The force of such a maverick thought caught the brainy guys amidships and almost keeled them over in their chairs. The Admin Officer, although an ex-naval officer, was neither an anti-submarine warfare specialist nor had been involved in scientific research of any kind. He had in fact been a Logistics Officer and therefore knew the vast quantities of paint that were consumed generously on board a warship.

The Admin Officer walked out of the conference hall for the third time without even realising the overwhelming impact his offhand remark had made. The brilliant scientists and engineers were triggered instantaneously by this refreshingly new idea and their thought process elevated to a different plane altogether. The sombre mood was quickly replaced by excited chatter and discussion. They broke off late evening having concluded that using highly advanced and super-fast processing techniques, and by integrating genomics

with bio computing techniques it would be possible to develop a homing head that would sniff out the paint trail being left by any warship. Not surprisingly, the project got code named Sniffer.

Any self-respecting Chief Bosun's Mate will reliably inform you that any flaky paint, bubbles, rust etc. needs to be scraped down to bare metal immediately and painted over, first with primer followed by the top coat. Paint on a ship comes in a myriad of colours and textures, with interesting names such as battleship grey, japan black, lipstick red, yellow chromate etc. Being in a corrosive marine environment, seldom a day passes without fresh paint being applied abundantly somewhere on the ship. Even a single speck of rust on a gleaming warship is absolutely unacceptable to the Executive Officer. Such is the proclivity towards painting that whatever does not move on a ship gets painted over. It is believed that, on some of the older ships, the deck plating had got entirely corroded long before and was now being held together by successive layers of paint applied over the years! If a cross section were to be cut, it would resemble the annual rings of a tree!

There is always a spurt in painting activity before an Admiral's visit and it reaches its crescendo just before the



Varunastra Torpedo (Photo courtesy en.wikipedia.org)



Indian Navy's Heavy Weight Torpedo

ship's Annual Inspection. More time is spent in painting surfaces than in getting weapon systems, sensors, equipment and machinery ready for sea and action. It is amazing as to how several problem areas can be successfully concealed under a coat of paint! As a corollary, the flag ship is the greatest emitter of the paint signature and therefore offers the best target to the PHT!

The scientists and engineers at Tarpeda met a week after the idea of PHT first broke. They had researched and applied their minds vigorously on the potential of this exciting new technology. They were convinced of three things: firstly, the penchant for continuous painting on a warship would remain as solid as ever; secondly, the paint trail left by a warship was very strong and unmistakable; and thirdly, Sniffer technology could be realised in a short time frame to make the PHT an operational reality.

At last there was light at the end of the tunnel, and the future suddenly began to look rosy. There was much banter and back slapping as the technical and

could sense one part of paint in a million! Trials were an astonishing success and soon series production commenced against orders that were pouring in faster than the marketing team could ever imagine. They were no longer going to be run out of business by Bubbly!

Sniffer now posed a threat of a new dimension to warships. Fleets would have to find a way of going about their business by drastically reducing the use of paint on board, which would appear unthinkable considering the prevailing naval philosophy and mind-set. At a future date, only history will stand witness to who won the paint battle – warships or PHT? Or perhaps a rival has already started working on technology to counter Sniffer. Till then, PHT will remain the most dreaded weapon at sea, and Tarpeda's Number One position is secure for several more years to come!



Captain (IN) Sunil David, VSM (Retd), a Gold Medallist from NDA, is a Gunner and Missile Man at heart. He has commanded three front line warships and has served in coveted appointments such as Director Naval Plans and Naval Assistant to Chief of the Naval Staff. He has an armament degree from the former Soviet Union, has attended the Royal Naval Staff College, UK as also the College of Naval Warfare. Post retirement, he has added to his repertoire 15 years of rich corporate experience. He enjoys playing squash and riding his Thunderbird 500.



Capt (IN) Sunil David

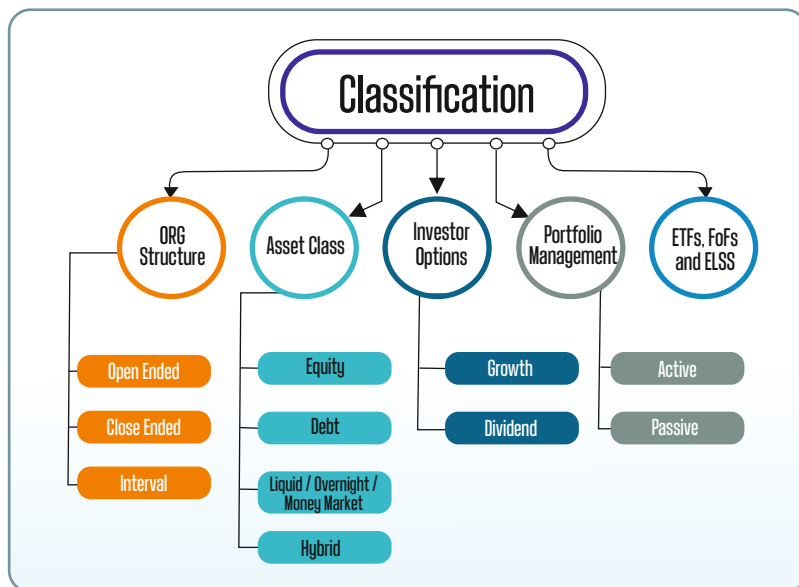


MUTUAL FUNDS

TYPES AND THEIR TAXATION

This overview of various types of mutual funds and the taxation yardsticks for capital gains will enable the investor to be more aware of the options and the portfolios adopted in different funds.

Mutual fund (MF) is a financial investment vehicle that collects money from several institutional and retail investors and invests the pooled money in securities like stocks, bonds, money market instruments, and other assets including gold. In India, in accordance with Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) MFs Regulations, 1996, all MFs must establish themselves in the form of a Trust under Indian Trust Act, 1882. They offer an ideal investment avenue for salaried class who can invest a small amount of their monthly savings through Systematic Investment Plan (SIP). Besides, people who are apprehensive to partake themselves in the financial markets due to inadequate financial knowledge, lack of inclination, or time constraint, find MFs very convenient and easily accessible. This is because qualified and professional fund managers manage them and unlike stocks, it is not mandatory for an investor to have a trading and dematerialised account for dealing in MFs. For managing investments in various MF schemes, SEBI mandates and regulates the fees and charges levied by the asset management companies (AMCs) on the investors.



Classification of Mutual Funds

There are a variety of MFs available in the market designed to meet the requirements and goals of all types of investors. Thus, MF classification takes various forms based on their organisation structure, portfolio, investment objective, product nature and so on. Broadly we can classify them as under:

- **Organisation Structure** : Funds are organised as either open ended, close ended or interval. In open ended fund, an investor can purchase or redeem at any time during the tenure of the fund. On the other hand, in close ended fund, an investor can only purchase it during its launch, usually as new fund offer (NFO), and redeem it when the fund investment tenure is over. The investor enjoys more flexibility with an open-ended fund because he can invest and redeem as per his convenience. On the contrary, the fund manager of close ended fund can carve out a suitable portfolio of the assets under his management due to the absence of redemption pressure from his investors. This makes close ended funds steadier vis-à-vis open-ended funds. The third type of fund is the interval fund, in which the investor can invest or redeem only during specified intervals (transaction

period) declared by the fund house. The transaction period is a minimum of 2 days with a minimum 15-day gap between two transaction periods. Ipso facto, they are a mix of both open and close ended funds.

- **Asset Class** : Another way to classify funds is as per the asset class of its investment. First, are the equity funds that primarily invest in company stocks. This investment can be either in large cap, mid cap, or small cap companies, or a mix of these companies as per the investment objective of the scheme. Investors with high risk and long-term wealth creation appetite find these funds suitable. Second, are the debt funds that invest in bonds (both corporate and government), corporate debt securities, and money market instruments. The relative safety and stability of bonds vis-à-vis equity makes debt funds suitable for investors with lower risk appetite and those looking for regular income. Third are liquid/overnight/money

market funds that provide investment options to investors seeking liquidity and principal protection, albeit with lower returns as compared to equity and debt funds because they invest in money market instruments with maturities less than 91 days. Fourth are hybrid funds, which invest in more than one asset class i.e., equity, debt and other asset classes depending on the investment objective of the scheme.

- **Investor Options** : Classification of mutual fund scheme as growth or dividend helps the investor to decide whether he desires capital appreciation or dividend income. Money once invested in growth-oriented schemes stays invested in the market, till redemption, thereby allowing suitable growth in the capital. In dividend option, the scheme either pays out a dividend to the investor at specified periods or reinvests it back in scheme, if the investor so desires. This helps the investor to generate income through his investments.

- **Portfolio Management** : When the fund manager regularly buys, sells, or holds stocks in his portfolio, then he actively manages the mutual fund. In passively managed funds, the fund's portfolio mirrors a market index to replicate its performance. There is minimal to no involvement of fund managers in passive funds and computer algorithms proportionately distribute the investment in the underlying market index. In active funds, the fund manager uses his market research and financial wisdom to exploit opportunities in the market to generate alpha, which is the excess return of an investment relative to the return

of a benchmark index. Accordingly, these funds have higher management charges, to pay for the fund manager and his team, than passive funds, which however generate moderate returns, almost equal to the fundamental index it tracks.

- **Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) :** ETFs are also MFs with the difference that unlike MFs, the investor can trade ETFs on the stock exchange like any other stock. Hence, it is a marketable security that tracks an index, a commodity, bonds, or a basket of assets like an index fund. Typically, the asset class in which the ETFs invest determines its type, viz. Equity ETFs, Bond ETFs, Commodity ETFs, Sectoral /thematic ETFs, and International ETFs. ETFs are passively managed and give the investor returns comparable to the benchmark index and provide liquidity of the stock market.

- **Fund of Funds (FoFs) :** These are MFs that invest in other MF schemes rather than directly into equity, bonds or money market instruments thus achieving diversification. However, a FoF has two levels of expenses: that of the scheme whose units the FoF invests in and the expense of the FoF itself, which compels an investor to incur a higher expense ratio when he invests in these funds. In India, some commonly used FoFs are the asset allocation FoFs, gold FoFs, international FoFs, and ETF FoFs. Asset allocation FoFs invest in diverse asset class MFs like equity and debt. Gold FoFs invest in MFs trading in gold or gold trading companies. International FoFs targets MFs operating in foreign countries. ETF FoFs primarily invest in ETFs that are tradable on stock exchanges.

- **Equity Linked Savings Scheme (ELSS) :** These are tax saving funds that

allows an individual or Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) a deduction from total income of up to Rs. 1.5 lakhs u/s 80C of Income Tax Act. These have a lock-in period of 3 years with no provision of a premature exit. Because they invest primarily in equity and force an investor to hold his investment for a minimum of 3 years, they provide the twin benefits of tax deductions and wealth creation. These funds are probably the only tax saving financial instrument available in the country that offers returns, which beats the inflation.

Categorisation of MFs

In October 2017, SEBI issued guidelines to categorise and rationalise various open-ended schemes of MFs “to bring in uniformity in the characteristics of similar type of schemes launched by different MFs. This would ensure that an investor of MFs is able to evaluate the different options available, before taking an informed decision to invest in a scheme.” As per their categorisation, SEBI issued instructions to categorise existing schemes that permitted one scheme per category except these three: Index Funds/ETFs

replicating/ tracking different indices; FoFs having different underlying schemes and sectoral/thematic funds investing in different sectors / themes. Furthermore, SEBI also regulated and classified the category of large, mid, and small cap companies as follows:

- **Large Cap:** 1st to the 100th company in terms of full market capitalization
- **Mid Cap:** 101st to the 250th company in terms of full market capitalization
- **Small Cap:** 251st company onwards in terms of full market capitalization

- **Equity Schemes :** These schemes primarily invest in equities and equity related instruments with the objective of long-term capital appreciation. Refer Table-1[#] (next page) for the SEBI categorisation and rationalisation of equity schemes.

- **Debt Schemes :** These invest primarily in bonds and other debt securities with the objective of generating safe and steady returns.

CATEGORISATION OF MFs		
Main Category	Number of Sub Categories	Details of Sub Categories of Funds
Equity Schemes	10	Multi Cap, Large Cap, Large and Mid Cap, Mid Cap, Small Cap, Dividend Yield, Value, Contra, Focused, Sectoral/Thematic and ELSS
Debt Schemes	16	Overnight, Liquid, Ultra Short Duration, Low Duration, Money Market, Short Duration, Medium Duration, Medium to Long Duration, Long Duration, Dynamic Bond, Corporate Bond, Credit Risk, Banking and PSU, Gilt, Gilt with 10 Year Constant Duration and Floater
Hybrid Schemes	6	Conservative Hybrid, Balanced Hybrid, Aggressive Hybrid, Dynamic Asset Allocation or Balanced Advantage, Multi Asset Allocation, Arbitrage and Equity Savings
Solution Oriented Schemes	2	Retirement and Children
Others Schemes	2	Index/ETFs and Fund of Funds (Overseas and Domestic)

Refer Table-2[#] for the SEBI categorisation and rationalisation of debt schemes.

- **Hybrid Schemes :** These invest in a mix of equity and debt securities. Their objective is to achieve wealth appreciation in the long-run and generate income in the short-run via a balanced portfolio. Refer Table-3[#] (next page) for the SEBI categorisation and rationalisation of hybrid schemes:

- **Solution Oriented and Other Schemes :** As the name suggests, solution-oriented schemes help the investor to pick customised portfolios for a specific financial goal like retirement or children education. They invest in both equity and debt securities. Usually, these schemes have a lock-in period of 5 years and some even offer tax benefit u/s 80C of the IT Act.

Taxation of MFs

Government taxes capital gains only at the time of redemption or switching of MFs. This is unlike fixed income instruments that it taxes on both the realised and accrued interest in a financial year. Capital gains are short term (STCG) and long term (LTCG) based on the duration of holding in the MF that differs for equity and debt schemes. If the holding period is less than 12 months in an equity-oriented scheme, then the gains are short term, and for more than 12 months they are long term. In debt-oriented and all other schemes, gains are short term, if the holding period is less than 36 months, and long term if it is more than 36 months.

- **Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) :** In MFs, TDS is applicable only on dividend income and not applicable on capital gains. For resident Indians the applicable rate of TDS is 10%, if dividend income exceeds Rs.5,000 in a financial year, which becomes 20% in case the investor has not got his PAN and Aadhaar card linked before 31 March 2022. Further, it levies a health and education cess 4% on aggregate of base tax and surcharge.

<https://www.amfiindia.com/investor-corner/knowledge-center/SEBI-categorization-of-mutual-fund-schemes.html>
1. <https://www.amfiindia.com/investor-corner/knowledge-center/SEBI-categorization-of-mutual-fund-schemes.html>

Table-1 - SEBI categorisation and rationalisation of Equity Schemes.

Multi Cap Fund	At least 65% investment in equity & equity related instruments
Large Cap Fund	At least 80% investment in large cap stocks
Large & Mid Cap Fund	At least 35% investment in large cap stocks and 35% in mid cap stocks
Mid Cap Fund	At least 65% investment in mid cap stocks
Small cap Fund	At least 65% investment in small cap stocks
Dividend Yield Fund	Predominantly invest in dividend yielding stocks, with at least 65% in stocks
Value Fund	Value investment strategy, with at least 65% in stocks
Contra Fund	Scheme follows contrarian investment strategy with at least 65% in stocks
Focused Fund	Focused on the number of stocks (maximum 30) with at least 65% in equity & equity related instruments
Sectoral/ Thematic Fund	At least 80% investment in stocks of a particular sector/ theme
ELSS	At least 80% in stocks in accordance with Equity Linked Saving Scheme, 2005, notified by Ministry of Finance

Table-2 - SEBI categorisation and rationalisation of Debt Schemes.

Overnight Fund	Overnight securities having maturity of 1 day
Liquid Fund	Debt and money market securities with maturity of up to 91 days only
Ultra Short Duration Fund	Debt & Money Market instruments with Macaulay duration of the portfolio between 3 months - 6 months
Low Duration Fund	Investment in Debt & Money Market instruments with Macaulay duration portfolio between 6 months -12 months
Money Market Fund	Investment in Money Market instruments having maturity up to 1 Year
Short Duration Fund	Investment in Debt & Money Market instruments with Macaulay duration portfolio between 1 year - 3 years
Medium Duration Fund	Investment in Debt & Money Market instruments with Macaulay duration portfolio between 3 years - 4 years
Medium to Long Duration Fund	Investment in Debt & Money Market instruments with Macaulay duration portfolio between 4 - 7 years
Long Duration Fund	Investment in Debt & Money Market Instruments with Macaulay duration portfolio greater than 7 years
Dynamic Bond	Investment across duration
Corporate Bond Fund	Minimum 80% investment in corporate bonds only in AA+ and above rated corporate bonds rated corporate bonds
Credit Risk Fund	Minimum 65% investment in corporate bonds, only in AA and below rated corporate bonds rated corporate bonds
Banking and PSU Fund	Minimum 80% in Debt instruments of banks, Public Sector Undertakings, Public Financial Institutions and Municipal Bonds
Gilt Fund	Minimum 80% in G-secs, across maturity
Gilt Fund with 10-year constant Duration	Minimum 80% in G-secs, such that the Macaulay duration of the portfolio is equal to 10 years
Floater Fund	Minimum 65% in floating rate instruments (including fixed rate instruments converted to floating rate exposures using swaps/ derivatives)

Table-3- SEBI categorisation and rationalisation of Hybrid Schemes.

Conservative Hybrid Fund	10% to 25% investment in equity & equity related instruments; and 75% to 90% in Debt instruments
Balanced Hybrid Fund	40% to 60% investment in equity & equity related instruments; and 40% to 60% in Debt instruments
Aggressive Hybrid Fund	65% to 80% investment in equity & equity related instruments; and 20% to 35% in Debt instruments
Dynamic Asset Allocation or Balanced Advantage Fund	Investment in equity/ debt managed dynamically (0% to 100% in equity & equity related instruments; and 0% to 100% in Debt instruments)
Multi Asset Allocation Fund	Investment in at least 3 asset classes with a minimum allocation of at least 10% in each asset class
Arbitrage Fund	Scheme following arbitrage strategy, with minimum 65% investment in equity & equity related instruments
Equity Savings	Equity and equity related instruments (minimum 65%); debt instruments (minimum 10%) and derivatives (minimum for hedging as specified in the SID)

Table-4 Taxation Rates

Equity Oriented Schemes		
	Individual/HUF	NRI
STCG	15%	15%
LTCG	10% without indexation benefit for gains exceeding ₹ 1 lakh in a FY	10% without indexation benefit and foreign exchange fluctuation for gains exceeding ₹ 1 lakh in a FY
Debt and other than Equity Oriented Schemes		
	Individual/HUF	NRI
STCG	At the individual's applicable income tax slab rate	At the individual's applicable income tax slab rate
LTCG	20% with indexation benefit	20% with indexation benefit for listed companies and 10% without indexation benefit for unlisted companies

Table-5 Security Transaction Tax (STT)

Transaction	Rates	Payable by
Purchase of units of equity-oriented mutual fund	Nil	Not Applicable
Sale of units of equity-oriented mutual fund (delivery based)	0.001%	Seller
Sale of units of equity-oriented mutual fund (non-delivery based)	0.025%	Seller
Sale of units of an equity-oriented fund to the Mutual Fund	0.001%	Seller

- **Taxation Rates** : Refer Table 4² for the applicable taxation for the FY 2022-23 (AY 2023-24).

Note³ : In case of individual and HUF (a) surcharge at 10% where income exceeds Rs. 50 Lakh but does not exceed Rs. 1 Crore and surcharge at 15% where income exceeds Rs. 1 Crore but does not exceed Rs. 2 Crore (including dividend income on shares or capital gains u/s 111A, 112 and 112A); (b) surcharge at the rate 25% where income exceeds Rs. 2 Crore but does not exceed Rs.5 Crore and surcharge at 37% where income exceeds Rs.5 Crore (excluding dividend income on shares or capital gains u/s 111A, 112 and 112A); (c) surcharge at 15% where income exceeds Rs.2 Crore (including dividend income on shares or capital gains u/s 111A, 112 and 112A) not covered in (b).

- **Security Transaction Tax (STT)** : charged when an investor buys or sells securities (excluding commodities and currency) through a recognised stock exchange. Moreover, it is applicable only in respect of sale of units of equity-oriented funds on a recognised stock exchange and on repurchase (redemption) of units of equity-oriented funds by the mutual fund. STT is not applicable in respect of purchase/sale/redemption of units of other schemes. Refer Table 5 for the STT in respect of units of equity-oriented mutual fund schemes.

To sum up, I do realise that several of our readers may not understand all these schemes, but it does give the reader a broad understanding of various options in MFs. Also, when investing in MFs, the investment advisor would use these terms to explain the options, and an investor can then be more capable of evaluating the options.



Colonel Raj Rakesh is a 1980 batch ex-NDA officer who commanded an armoured regiment and converted it to state-of-the-art T-90 tanks. He served as a Brigade Major of an independent armoured brigade and as

Colonel General Staff of an infantry division. Post retirement, he is a consultant with an investment advisor at Jaipur and edits their monthly investment magazine. The officer has also contributed to DLAV annual magazine 'SAMMAAN' and number of web portals.



Colonel Raj Rakesh

2. https://www.tatamutualfund.com/docs/defaultsource/taxation/2022/tax-reckoner-2022-23.pdf?sfvrsn=a30f6a3f_2

3. HDFC Tax Reckoner for Investments in Mutual Fund Schemes FY 2022-2023

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH

Our body's relationship with diet and exercise is directly proportionate to our health, the way we look and feel. Dr Renuka David offers pointers on how to get your workout and nutrition right.

"Exercise for at least 90 minutes a day."

"Don't exercise for more than 45 minutes each day."

"Protein shakes are good for health."

"Avoid supplements – stick to natural foods."

"High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workouts are not for those over 50."

"Anyone can start doing high intensity workouts as long as they're physically fit."

There is so much contradictory information today when it comes to workouts and nutrition, so one often finds it difficult to choose the best fitness schedule. So how then, do we decide what is best for our bodies?

Every Body is Unique

To begin with, it is important to understand that not one size fits all. Everyone's body is different, and so are their needs, circumstances, limitations, and access to nutrition and exercise. The first thing to do before you embark on a diet and fitness routine, is to get a master health check-up, which can highlight any problem areas that you need to be careful about.

For instance, if it turns out you have Type 2 Diabetes, you may have to cut down on your fruit intake and stock up more on vitamin C-rich veggies. Or if you've got lung issues, you may



(Photos courtesy unsplash.com)

need to include more breathing exercises and go easy on the cardio. Take into account any genetic problems, injuries or other lifestyle choices when deciding what to do.

How Should You Move It?

Obviously the point of exercise is to do as much as you can, push yourself out of your comfort zone and get fitter with each passing day. If you are an adult between 18 and 60, reasonably healthy but unsure of your fitness levels, half-an-hour of moderate cardio activity is what you should be looking at. How do you gauge intensity? Use the talk test. During moderate activity, even though you'll probably be short on breath, you can talk. When you suddenly find you cannot talk, it means you've crossed your threshold – this qualifies as vigorous activity. If your goal is weight loss though, you will probably have to work out for an hour every day (moderate to vigorous), while simultaneously bringing down your calorie intake to 1200 a day. Some simple cardio activities include dancing, running, brisk walking, swimming and cycling.

Try and juggle your cardio with two days of strength training, hitting multiple muscle groups during each of these sessions. Unless you have already been trained, avoid lifting weights without the guidance of a coach. Instead, try body weight exercises like push-ups, pull-ups, crunches and leg squats.

Include two days of breathing and a balancing workout – ideally yoga. Surya namaskars, pranayama, and other asanas for balance are great to learn, you can follow an accredited video tutorial online by a trained teacher.

While under-exercising is definitely a no-no, over-exercising can be a cause for concern as well. Your body needs rest and recovery, so if you overdo it, you may not be

able to rebuild from the body's wear and tear during the previous workout. How do you know you're exercising too much? It's difficult to come up with an exact formula, since we're all unique – and factors like nutrition, stress, age and lifestyle have to be considered. If you've hit a plateau – either you are not getting thinner or stronger – perhaps you need to look at whether you're overdoing things. Weight gain, sore muscles, irritability, poor sleep quality and irregular heart rate are other indications that you need to look at and take a step back.

Food & Supplements

Use plenty of common sense when you choose what to eat. When in doubt, look to your tradition and nature for a good diet. Most Indian diets are very well-balanced – they contain fruits, veggies, proteins in the form of legumes or meat, calcium in the form of milk or curd, and carbs. Consider trading in

refined grains for whole grains – an inexpensive swap that can go a long way in maintaining health. Eat local, seasonal foods as much as possible, as they give you the nutrients you need.

If we believe the claims most supplements make, we will all live to the grand old age of 100 without a day's illness! However, as the name suggests, supplements are only meant to help support your diet. So, if your diet is bad, adding supplements to it is like adding turmeric to spoilt milk – completely pointless.

I would always advice you to eat that extra bowl of spinach rather than take an iron supplement, or an extra-large cup of curd rather than a calcium supplement. Of course, the rules are different for women who are pregnant or lactating, and those with other underlying health issues.

That's not to say all supplements are bad. If you do your research well, and give your already-healthy diet a boost



(Photo courtesy jonathan borba / unsplash.com)

with good quality supplement, it is a win-win situation. Also, take an omega 3, 6, 9 supplement if you can, since this nutrient is important for heart health, joint health and hair/skin health. Since it is mostly found only in fish, vegetarians and vegans are especially likely to be lacking.

Protein shakes can also benefit vegetarians a great deal. Remember that the body needs at least 1g of protein intake per kg of body weight. So, unless you are eating a whole lot of tofu and lentils at the cost of other foods, it's likely that you are protein deficient. Protein shakes keep you filled up for longer, and are also a good option for non-vegetarians who are trying to avoid red meat. Of course, as with every other supplement, there are a few things to consider.

Firstly, timing is everything. Don't consume your protein shake with a meal already rich in protein, or on a day when you have reached your daily intake already. Secondly, check to see if you are allergic to any of the ingredients. Thirdly, do not take more than 20g – 25g of protein shakes at a time, and that is if you are active. The body cannot process more than this, and you will find it being stored as fat! Also, as with everything else, do not overdo it over a period of time, and check the labels before you decide which one to opt for. If you have any health concerns with your kidneys, discuss it with your doctor before you jump onto the bandwagon. Consult your physician before starting any diet whether it is Ketogenic, Mediterranean, General Motors or any form of fasting. It is good to follow these diets for a short period, giving a break and restarting again. The recent incident of a young girl losing her life due to the much hyped Keto diet for weight loss is definitely a wake-up call for all those who follow these diets beyond the stipulated period.

THE BIG 5 WHAT YOU SHOULDN'T OVERLOOK

1. Do not feel guilty or anxious if you are not able to exercise for a day. It should be a part of your lifestyle, but you don't need to punish yourself for a day off! Also, avoid exercising or putting yourself through a stringent diet if you're injured or sick, or if you feel like it's making any pre-existing aches and pains worse.
2. Your calorie intake and exercise levels need to be in sync. If you are consuming excess, try and work it all off. If you are eating low calorie foods, be careful burning it via exercise as you would be shedding more energy than you could afford to.
3. Two things are non-negotiable, no matter what your diet and exercise look like – water and sleep. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! Drink at least 2.5 litres of water a day – an extra litre if it's summer. A glass of lime juice or coconut water also goes a long way in keeping your body hydrated.
4. Ensure you get at least eight hours of sleep. I've known people to do everything else right, but lack of sleep always gets the better of their health – sometimes with fatal consequences.
5. Don't leave it open-ended. Keep a daily diet and fitness journal to quantify your workouts, food intake, weight, BMI and other important parameters. You can also use one of the many apps in the market that will do this for you.

Dr Renuka David, MBBS, PGD (MCH), USA-PhD(HC) is the Managing Director of Radiant Medical Services and an alumnus of the Coimbatore Medical College. She has been a frontier doctor, working extensively with women and young adults in urban, rural and tribal India. She has also been a contract doctor with the Indian Army for three years. Dr Renuka dons many avatars as an entrepreneur, doctor, professional speaker, television show host, TEDx speaker and wellness expert. She is the Founder-Curator of the immensely successful Radiant Wellness Conclave. For medical queries, please email: ask@drrenukadavid.com



Dr. Renuka David

THE FIRST INDIA LED UN PEACE INITIATIVE

A word about the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission and the Custodian Force of India and how they came into being.

Repatriation Commission (NNRC) to facilitate the repatriation of prisoners. The proposal was accepted and a UN resolution was passed on 03 December 1952. As per the Resolution, the prisoners who refused voluntary repatriation to their own countries were to be placed in the custody of NNRC and the Commission was tasked to settle the issue of the non-repatriated prisoners. In order to implement this process, two organisations were established, the first was the NNRC with India as the Chair of the Commission and a Custodian Force consisting of Indian units (CFI), which was to take responsibility for all prisoners who did not wish to be repatriated. An estimated strength of 24,000 prisoners was looked after by the CFI.

Lieutenant General KS Thimayya, DSO was nominated to chair the NNRC

and Major General SPP Thorat, DSO was tasked to command the CFI. The CFI consisted of one Infantry Brigade with five Infantry Battalions, Machine Gun Company, General Hospital, 60 Parachute Field Ambulance and other minor units. The CFI and NNRC rendered yeoman service during the entire span of the mission. The CFI negotiated the complex issue of repatriation through compassion, fairness and neutrality. The conduct of the CFI and NNRC was widely acclaimed by the international community. On completion of the mission, the Indian Government awarded Padma Bhushan to Lieutenant General KS Thimayya, DSO for distinguished service and Kirti Chakra to Major General SPP Thorat, DSO.

■ Lt Gen JS Sandhu (Retd) Editor

The cessation of hostilities in Korea was implemented by a UN Armistice which envisaged establishment of a demilitarized zone, from which all military forces would be withdrawn and followed by an exchange of prisoners. The exchange of prisoners became a stumbling block with many personnel of the North Korea People's Army (NKPA) and Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) under captivity of UN Command, as well as UN Command prisoners with the North Koreans not wishing to be repatriated to their respective countries. The North Koreans and the Chinese insisted on the repatriation of all prisoners, whereas the UN Command insisted on the choice being left to the individual combatant. In November 1952, India proposed to the UN General Assembly, the creation of a Neutral Nations



Images of Indian troops in Korea 1952 - 53

CONTEMPORARY UN PEACEKEEPING

- THE SUDAN EXPERIENCE

Situations often become volatile in peace operations and the military commanders have to use ingenuity and a whole of mission approach to bring down the violence. The author handled extremely challenging assignments in Sudan with finesse and is widely accepted as an expert on preparing contingents for tough peace operations. His insight follows.

The Sudan Conflict

I was honoured to be part of Sudan's peace process, resulting in the birth of South Sudan on 09 July 2011. During the period, I was Force Commander (FC) from January 2006 to April 2008 and Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General (DSRSG-P) from January 2010 to December 2011. These reflections are more on the military.

Sudan had witnessed civil war for all but 11 years since it became independent in 1956. The north-based National Congress Party (NCP) and south-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA) fought for decades on governance, religion, grazing rights and oil. The conflict was brought to an end by signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 09 January 2005. The agreement provided for a six-year period of political and security work, leading to a self-determination referendum for South Sudan in July 2011.

In Eastern Sudan, Eastern Front (supported by Eritrea) had taken arms against the government. However, a peace agreement was signed in 2006. In Darfur (Western Sudan), tribal war over scarce fertile land between two groups - Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice Equality Movement (JEM) had United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) deployed since 2007. The core mandate of UNAMID was protection of civilians (POC), but it was also to assist in humanitarian support and political reconciliation.

Sudan and the neighbouring countries like South Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya have faced political instability and violent internal strife for several years. The political future of the Darfur and Abyei Regions in Sudan is still uncertain - a work in progress.



An Indian Army peacekeeper in South Sudan (Photo courtesy in.one.un.org/indian tradition of service and sacrifice)

United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) – Leveraging Integration

UNMIS was established based on UN Security Council Resolution 1590 (2005) - to support implementation of the CPA, with an authorized military strength of 10,000 troops. The mandate kept getting extended through various resolutions till South Sudan gained independence on 09 July 2011, after which a new mission United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) came up at Juba.

UNMIS was a Chapter VI consent-based mission, with Chapter VII provisions for protection of UN installations/personnel and POC. The mission was mandated to support CPA, implement the ceasefire and monitor redeployment of Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) to the North - and SPLA to the South of Line 1/1/56. The political thrust was to provide a framework for inclusivity and reconciliation - which included supporting national elections (2009) and the South Sudan referendum (2011).

UNMIS proved to be a success story surmounting multiple obstacles - and set new standards for effective peacekeeping. The mission managed to implement all CPA protocols except the resolution of Abyei - an oil rich region located astride Line 1/1/1956, where United Nations Interim Stabilization Force for Abyei (UNISFA) had to be deployed post UNMIS. The mission accomplishments were largely driven by Senior Mission Leadership (SML) which worked as an integrated team - cutting across silos and rising above egos. CPA was identified as central to mandate delivery, for which all plans, processes and resources got synergized.

Civil military cooperation is fundamental for peace operation's performance; yet tensions between civil and uniformed personnel often arise on

division of responsibility, command and control and operating culture. Since the Heads of Office (HOO) and Sector Commanders (SC) are not under each other's command, coordination gets personality oriented. Realizing this subjectivity, SML guided field offices to operationalize mandates with joint planning and execution. Supervision was necessitated at times to correct the friction. Integration lies in the mind. *'Everyone wants to integrate but no one wants to get integrated'* - as I often state. Another UN civil-military advice popularized by me in the UN is - military *'please don't carry your rank'* and civilians *'please don't forget their rank'*!

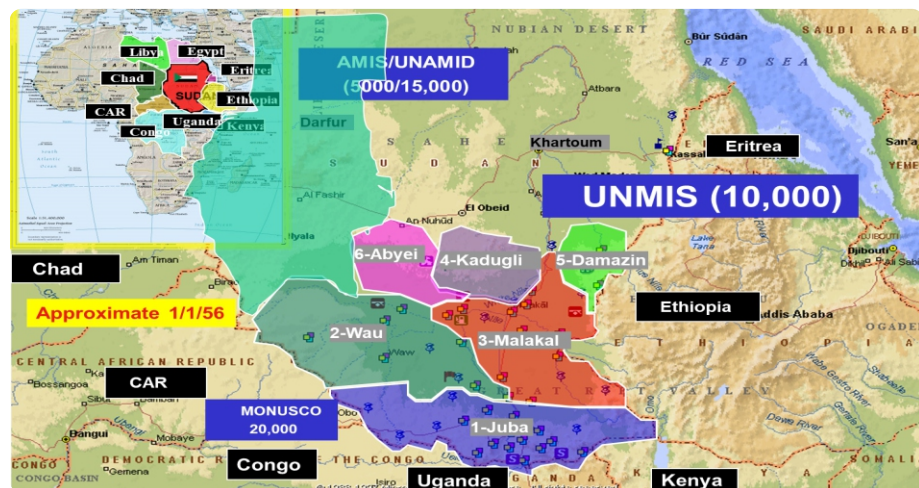
Conflicts require political solution and all military actions need to contribute towards this objective. Concurrently, political leadership should respect military's operational control during physical interventions. It is also better if the military is mainstreamed into the entire spectrum of political and humanitarian activity. This ensures troops remain updated and prepared to

provide credible force protection and timely crisis management. Certain community-based civil military coordination (CIMIC) programmes were objected to by the humanitarian community as an intrusion into their space. This was thereafter coordinated by the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Three new organizations got raised in UNMIS - Joint Operations Centre (JOC), Joint Missions Analysis Centre (JMAC) and Joint Operations Logistics Centre (JLOC). There were coordination and ownership issues - typical of a new raising. These were ironed out by the military component with professional commitment. Logistical support caused problems as military enabling units were being tasked by Director Mission Support (DMS). An effective interface by logistics staff (J4) was established to ensure prioritized operational support. I found that a good relationship between the FC and DMS enabled a top-down approach to resolve issues.



The author interacting with a tribal leader in Darfur, Sudan



UN Intervention in Sudan Theatre (2005-11)

Darfur was being handled by the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS), with UNMIS providing technical and administrative support. I helped transit AMIS to UNAMID through operational, administrative and training guidance - and physical support where necessitated. UNMIS and UNAMID maintained a healthy working relationship throughout, overcoming Khartoum and African Union (AU) bureaucratic hiccups. Amongst the many changes I introduced in Darfur was robust employment of the military. While visiting AMIS in 2006, I noticed a few bases were being targeted by stand-off fire every night - as there was no outside movement after sunset. We made contingents start night patrolling, which provided due security and regained their combat confidence.

Meaningful interface with both Khartoum and Juba was a delivery imperative. Though peace operations' legitimacy is driven through the mandate, performance credibility can only be achieved once local stakeholders and populations are on board. Special attention was paid by UNMIS to build

trust with political leadership and communities. This assisted us not only to progress the CPA smoothly - but helped get support on sensitive issues like freedom of movement and use of local facilities.

It is an information world. Public information (PI) is an art – for which all strategic and operational leaders need to be educated and trained. UNMIS PI staff interacted credibly with international and local audiences through periodical briefings and proactive press releases. Local press was identified as our primary audience - with cultural bridge by national staff. UN Radio Miraya at Juba was used as an effective force multiplier in Sudan -

holding interviews, panel discussions and community engagement. As Chairman, Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Committee (CJMC), I used the radio on multiple occasions to update civil society on conflicts, redeployment of forces and POC - with Sudanese commenting alongside. These briefings became hugely popular for personal authenticity.

Role and Performance of Military

UNMIS military had a specific and detailed mandate with a unified ceasefire mechanism structure spread across different levels. The mission had troop contributing countries (TCCs) representation from across the globe – with domination by South Asia and the Arab world. The authorized strength was 10,000 troops and 750 military observers, who operated under SCs. India was represented by two infantry battalions, an engineer company, signals unit, transport company and Level 2 hospital – all of whom performed admirably. UNMIS was deployed across South Sudan in the ceasefire zone (CFZ) based on six sectors, three each on either side of Line 1/1/56 (see map).

UNMIS headquarters was located at Khartoum with a logistics base at El Obeid. The deployment was based on team sites (pivots) which for long remained under tents - while surface patrolling (manoeuvre) was severely restricted due to water logging and sticky soil.

To sustain control of far-flung areas, UNMIS pioneered the concepts of 'Joint Patrolling' and 'Temporary Operating Base' (TOB) – the latter a need-based platoon deployment supported by helicopter effort. Being new concepts there were hesitations from both civil and military components - which were overcome with due consultation.

With an extended footprint, local clashes and skirmishes could be identified and dealt with promptly. Two incidents of attack on the Yambio team site and ambush on the Indian battalion at Magwe were dealt with firmly in 2006 – and no further attacks took place. TOB is now an accepted UN concept of operation.

The Bangladesh Force Riverine Unit (armed speed boats) proved a major force multiplier for Nile domination, while four aviation units (two from Pakistan, one from Russia and from India) took the lion's share in rotary mobility. A major effort was made by me to break the sector silos - and encourage whole-of-mission operational flexibility through periodical inter-sector dialogue. I believe that while national-based unit cohesion is a battle winning factor, multi-national structure at sector and regional levels is preferable – as it cross-fertilizes global campaigning experience and enhances transparency.

The security situation was broadly kept on track and violence controlled through proactive interventions by ceasefire monitoring structures and energetic contingent commanders. Chain of command, caveats and accountability can become tricky ground, especially in high tempo operations. We attempted to resolve these issues through a combination of strategic engagement with contributing countries - and operational team building within the mission. As FC, I remained mostly in the field, delegating administration and management tasks to my Deputy Force Commander (DFC) and competent staff.

The overriding factor for success of UNMIS was effective implementation of ceasefire and redeployment of SAF and SPLA. The process was monitored through the CJMC represented by senior Sudanese generals, with me in the chair - while SCs chaired Area Joint Monitoring

Committees (AJMCs). A special effort was made to professionalize these structures and provide impartial jurisdiction through 'national monitors' (liaison officers from SAF and SPLA accommodated within military administration). Importantly, CJMC held its critical meetings at conflict spots, moving beyond Juba-based chair-bound conferencing.

Intense fighting broke out between SAF and SPLA in Malakal in November 2006, nearly leading to a relapse of war. 8 Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAK LI) under Colonel Bharat Shekhawat held their ground when majority of UNMIS had evacuated. The CJMC flew to Malakal under special security waiver and met under fire to cease fighting – an incident that won widespread recognition – both nationally and internationally. The Malakal intervention set the bar to new peacekeeping heights.

More complex the peacekeeping environments become, greater is the significance of proper conduct and battlefield discipline. Good units

rigorously follow their daily routine of training, administration, welfare activities, and sports. This not only helps maintain a high degree of physical fitness and mental conditioning, but also keeps troops in high morale. UNMIS posted a creditable record in respect of human rights and denial of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). A system of unit citations and FC Commendation Cards introduced by me proved very popular.

In Sudan, pre-induction training was left entirely to contributing nations while in-mission training was non-existent. I have influenced fundamental changes in UN's training culture over the past few years - for contextual in-mission training and training being made a command function.

POC

POC is a collective responsibility and obligation, which requires synergized effort by the international community, peacekeeping missions and humanitarian groups. While the



The author monitoring demining operations in South Sudan - the team is wearing mine suits.

subject of POC lies firmly with the state, a UN mission is mandated to assist the national authorities with a wide range of responses 'up to and including use of deadly force'.

POC was – and continues to be a sensitive issue in Sudan. For UNMIS, the threat to civilians came from organized banditry, inter-tribal clashes, violence committed by armed groups – and spill-over from Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia. The expectation bar of POC remains very high - and missions struggle with given resources and guidance. **You cannot protect everyone, everywhere and every time!**

UNMIS formulated its POC Strategy – amongst the first. The document laid out the SRSG's comprehensive vision of POC, benchmarks and guidance roles and responsibilities for mission components. The POC concept was based on task forces, executing integrated operating techniques. Civil affairs took the lead in political dialogue and networking with communities - while the military led in physical protection. I believe real-time information flow through JOC and JMAC, backed by credible response should be the preferred approach to POC. **'Predict and Pre-empt' has to be the POC mantra!**

I noticed a lack of women representation and local language competence in few contingents - which hampered them from rightful networking with local communities. The civilian staff, on the other hand, was under subscribed, or hesitant to reach-out in the interiors, due to safety concerns. There is work ahead on this.

The Way Ahead – Changing Landscape of UN Peace Operations

UN's operating environment has undergone a paradigm shift - with hybrid

nature of conflicts, sectarian violence and unprecedented civilian deaths and displacement. UN missions are accordingly outstretched – and under scrutiny for non-operationalization of ever more demanding and prescriptive mandates. There is a need to enlarge the mandate evolution and review process at the Security Council, with a strong voice for the TCCs.

The use of force requires deliberation, both at strategic and operational levels. With majority of missions under Chapter VII, application of international laws and collateral damage are genuine growing concerns. Safety and security of peacekeepers has become a major concern for which conflict-tailor-made contingents are the need – which are structured and motivated to contest in asymmetric threat environments. Empowering junior leadership to take time-critical decisions is an operational imperative. There is no time for them to look over their shoulders.

Technology is the new force multiplier in contemporary peacekeeping. Notwithstanding, while technology can assist in conflict mapping, assessments and surveillance, the 'horse sense' of peacekeepers must drive decision making. Another concern mission leadership is facing is host nation's discomfort with technology intrusion. This demands convincing local stakeholders of technology advantage for governance.

With hybridization of conflict environments, militaries must deploy for high intensity peace operations, with a focus on countering unconventional and unpredictable threats - with minimum losses to their personnel and equipment. Competence, training and accountability are mandatory requirements for contemporary UN leaders. **There are no runners-up in war - and the UN is fighting a war!**



Lieutenant General Jasbir Singh Liddar, UYSM, AVSM (Retd) was commissioned into the Grenadiers Regiment and has a military career spanning over 40 years. He has held various senior UN appointments to include Chief of Staff of the UN Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) in 1994-95, Force Commander in Sudan (UNMIS) from 2006-08 and Deputy Special Representative of Secretary General (Political) in the same mission from 2010-11. The General Officer is involved with multiple UN offices and global institutes as an expert and mentor.



Lt Gen Jasbir Singh Liddar

UNTAC Cambodia 1992-93



UNTAC - the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia - was set up to supervise a ceasefire, disarm combatants, repatriate refugees and monitor conduct of free and fair elections. A total of 1,373 personnel from the Indian Army participated.

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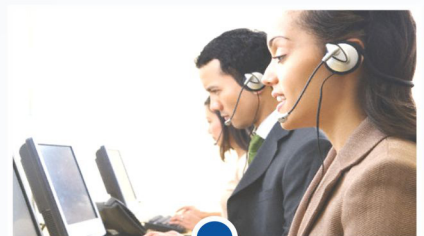
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