

RESTRICTED

Chapter II

CONFLICT IN KUTCH, 1965

The Terrain

The Rann of Kutch is a salt waste lying between 22°55' and 24°43' North and 68°45' and 71°46' East, covering an area of about 23,310 sq km and stretching along the north and east of Kutch. It separates Kutch from Sind on the north, and from Radhanpur and Kathiawar on the east and south(1). From the head of the Gulf of Kutch stretches the dry bed of the sea that once surrounded Kutch on the south-east, east and north. For the sake of convenience, this area may be divided into two parts, the Great Rann to the north and north-east of Kutch, about 257 km from east to west, and 129 km from north to south, covering an area of about 18,130 km and the Little Rann to the south-east and south of Kutch, about 129 km from east to west, and 16 to 64 km from north to south, encompassing an area of about 4,144 sq km(2).

The Great Rann of Kutch forms the southern boundary of Sind from the south-western border of Rajasthan to the sea. It is generally flooded from June to October by the sea waters pushed into it by the south-west Monsoon, turning it into a salt lake. In other seasons, it is a desert, - flat, firm and quite bare - except for a few islands, sprinkled with scanty herbage. But there appears some evidence that when Alexander the Great was in Sind, it was an inland sea or lake fed by the "lost river", and afterwards by the Puran river. Till recent times, at least the western part of the Rann from Ali Bander to the Kori Creek was fertile, and intercourse between Sind and Kutch was free and frequent, obstructed by no desert barrier(3).

During the south-west Monsoon, the northern Kutch is entirely covered with water, generally salty. When the Monsoon abates, the waters recede, leaving behind a morass which gradually dries up and turns into a good pasture. In Banni area on the border, where agriculture is not possible due to salinity people have, therefore, taken to cattle-rearing. In Northern Rann there are a few villages with a sparse population with little contacts with the rest of the region. Even the area around Bhuj, the main town of Kutch, is barren, with oppressive heat and forbidding dust during most of the year.

As for communications, there runs a road (67 km) from Bhuj to Khavda in Kutch, near the border of the Rann. This road passed through Banni, an obstacle for

RESTRICTED

wheels in the wet season. Northward from Khavda a track led to Diplo (in Pakistan) across the Rann. The stretch of track up to Mori Bet, passing over wet, salty Rann, was heavy-going. From Mori Bet onwards the Rann was firm and vehicles could move at some speed, except during the wet period.

The northern portion of the Rann was easily accessible from the side of Sind (Pakistan). There was also a road along the border on the Pakistani side, which was motorable during the dry season. A track linked Luna near the northern end of Kutch with Rahim-Ki-Bazar (in Pakistan) across the Rann, passing through Karim Shahi, Vigokot and Kanjarkot(4). There were two more tracks linking Bela area with Nagar Parkar in Pakistan. One of them started from Bela and the other from Lodrani.

Kutch-Sind Boundary Dispute

The British annexed Sind in 1843. This necessitated determination of boundary between Sind, the British territory and Kutch the Indian state. It was clearly stated that the Rann lying between Sind and the core territory of the Kutch ruler was part of Kutch. As there was no immediate urgency the border remained undemarcated though some effort in this direction had been initiated by planting pillars.

As a result of the partition in 1947, Sind by virtue of its muslim majority was given to Pakistan whereas Kutch with its predominantly Hindu population remained in India.

Even before partition, the Sind authorities had been disputing the rights of the Kutch government over the entire Rann. In 1938 they had laid claim over half of it. On 14 July 1948, Pakistan wrote to India that the Sind-Kutch "boundary was still in dispute and must be settled." On 10 August 1949, India cited evidence to prove that there was no dispute in this regard. In a note of 9 April 1956, Pakistan put forth the argument: "It has been emphasised that the Rann is dead sea. According to the international practice also seas are divided equally between the states situated on either side of it. The same principle appears to have been followed while settling the dispute over the little Rann between the two states of Morvi and Kutch. The Pakistani claim to the northern portion of the Rann upto Dharamsala is, therefore, supported not only by possession and exercise of authority, but also by international practice and precedent."(5) They also cited maps and letters of the British province of Sind to prove that they never ceased to claim rights over portions of the Rann.

RESTRICTED

India pointed out that the Survey of India maps issued during the British period mark the entire Rann as part of Kutch.

The exchange of notes notwithstanding Pak intrusions into the Rann and military movements near the border started as early as 1949. To contain this, Indian authorities in Kutch also demanded the strengthening of patrol arrangements. By the end of 1955, Pak had built a motor track leading to Gulmamad Talavadi, a small depression in the Rann, and reports said that contingents of Sind Reserve Police (about 50 in each) had been stationed at Vingi and Baliari or Jat Tarai, opposite Chhad Bet area. Men of SRP were reported to be patrolling Bet area and instigating Pak cattle-owners, not to pay the grazing fees to the Indian authorities. India lodged a protest with the Government of Pakistan on 12 January 1956. But this did not have any effect. On 17 February 1956, an Indian Police patrol found that Pakistani armed personnel had intruded upto Gulmamad Talavadi and taken up position there. They also fired some shots. Pakistan had thus decided on asserting its right over the Chhad Bet area.

At this juncture B Squadron of 7 Grenadiers (camel mounted infantry) was located at Khavda. On 18 February 1956, its Commander sent a routine patrol to Chhad Bet which due to the long distance (72 km) reached there by noontime the next day. The Pakistanis in well dug-in positions allowed the patrol to enter the area and then opened LMG fire, injuring a sepoy. The patrol returned fire and in the resultant exchange of fire, two Indian sepoys were wounded and 3 camels killed. The exchange of protest notes followed without any result.

Subsequently, it was learnt that Pakistanis equipped with MMGs and 2" mortars had occupied the whole of Chhad Bet. On 24 February, India protested that Chhad Bet was indisputably her territory(6). The Indian army took measures to expel the intruders. 112 Infantry Brigade stationed at Dhrangadhra was ordered to move to Bhuj on 22 February. The Brigade (less 5 Raj Rif) concentrated at Khavda on 24 February. On the same day, 7 Grenadiers of the brigade established a firm base in area Bedia Bet. Next day, the Army Commander reconnoitered the area.

Indian Precautions

No major incursions by Pakistani nationals occurred in the area after this. The Indian authorities had however realised the vulnerability of the border to Pak encroachments. Consequently, a

proposal to disband 7 Grenadiers, (a camel battalion) was abandoned and it was reorganised as a normal infantry battalion. One Squadron of 7 Grenadiers with attached troops was stationed at Bhuj, and the rest of the battalion was strung along the L of C between Bhuj and Khavda. The Bhuj airstrip was improved to facilitate the operation of modern fighter aircraft. An all-weather airstrip for landing Auster aircraft was built at Chhad Bet. Fair weather airstrips were also constructed at Khavda and Kotda (16 km north of Khavda), the latter for the emergency landing of Dakotas. A plant for distillation of salt water for the use of men at Chhad Bet was also set up. A bund was also built to keep off the tidal waters from flooding the area.

As a long term measure, it was proposed to construct the following roads of strategic importance in the area:-

- 1) Khavda-Chhad Bet
- 2) Khavda-Lakhpat
- 3) Mavsari-Tharad-Dhanera-Panthwada-Dantiwada
- 4) Varahi-Morwada-Suigan
- 5) Bhabhar-Suigan
- 6) Radhanpur-Morwada
- 7) Dhalavira-Godhada-Lodrani-Mosana-Santalpur

In November 1962, 112 Infantry Brigade Group was replaced by 31 Infantry Brigade Group in the area. However, the border posts continued to be manned by CRPF and State Reserve Police personnel.

Trouble at Kanjarkot

In 1964, trouble started in Kanjarkot area, where Pakistanis were frequently trespassing into Indian territory. On 13 May 1964, three such intruders were arrested and subsequently released by the State Reserve Police. No further incidents took place in that year, but the issue became live again in January-February 1965.

Kanjarkot was a fort in ruins, about 1370 metres south of the Pak border on the north-western fringe of the Rann of Kutch. The area south of Kanjarkot was a flat plain. The area to the north consisted of a series of parallel sand dunes, the southernmost running along the Pak border. The sand dunes dominated the area of the fort and provided Pakistanis an unimpeded view. The area lend itself to operations only during the dry season.

Communications in the area also favoured Pakistanis rather than Indians. The Indian administrative base at Bhuj was about 177 km south of

the border. The advance maintenance area being established at Khavda was about 104 km from the border and about 119 km from Vigokot. The proposed brigade administrative area at Karim Shahi, south-east of Kanjarkot, was 32 km from the border. The Bhuj-Khavda road was liable to breaches during rains. The desert track from Khavda to this area passed through a causeway. No drinking water was available beyond Khavda, except at Vigokot, where it was sufficient for a limited number of troops(7). At this time, for air communication there was a fair weather airstrip at Khavda, and a civil landing ground at Bhuj. Efforts were on to construct a helipad at Vigokot. But a sizeable airstrip for Air Force operations in the area was located only at Jamnagar.

However, the position was quite different on the Pakistani side. Badin a sizeable town, was only 30 km from her border. It had a large airfield with radar, capable of handling all types of fighter and transport aircraft and was well connected with Hyderabad (Sind) and Khairpur. There was also a road running from Badin to Maro and further east to Nagar Parkar. Thus the maintenance of the border-posts was much easier for Pakistanis than Indians.

It appears that Pakistan had started building up in the Kanjarkot area from about the third week of January 1965. On 10 February this was reported by an Indian routine patrol(8). The Commanders of the border police of India and Pakistan met on 15 February to resolve the issue of Kanjarkot. In fact Pakistanis had established a vehicle track, running from Surai to Ding (32 km) which ran through the Indian area, south of Kanjarkot. Thereafter, the Indian police increased night patrols, and in reply the Pakistanis put up a standing patrol there. This aroused the Indians and forced them to take measures to eject the Pakistanis from Kanjarkot.

Pakistan had stationed one Company of Indus Rangers at Kanjarkot, 400 Indus Rangers at Rahim-Ki-Bazar, and one wing of Indus Rangers along the border. Two battalions of Indus Rangers were kept in reserve at Hyderabad (Sind) and Chhor. As on 18 February, the Indus Rangers were deployed in the Kanjarkot area as follows:

- a) Kanjarkot - Possibly one platoon during day and a listening post at night.
- b) Area Sand Dune Hill, north of Kanjarkot - Possibly two platoons, supported by 3" Mortars and MMGs.

RESTRICTED

Against this, the Indians had 5 companies of State Reserve Plice - two at Vigokot, one at Karim Shahi, and two at Chhad Bet. This force was not, however, adequate to evict the Pak encroachment.

Operation KABADI

On 21 February, the Maharashtra and Gujarat Area Commander, Maj Gen P.C.Gupta, MC, issued his Operation Instruction No 1 (OP KABADI) to Brig S.S.M. Pahalajani, Commander 31 Infantry Bde Group, to capture Kanjarkot. The Brigadier was authorised to cross the border for the completion of his task. Headquarters 31 Inf Bde Gp, 11 Fd Regt, 226 Independent Workshop Company, 373 Field Coy Engineers, 31 Inf Bde Signal Coy, ASC, and 407 Medical Coy reached Bhuj on 27 February. The troops of 17 Raj Rif (less coy) were already in Bhuj. On 26 February, the Army Headquarters arranged for sending 7 companies of police to Ahmedabad. A Parachute Battalion was also placed at 24 hours' notice for move to the area(9).

Pakistan retaliated by ordering its 8 Div Commander, Maj Gen Tikka Khan, to assume operational command of the Indus Rangers and to take measures for effective retaliation. Commander 8 Division, in turn, alerted 51 Brigade Group to move forward, if necessary. The latter moved 8 Frontier Force to Khadan(10) on 6 March, reinforced the posts at Rahim-Ki-Bazar, and Kanjarkot to company strength and deployed mortars and machine guns around Kanjarkot(11).

Maj Gen Tikka Khan visited Headquarters 51 Bde on 9 March and ordered M.Azhar, the Bde Commander to move a little south of Diplo, midway between Vingti and Kanjarkot. 6 Baluch, a Battalion of this Bde stationed at Karachi was asked to move to Hyderabad and act as Bde reserve.

According to a Pak officer, the Indians, in order to hasten their concentration in the Rann, covered up the marshy and sandy portions of the roads and tracks with steel planks and constructed over-head covers over their trenches and dug-outs, particularly in the areas around Vigokot, Gullu Talao, Kanjarkot and Vingti. He further says that in these areas the Indians constructed a number of strong positions which the local Indus Rangers could not recapture due to inadequate weapons and numbers(12).

The Indian authorities knew about the deployment of two tanks(13), four 25 pounder guns, three armoured

vehicles and sufficient troops at Badin by Pakistan. They had also concentrated troops at Pabuhar, (north-west of Diplo) and established a military camp at Ali Bandar. The presence of four tanks, seven armoured cars and some troops was also noticed at Luwari. Intelligence reports indicated the presence of 400 Rangers at Rahim-Ki-Bazar and 100 Rangers each at Kulri, Surai, Vingi, Jattalai, Ving-Jatur and Kanjarkot. It was also reported that the Rangers' headquarters had been moved from Diplo to Rahim-Ki-Bazar and that 12 Pak aircraft had been stationed at Badin air-field.

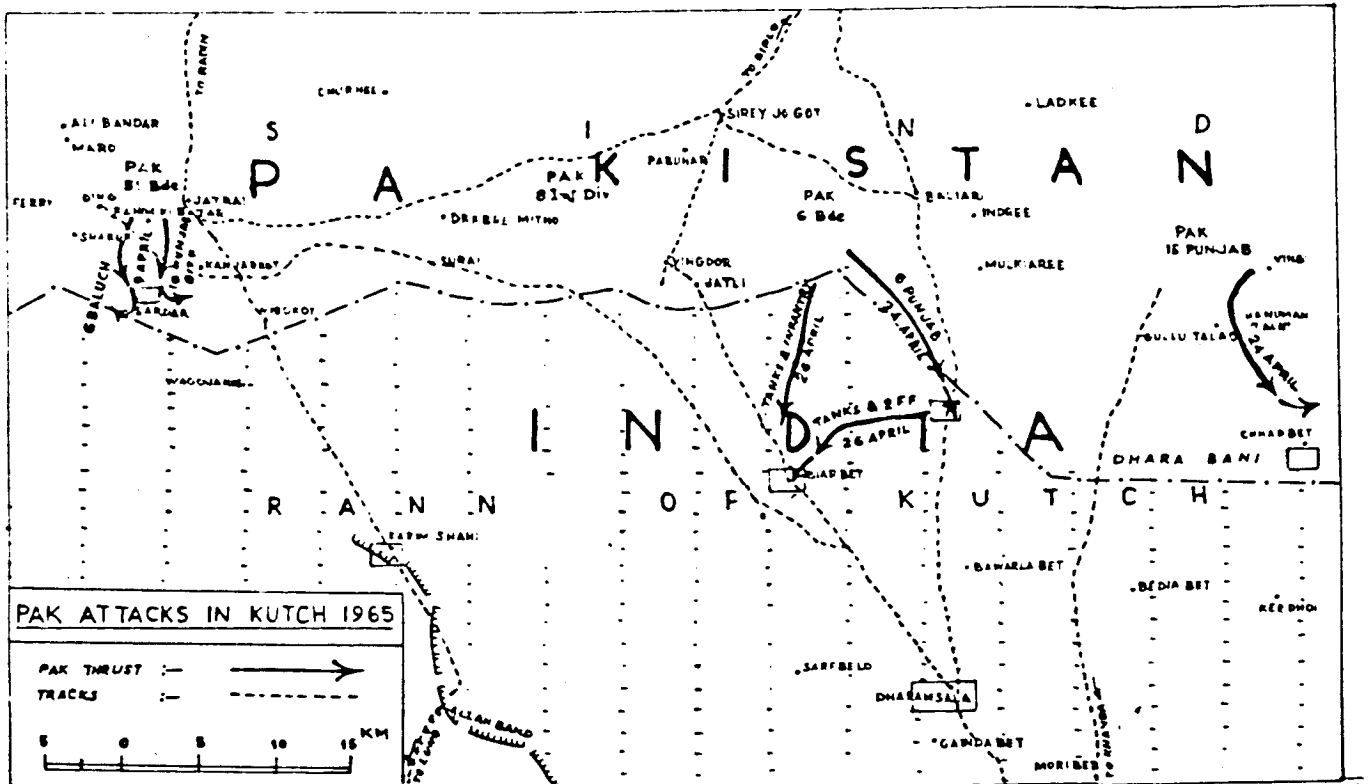
On 13 March, CRP established Sardar Post, 4600 metres to the south-west of Kanjarkot. This effectively blocked the Pakistani route of ingress. The location was a featureless mud-flat with some scrub-covered area around. Some outposts were established to protect the main Sardar Post. These were located south-west of Ding, south-east of Kanjarkot and south-west of Kanjarkot(14). The 2nd CRP battalion held this area. It is said that the location of Sardar Post which was tactically unsound, was not an Army choice(15).

When the Kanjarkot trouble started, Lt Col K. Sundarji, CO of 1 Mahar (who later rose to become the Chief of Army Staff) was the officiating Brigade Commander. He personally reconnoitred the area in police uniform, and recommended the immediate capture of Kanjarkot(16). But this recommendation was not approved by the government, and it was decided to set up Sardar Post. 4 Coys of Central Reserve Police under Maj Karnail Singh, were brought up to replace the SRP. Maj Karnail Singh deployed one company at Tac Post, and two kilometres behind this, the Adm Post was located. Patrols were placed on two islands to the west of these posts. Maj Sharma of 1 Mahar was ordered to assist the CRPF personnel with 4 JCOs and 15 NCOs of his battalion.

In reaction to the establishment of the Sardar Post the Pakistanis established a platoon post at Ding to the north-east of Sardar Post. In reply the Indians set up a new police post, 1-1/2 km north of Sardar Post in the direction of Ding, on 5 April 1965. This post was necessitated due to Pakistani interference with the Indian Police patrols(18).

Exercise Arrow Head

Meanwhile, during 26-28 March, 1965, Exercise Arrow Head was organised jointly by the Indian Army and the Navy at the sea port of Mandavi on the Gulf of Kutch to familiarise the Indian Infantry with Naval aircraft flown from INS Vikrant(19). This reportedly alarmed the Pakistanis(20).



HQ Southern Command then appreciated that Pakistan had deployed strong regular forces in the Sand Dunes area in depth, and that an infantry battalion group had been positioned at Pabuhar to protect the flanks and also to act as reserve. It was estimated that four tanks and seven armoured cars and a field regiment had also been positioned in area Pabuhar-Sand Dunes. Even so, the Army Headquarters had assessed the threat against the Kutch border at one infantry battalion group only. On 8 April it was learnt that two F-86 Squadrons had moved from Mauripur to Badin(21). In spite of these military movements, Pak contended that its moves were only a reaction to Indian moves.

Desert Hawk-I

In his book, Maj Ahmad says that Pakistan had apprehended an attack on Kanjarkot by the Indian forces and that to forestall it a preemptive operation by Pak 51 Brigade, code-named "Operation Desert Hawk" was formulated by Pak 8 Inf Division. He says that after the reconnaissance on the morning of 7 April, Brigadier Azhar, Commander of 51 Bde, decided to attack Sardar Post with two Battalions up - 18 Punjab and 8 Frontier Force. The post was garrisoned by a CRP battalion (Bn Hqrs and 3 Coys) with one company forward and two in depth. The fourth company is stated to have been on patrol on an island about 1300 metres north-west, apparently near the post established on 5 April(22). The Pak Bde had identified the three Indian camps in the Sardar Post area and designated the forward eastern camp as 'A' the forward western camp as 'B' and the rear camp as 'C'. The Indians had two smaller posts on the eastern and western flanks of the Sardar Post. These posts were named by Pakistanis as "Jungle Post" and "Clump" respectively. Another small Indian out post was detected between Camp 'A' and the "Clump".

According to the plan of attack two companies each of the two Pak battalions (18 Punjab, 8 FF) were to contact the Indian defenders from east-north-east direction and the remaining troops were to follow close behind(23). 18 Punjab was to lead the attack as the left forward Battalion with the mission to capture camp 'A' at Sardar Post and thus prepare to deal with the enemy counter-attack from south-east. 8 FF as the right forward Battalion was to capture camp 'B' at Sardar Post and then be relieved by 6 Baluch. 6 Baluch was to function as the Brigade Reserve ready to attack the rear of Sardar Post. In the second phase

RESTRICTED

of its mission, 6 Baluch, which was to be replaced by 8 FF as the Brigade Reserve, was to capture camp 'C' - area 'Jungle Post' and 'Island' north-east of Sardar Post(24).

Orders were given to the Pak 51 Bde to launch attack on the night of 7/8 April. The attacking Bns could not however be mustered in time and therefore, the attack was launched at 0100 hrs on 9 April 1965. Even on the mid night of 8/9 April there was lack of coordination in 51 Bde.

According to Indian sources, Pak forces in Brigade strength mounted the attack at 0330 hrs on the north and north-west sides of the Sardar Post after heavy shelling. The attack was supported by 14 Field Regiment and 83 Heavy Mortar Battery(25). The two Pak battalions which had left their forming-up place at 0145 hrs on 9 April reached the defence line at 0300 hrs, without being detected. 6 Baluch which had been kept as reserve, also joined the fray and occupied the Shalimar post, which had reportedly been vacated by the Indians. Due to loss of direction, 18 Punjab went for the objective of 8 FF, resulting in general confusion(26). In effect, the coordinated Pak attack, as planned could not be executed. Finally the Pakistanis decided to disengage and withdraw. Though one Pak Company succeedd in reaching the Indian defended position, the Pak attack was repulsed(27). According to Gen Sundarji, due to wrong appreciation of Indian strength at Sardar Post, the Pak attack could neither be aimed correctly nor coordinated profitably. Pak troops pinned down by Indian small arms fire suffered heavy casualties. "Had Pakistan Bde Commander kept up his efforts for some more time, they could have captured the post, but thinking that Indian reinforcements would be coming up soon, he withdrew his forces"(28).

After facing the first Pak attack boldly, many CRP personnel withdrew to Vigokot. At 1600 hrs, the Pak artillery fired shells of coloured smoke which prompted the rest of the CRP personnel to leave Sardar Post. Soon afterwards, Brig Pahalajani took over the command from Lt Col Sundarji and asked 1 Mahar to withdraw from Sardar Post. In this battle, the following casualties were suffered:-

Pakistan	-	Killed	-	4 officers and 30 ORs
		POW	-	4 ORs

RESTRICTED

India	- Killed	- 4 CRP Personnel
	Wounded	- 5
	POW/	- One Officer (Major Karnail Singh)
	Missing	- One JCO (Jemadar Baldev Singh), 9 ORs and 8 followers (29).

According to Major Ahmad, 50 Indian dead bodies were counted on the half part of Camp 'B' alone, and subsequent wireless intercepts confirmed 200 Indian casualties, besides 21 (including Major Karnail Singh) captured. The losses of 51 Inf Bde (Pakistan) included 5 killed (including Capt Nazar Hussain of 83 Mortar Battery, 16 wounded and 4 missing (30).

A patrol from 2 Sikh LI, accompanied by Lt Col Sundarji, went to Sardar Post, to see if the Pakistanis had occupied that post. According to Sundarji, he found dead bodies of Pakistanis strewn all over. He captured some Pak arms, ammunition and equipment and also recovered a considerable quantity of arms, ammunition and equipment, left behind by the CRP personnel.

The Indian Bde Cdr also visited the post. The DIG of Police reportedly declined to accompany him. The DIG feared a possible attack on the Vigokot post, held by two of his companies, and ordered vacation. On 9 April itself, 'C' Coy 17 Raj Rif arrived at the Vigokot post at 1915 hrs. Soon after, 2 Sikh LI positioned itself on the post. In the meanwhile, 11 Fd Regt had also moved to Dharamsala and by 0800 hrs on 11 April, a Battery of the Regt had been deployed at Vigokot. On 11 April, a standing patrol (coy strength) of 2 Sikh LI was sent to Sardar Post, and simultaneously 1 Mahar at Khavda was also ordered to move to Sardar Post. 1 Mahar reached there at 0800 hrs on 12 April. Coy 2 Sikh LI returned to its unit at Vigokot on 14 April. A platoon patrol was sent to Kanjarkot to verify if it was still occupied by the Pakistanis. The patrol reported that Kanjarkot was occupied by approximately 2 companies of Pak troops. One RCL gun was also seen there.

The Pakistanis did not launch another Infantry attack at Sardar Post. However, they directed intense

RESTRICTED

artillery and mortar fire on Sardar Post and Vigokot for many days, resulting in exchange of fire. According to Sundarji, his troops raided Pak territory several times, but when Brig Pahalajani heard about it, he stopped raids. It would appear that Commander of Pak 51 Bde handled the operations as ineptly as Brig Pahalajani of 31 Indian Inf Bde(31).

At 11.40 A.M., on 14 April, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, C-in-C Pakistan Air Force, rang up his Indian counterpart, Air Marshal Arjan Singh, to suggest that the aircraft of both the countries should not fly over the 'disputed' Kanjarkot area, as it might escalate fighting. He added that no PAF aircraft was stationed at Badin and that there was no plan to do so. He also suggested that the fighter and bomber aircraft of both the Air Forces should not fly within 16 km of the border. The Indian Air Chief accepted the proposal but added that Indian helicopters and transport aircraft would be used right up to the Army position for supply purposes. He also told Air Marshal Asghar Khan that two Pak Air OP type aircraft had flown over the Kanjarkot area. The Pak Air Chief explained that those aircraft were under the control of the Pak Army, and he would talk to the Pak Army about that(32). According to S. Ahmad, the very next day IAF plans flew several sorties over Kanjarkot and other Ranger posts along the border, and two days later the two Air Chiefs again discussed the subject inconclusively. This was followed by a PAF air defence exercise in the southern region on 15 April. Anti-aircraft guns were deployed to take part in the exercise(33).

Indian Forces Reorganised

In the meanwhile, the Indian Army set-up responsible for the defence of Kutch was reorganised. On 10 April, Maj Gen PO Dunn was appointed Army Headquarters Liaison Officer in Gujarat. On 17 April, the Indian Force operating in the Kutch sector was designated as Kilo Force and Maj Gen Dunn became its General Officer Commanding. On 20 April, HQ Kilo Force became HQ Kilo Sector. 50 Independent Parachute Brigade less one battalion, which came under Southern Command Headquarters on 17 April, joined Kilo Sector on 20 April.

RESTRICTED

The Pakistani disposition at the time was as follows:-

<u>HQ 8 Division</u>	- Hyderabad (Sind)
Tac HQ	- Badin (April 22)
<u>HQ 51 Bde</u>	- Rahim-Ki-Bazar
18 Punjab 8FF 6 Baluch One Platoon 15 FF (R&S) 14 Field Regiment 83 Mortar Battery 81/25 Field Battery	- Opposite Sardar Post
<u>HQ 6 Brigade Group</u>	- 8 km south of Diplo (area opposite Chhad Bet)
6 Punjab less 2 Coys, 25 Field Regt, less battery	- area Jatrai
15 Punjab less one coy; Battery 25 Field Regiment; one troop 88 Mortar Battery	- area Vingri
2FF	- Sirey Jo Got (21/22 April Jatrai (23 April))
<u>Brigade Reserve Force</u> (one company from each battalion, but less platoon of coy 15 FF (R&S))	- Sirey Jo Got
Element 12 Cavalry, Squadron 24 Cavalry	- formed into a composite Regiment
Army Aviation units, four 20-mm Orlikan guns	
One platoon 3 Engineers battalion, Light workshop 63 EME battalion, ADS battalion, Section 11 Military Police Unit, and Special Services Group platoon were also there in the area(34).	

The Indian dispositions before the organisation of Kilo Force were as follows:-

<u>HQ 31 Inf Bde Gp</u>	Bhing
1 Mahar	Sardar Post
2 Sikh LI	Vigokot
17 Raj Rif less 2 coys	Dharamsala
Coy 17 Raj Rif	Chhad Bet
Coy 17 Raj Rif	Bela
Coy SRP	Pt 84 (Sera Bet)
Coy SRP	Hanuman Talai

Under M&G Area

2 Grenadiers	Suigam-Nagar Parkar axis
--------------	-----------------------------

11 Field Regiment and battery 1673 Field Regiment provided the artillery support - the former supporting the troops in Sardar Post - Vigokot area, and latter the 2 Grenadiers.

Following the creation of the Kilo Sector additional troops were inducted into the area. Their dispositions were as follows:-

<u>HQ 50 Para Bde</u>	- Khavda
<u>2 Para HQ</u>	- near Dharamsala
B Coy 2 para Platoon 'A' Coy	- Screen position in the area of Pt 84 (6 km north of Dharamsala)
<u>3 Para HQ</u>	- Dharamsala
B Coy	- Pt 84
C Coy	- Biar Bet
<u>4 Para</u>	- Pt 183 (Dharamsala and south of cause-way)

Anti-tank mine-laying was completed at Vigokot on 17 April, and in Sardar Post area on 23 April. 106 mm RCL guns and 3.5" Bazookas were brought to fight the tanks.

Desert Hawk-II

After the attempt on Sardar Post, the Pakistanis brought more reinforcements into the area. The task allotted to Pak 8 Division was to maintain status quo and an offensive capability against the Indians in the disputed territory. "Moreover, if the Indians did not abstain from their frequent aggressive actions against the Rangers' posts and patrols, then 8 Division, as a counter-measure, was to advance, capture and secure maximum possible of the disputed territory, particularly those areas which were still not occupied by the Indians e.g. the area between Vigokot and Gullu Talao"(35).

Between 10-19 April, both sides engaged in patrolling and exchange of artillery fire, directed by Air Observation Posts. On 12 April, a Pak patrol, north of Sardar Post, was engaged by the Indian artillery and suffered at least six casualties. There was another patrol clash on 15 April, south of Kanjarkot, in which the fleeing Pakistanis suffered casualties. It is significant that these activities were confined to the Vigokot-Sardar Post area up till 19 April. However, on 20 April, while continuing the shelling of the Sardar Post, the Pakistanis started shelling Pt 84 (Sera Bet) in the Chhad Bet area with field guns. The shelling from 0730 to 0930 hrs was so heavy that the State Reserve Police occupying the post abandoned it, as also the post at Biar Bet. It is said that under "Operation Desert Hawk-II", the Pak troops launched a deliberate attack on Pt 84, which was a screen for the main Indian defensive position at Dharamsala, during the night of 20/21 April.

Brig Eftikhar of 6 Bde (Pak) had already made plans for raiding the Indian out-posts at Sera Bet and Gullu Talao on 20/21 April, before launching the main offensive against Biar Bet and Chhad Bet on 23/24 April. Accordingly, a raiding party of 6 Punjab (Pak) consisting of Lt Nadir Pervaiz and 20 men of his Commando Platoon, accompanied by Capt Mohd. Yaqub as the artillery FOO, equipped with 2 LMGs, 2 Rocket Launchers, 8 Sten Guns, 6 Rifles, hand-grenades, and also M-30 grenades, attacked an Indian post at Pt 84. The defenders were taken by surprise, and before they could take up position, the raiding party had killed 8 Indians, blown up their tents, destroyed the water tanks, and set fire to the ammunition dump(37). The FOO brought down artillery fire on the Indian camp and kept it engaged until the raiding party withdrew. The Pakistanis brought back one LMG and 6 rifles from the Indian camp. This successful raid raised the morale of the Pak battalion. Lt Pervaiz was awarded 'Sitara-i-Jurat', and his deputy 'Imtiaz Sanad'.

RESTRICTED

A similar raid was organised by 15 Punjab (Pak) at Gullu Talao on 21 April. But before the raiding party could reach the objective, the SRP withdrew in confusion after suffering some casualties in shelling(38).

Immediately, Kilo Sector Headquarters ordered 3 Para to occupy Sera Bet with a company('B'). This was done after a patrol had cleared it. On 20 April, one battery of Indian 71 Medium Regiment and 70 and 78 Field Companies reported arrival. The battery was moved to south-west of Vigokot on 23 April. Though there were many reports of Pakistani armour moving into the area, India deployed no armour in Kutch(39). Between 21 and 23 April, the Pakistanis moved their armour and did some reconnoitring, while keeping up the shelling. Gen Sundarji has stated that although the existence of Pakistani tanks was detected in the area through tank noise and otherwise, according to higher Indian Intelligence Organisations, there was no Pakistani tank in the area. He further says that some of the Pakistani tanks got bogged down in the wet sands.

Desert Hawk-III

Maj Gen Tikka Khan carried out a complete reappraisal of the situation in the Rann of Kutch. Major portion of his 8 Division was concentrated in Diplo area, regarded vital for both defence and offence. For offensive south of Diplo, he conceived 'Plan Alpha', to destroy Indian forces in area Chhad Bet-Dharamsala-Vigokot-Karim Shahi. PAF was alerted to strike the Indian concentrations in this area. On 23 April, Tikka Khan received the following order from the C-in-C Pakistan Army:-

"6 Brigade Group will be established in area south of Jatrai upto Biar Bet not later than 1800 hours today. Enemy post at Biar Bet will be dislodged at the earliest opportunity. Position will be dug and mined and prepared for all round defence. Enemy will be enticed to attack this position and maximum casualties inflicted on him. There will be no withdrawal from this position without permission from GHQ. No attack on Chhad Bet"(41).

One Squadron of 24 Cavalry and 12 Medium Regiment less two Batteries from 51 Brigade sector were allotted to 6 Brigade at 8 p.m. on 23 April to become available by first light on 24 April to support the attack(42).

However, the Indian assessment was that the Pakistani build-up was only defensive. It was felt that the experience at Sardar Post must have chastened Pak to be wary of undertaking any fresh venture. It was also estimated that the Pakistanis should be aware that after 15 May, due to climatic conditions, the Indians would have to withdraw the bulk of their forces to the south of the Rann. It was also assessed that the Kilo Sector had resources just for defensive tasks, aggressive patrolling and harassing artillery fire against Pakistani posts, and hence the Kilo Sector was not in a position to undertake offensive tasks. But things developed differently.

Sera Bet (Pt 84) was held by B Coy 3 Para, (about 70 men), under the Command of Major PP Singh. It was supported by a troop of 17 Para Field Regt and a section each of MMG and RCL. On 23 April, at 1800 hrs, Major Singh sent a reconnaissance patrol under 2/Lt Sharma to Jat Talai to ascertain the enemy strength. The patrol did not return. That night the noise of the movement of tracked and wheeled vehicles opposite the company position could be heard. There was shelling for about an hour from 0300 hrs on 24 April. The Pakistanis, about a battalion in strength, were seen advancing in assault formation from approximately 1090 metres north-west of the position at 0600 hrs. When engaged by artillery, MMG and 3 inch mortars, the attackers seemed to have stopped. However, at 0715 hrs, Pak armour (Sqn plus) followed by APCs could be seen forming up about 1400 to 1800 metres in the north-north-west direction. They were engaged by the artillery and RCL guns. Three of the Pakistani tanks appeared to have been knocked out. But tank shells kept falling into the trenches and the temporary gun position, ahead of the company locality. Later, the Pak tanks, adopting fire-and-move tactics, advanced to within 700-800 metres of Company position. Realising the weight of the assault, Maj P.P. Singh ordered his troops to withdraw under the cover of Artillery, 3 inch mortars and RCL guns. In this encounter Pakistanis suffered heavy casualties estimated to be 100 killed/wounded. The Indians suffered one OR killed, two wounded, and nine including one Officer missing. Pt 84 was occupied by the Pakistanis.

According to Major S. Ahmad, this Pak attack by 6 Brigade was code-named Operation Desert Hawk III, and was executed by Brig Eftikhar Khan. The plan of

attack of 6 Punjab was as follows:-

- (a) Attack was to be launched with two Companies up: 'A' and 'B' Companies leading and 'C' and 'D' Companies following at a distance of 275 metres. The Battalion Headquarters was to move in between the two leading Companies behind a Battalion navigation party.
- (b) 'A' Company was to capture the left half of the objective and 'B' Company the right half.
- (c) The attack was to be a silent one with Artillery Support Fire on call. Objective to be indicated for an artillery concentration on the Battalion Commander's order(43).

During the advance on Sera Bet, 6 Punjab ambushed and captured an Indian patrol, consisting of Lt Sharma of a Para Bn and 3 ORs, without firing a shot. With the help of B Coy of 15 FF (R&S), they attacked the Indian position at Sera Bet (Pt 84) and forced the Indians to withdraw, leaving behind some equipment. 6 Punjab occupied Sera Bet by 0730 hrs, on 24 April 1965. During the Pak attack on Sera Bet, 15 Punjab carried out a feint attack on Chhad Bet from Vingi to mislead the Indians.

However, when 3 Pak tanks tried to probe south-west of Pt 84 under cover of smoke-screen at 1500 hrs on 25 April, their efforts were foiled.

Loss of Biar Bet

Pakistanis then turned attention to Biar Bet, the other screen position, about 13 km to the south-west of Pt 84. On 25 April, at 1630 hrs, a Pakistani patrol, mounted on 3 APCs, approached the 'A' Coy position at Biar Bet. The Coy led by Major Kumar had in support a sub-unit of 17 Para, and a section each of 106 mm RCL gun, MMG and 3 inch mortar. These were brought to bear on the patrol, and it withdrew to Pt 84. Pakistani infantry in APCs, supported by 12 tanks made another futile attempt to bypass the position at 1750 hrs. Apprehending another Pak attempt to occupy the position two additional RCL guns, a section of MMG and sufficient number of jeeps to lift a platoon were sent to Biar Bet on the night 25/26 April.

On 26 April, the Pakistanis fired intermittently on the position with artillery and mortars for an hour from 0500 hrs. Then, forming up about 1800 metres to the north-north-east, the Pak infantry mounted on APCs

and supported by 13 tanks, launched attack on Biar Bet. A smokescreen was also laid by the enemy at about 730 metres to the front. Some tanks and infantry were also seen about 1300 metres to the north-north-west, probably kept as a reserve.

The Indian guns went into action. But due to clouds of dust enveloping the Pak tanks on the move, and dust raised by the blast of RCL guns, visibility was affected. In spite of this, the Indian guns set ablaze 3 Patton tanks and knocked out three others(44). But the number of Pak tanks, now estimated to have grown to about two squadrons, kept advancing and shelling the Indian Coy position. Probably to prevent a 2 Para detachment nearby (at Arjun Tree) from coming to the aid of the 2 Para Coy at Biar Bet, it was also shelled heavily from about 0720 by the Pakistanis. Seeing the unmanageable Pak strength, the Indian troops began withdrawing from Biar Bet in stages. With the guns slowing down the Pak advance, the 3 Para Coy returned to Dharamsala. Only one disabled jeep of RCL gun could not be withdrawn. In this action about 140 Pakistani casualties were estimated as against Indian casualties of one killed, six wounded and five missing(45).

According to S. Ahmad, Brig Eftikhar carried out a detailed reconnaissance of the Biar Bet area to get maximum information about the terrain on 24 and 25 April. Maj A. Shakoor Jan, Commander B Coy 15 FF (R&S) was ordered to lead a mobile patrol towards Biar Bet. Wireless communications with him was to be maintained from Sera Bet. An Army Aviation aircraft was to keep airborne for surveillance and guiding the artillery fire. As per the Brigade plan, the assaulting force was to advance from Sera Bet due west on a compass bearing of 270 degree and, after covering a distance of 8 km, was to turn due south on 180 degree for a distance of 5 km. The column was to be led by the Commander of B Company 15 FF (R&S), followed by the squadron of 24 Cavalry, Heavy Mortars of 15 FF (R&S), 2 FF mounted on vehicles, and two Companies of 15 Punjab. Two companies of 2 FF were to be left behind at Sera Bet so that the firm base established there was not upset. In their place two companies of 15 Punjab were to join 2 FF in the attack(46).

"The column advanced practically head to tail and cleared the first leg at 0500 hrs. While turning in the soft bed on the Rann, the 2 leading tanks got completely bogged down, leaving only 8 tanks to make the assault"(47). During the assault each Company was supported by a troop of tanks and a section of the Battalion Assault Pioneer Platoon and Artillery Forward Observers. Before the column could reach the

forming up place, still 1829 metres away, the Indian troops on Biar Bet opened up with all weapons at 0530 hours, thus disclosing their own disposition and thereby helping the Pakistanis. If the Indians had held their fire for a little while, the Pak column would have suffered heavily. However, 2 FF suffered 8 killed and 2 wounded due to Indian artillery fire. As the Pak tanks inched forward, the Indians fired heavily with Recoilless Rifles. But once the Pakistani tanks came closer, the Indian defenders withdrew to avoid disaster. One Indian gun detachment which unsuccessfully tried to engage the Pakistani Commander's tank subsequently deserted the gun. It was captured by the Pakistanis intact. The Pakistanis also captured a huge quantity of arms and equipment, abandoned by the Indians. Besides 4 prisoners of war, 50 Para Bde suffered over 40 casualties(48). By 0800 hours, Biar Bet was occupied by the Pakistanis.

The action at Biar Bet was followed by a stalemate, activities being restricted to shelling and patrolling. One notable event was the straying of seven Indian 3-ton lorries carrying defence stores into the Pakistani held area at Biar Bet during the night of 27/28 April. Only the JCO in charge of the convoy escaped to tell the story(49).

After the capture of Biar Bet, the Pakistanis strengthened their defences in the area. Maj Gen Tikka Khan ordered 24 Cav, less the Sqn with 6 Bde, to concentrate in Jitrai area in order to frustrate Indian counter-attack on Biar Bet. 'B' Coy 15 FF (R&S) was deployed about three miles beyond Biar Bet to gain early warning about the Indian troop movement. The main defences at Biar Bet were held by 2 FF and 15 Punjab, each short of two coys. 6 Bde Headquarters was also established in the area along with 25 Fd Regt and two batteries of 12 Medium Regt, brought from Jitrai and Rahim-Ki-Bazar. Besides, one battery of 38 Fd Regt and 88 Mortar Battery were deployed to cover Indian approaches to Biar Bet. During 27-29 April, the Pakistani troops fired 220 rounds from Medium guns and 2,000 rounds from Fd guns, besides 325 mortar shells. Most of the Pak shooting was directed by officers of the Army Aviation Flight who maintained daylong vigil over Biar Bet. In an artillery duel, 88 Mortar battery of Pakistan suffered 2 killed and 3 wounded(50).

Meanwhile, the Defence Minister of India, Y.B. Chavan, announced in Parliament on 26 April that the armed forces had been put on the alert following general mobilization in Pakistan. This "necessitated certain moves plus stoppage of leave and recall of personnel on leave." Thus the armed forces were put

in a state of readiness to face any Pakistani challenge not only on the Kutch border but all along the Indo-Pak frontier.

As the Indian forces moved into battle positions along the West Pakistan border, Gen Mohd Musa, the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, placed all his army formations at twelve hours' notice to move into their battle positions(51). Pakistan railways were also instructed to accord top priority to all military moves, and the Pakistan Air Force and Navy were also alerted to meet the war threat. 52 Bde Gp and 21 Bde Gp were ordered to move from Quetta to Hyderabad (Sind) area to reinforce 8 Div in the Rann(52). Maj Gen Tikka Khan also created a small mobile counter-attack force, called "Changez Force", consisting of a Sqn of 12 Cav and some infantry, and deployed it at Vingoor to foil any Indian threat to 8 Division's positions in the Rann(53).

Meanwhile, cease-fire negotiations had begun. On 28 April 1965, Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, wrote to the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and President Ayub Khan of Pakistan, expressing great concern over the Kutch conflict. He suggested a cease-fire to be followed by withdrawal of troops, restoration of the status quo as on 1 January 1965, and talks between the two Governments. Both India and Pakistan accepted these proposals. The Pak President appeared to be satisfied with this turn of events, as they supported the Pak position that the Sind-Kutch border was in dispute. However, the Indian Prime Minister warned: "If Pakistan continues to discard reason and persists in its aggressive activities, our Army will defend the country and it will decide its own strategy and employment of its manpower and equipment in a manner which it deems best"(54).

On 1 May 1965, HQ Kilo Sector issued instructions to its formations not to undertake any offensive action(55). However, patrolling by both sides continued. On 23 June 1965, the responsibility of the Kutch border was taken over by 11 Infantry Division, commanded by Maj Gen N.C. Rawley, MC, from the Kilo Sector.

The Cease-fire Agreement

Negotiations on the terms for a cease-fire agreement continued in May and June 1965. Finally the effort of the British Prime Minister bore fruit and a cease-fire agreement was signed by India and Pakistan on 30 June 1965. The cease-fire was to take effect from 0600 hrs IST on 1 July 1965. The main features

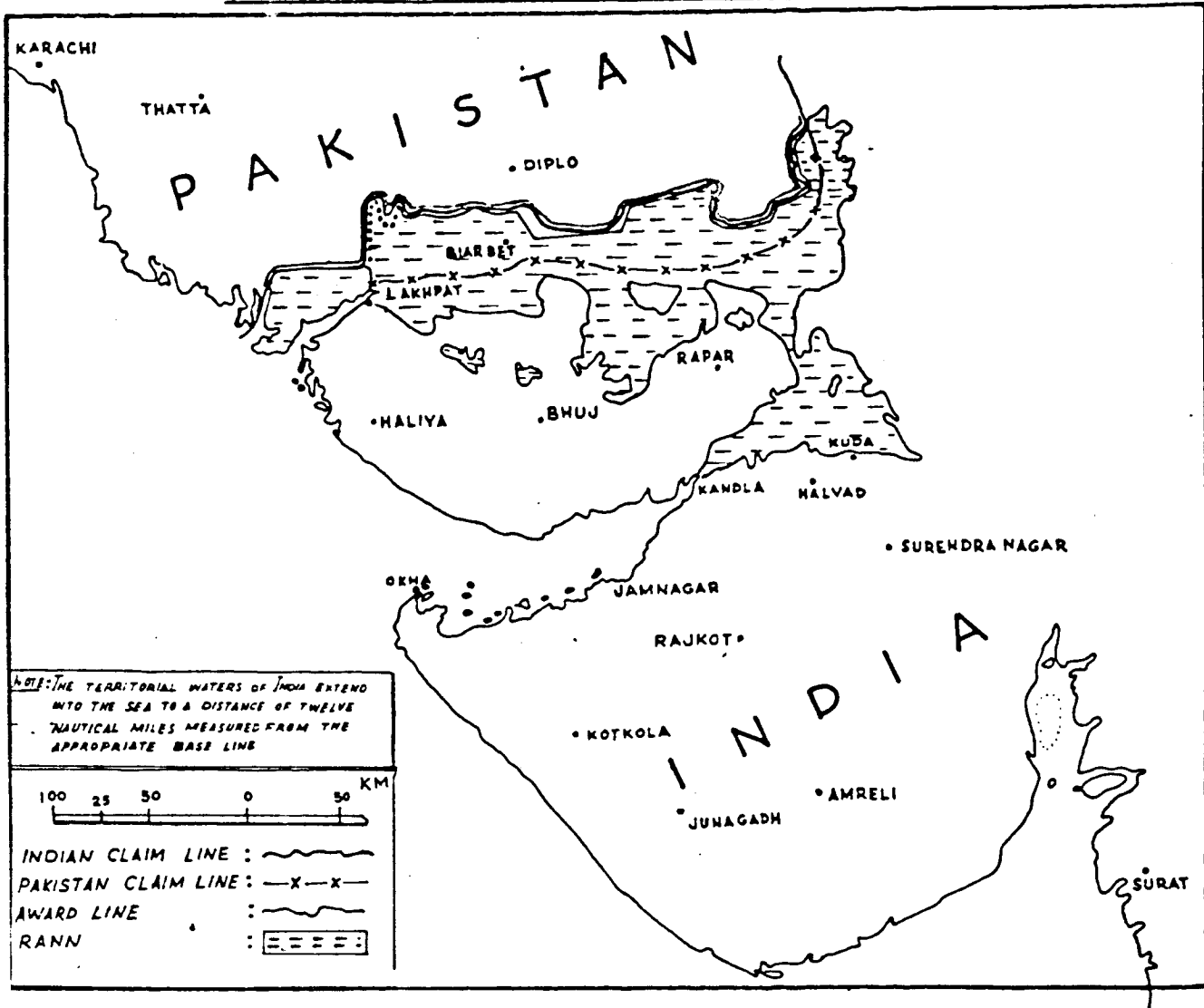
RESTRICTED

of the agreement were:-

1. Restoration of the status quo as on 1 January 1965 in the area of the Gujarat-West Pakistan border.
2. All troops on both sides to withdraw; the process to be completed within seven days.
3. Indian police could reoccupy the post at Chhad Bet in the same strength as on 31 December 1964.
4. India and Pakistan police could patrol on the tracks on which they were patrolling prior to 1 January 1965, the intensity being restricted to that of the period prior to 1 January 1965.
5. The ministers of the two Governments should meet, not later than one month after the cease-fire, in order to agree on the determination of the border in the light of their respective claims and make arrangements for its demarcation.
6. In the event of no agreement between the ministers of the two Governments within two months of the cease-fire, the two governments as contemplated in the joint communique of 24 October 1959, would have recourse to a tribunal, to be constituted within four months of the cease-fire(56).
7. The tribunal would consist of three persons, other than nationals of the two states, India and Pakistan - two to be nominated by each of the two governments of India and Pakistan, and the third, the Chairman, to be selected jointly by the two governments or failing an agreement on the selection, to be nominated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
8. The decision of the tribunal would be binding on both governments and could not be questioned on any ground whatsoever.

As per agreement, the Indian troops were pulled back south of the "Cause Way"(57) by 0600 hrs on 8 July 1965. A total of 417 mines (13 anti-tank and 404 anti-personnel) mainly in the Sardar Post area, could not be removed but the fields were suitably marked and cordoned off. Two CRP battalions were placed under the operational control of Southern Command to establish posts at Suigam, Bela, Lodhrani, Navsari and

KUTCH DISPUTE RIVAL CLAIMS & FINAL AWARD



RESTRICTED

Chhad Bet. A post at Karim Shahi was also to be established depending upon the feasibility of its maintenance during the monsoon. Patrolling was to be carried out from Chhad Bet to Kanjarkot broadly following the line passing near Biar Bet and Pt 84 and through Karim Shahi and Vigokot. Patrols might be sent east of Chhad Bet to visit Narbet and Pt 5. Patrolling was to be done once in a week.

As per the agreement, a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan was arranged from 20 August 1965, but it was subsequently cancelled. On 7 October, it was decided to refer the matter straightaway to a tribunal. The Pakistan Government nominated Nasrollah Entezam, a former Iranian Foreign Minister and President of the UN General Assembly. The Indian Government nominated Ales Bebler, an eminent Yugoslav jurist and Judge of the Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia. On 15 December 1965, the UN Secretary General nominated Gunnar Lagergren, President of the Court of Appeal for Western Sweden, as the Chairman of the Kutch Tribunal.

The Tribunal held its first meeting in Geneva on 19 February 1966. It held sittings in camera to hear the arguments of both the countries and to consider the documents. It announced the award on 19 February 1968, which was accepted by both the Governments. India won her basic claim, that the border was along the northern rim, leaving the whole of the Rann in India. Pakistan's basic claim - that the border ran through the middle of the Rann - was rejected by the Tribunal. It however, awarded to Pakistan an area of about 828 Sq kms, which included the Kanjarkot and Chhad Bet areas. This amounted to roughly 1/10th of the area, originally claimed by Pakistan. Biar Bet, Pt 84 and Sardar Post areas remained with India. The Kutch affair thus ended on a note of peace.

Conclusion:

The nature of the terrain made the conduct of military operations in Kutch difficult for India. While Pakistan operated from an elevated region linked by good communication, Indian defenders were placed in a terrain with almost no water and no communication lines. It was difficult to conduct operations in the heat of the desert during daytime, but easy to lose direction and the way, especially at night.

It is said that Pakistan deliberately created trouble in Kutch to test Indian military capability and political will, so that in the event of success she could follow it up in Kashmir also. Surprisingly,

no Pakistani source has hinted at this. Gen J.N. Chaudhuri remarked in 1971 : "Could it have been foreseen then that these moves were the first stage of a grand plan which was designed to culminate with the so-called freeing of Jammu & Kashmir by equally so-called Azad Kashmir raiders?"(59)

But the inept way the Pak Army planned its offensive in Kutch goes to prove that there was no plan to test the Indian Army's capability in the Rann. Nor was there any Pak strategy to draw out Indian forces from Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir into the distant, unfavourable terrain of Kutch, with a view to capturing the Kashmir valley. Perhaps the Kutch flare-up was accidental, but the Pak sense of victory in the Rann might have encouraged her rulers to undertake Operation Gibraltar in August 1965(60).

In 1965, there was a clamour in India over the alleged failure of Indian intelligence to supply adequate information about the terrain and Pak intentions in Kutch. It was subsequently realised that Indian intelligence did provide information about the movement of Pak troops and armour into the Rann. However, the local commanders were not happy with the intelligence that was provided to them(61). Gen J.N.Chaudhuri admitted in 1971, that he had "adequate information regarding the southward move towards the Sind-Kutch border of some Pakistani military units, though the official Pakistani story was of movement by Rangers or Armed Police only(63). Perhaps a better assessment of the collected intelligence would have been helpful(63).

There was no higher plan to meet the Pak attack, nor any prior preparation for the operations in the Rann. Local commanders chose their own objectives(64). In April 1965 Indian forces were not at all prepared to take on Pakistan(65).

About the performance of Indian forces, divergent views have been expressed. It is said that 50 Para Brigade which was inducted into Kutch in April 1965, did not push forward with sufficient determination(66). The withdrawal from certain positions in the face of Pak attacks was also not wise (67). However, it was not possible to defend every place with a limited number of troops(68). Moreover, Indian troops had withdrawn from delaying positions only, but not from the main defended positions(69).

It is said that the leadership of the Pak forces was good, their artillery was accurate; and if they had deployed their armour properly against the Indian

RESTRICTED

units, the latter could have easily been cut off(70). There is no doubt that the induction of Pak armour made all the difference in the fighting in April 1965. "As the area to be guarded was too wide, it was not possible to hold every point in strength, and in the absence of Indian armour, it was difficult to fight against the Pak armour"(72). Still the number of casualties suffered by Pakistan was more than that of India as shown below:-(73)

	<u>INDIA</u>	<u>PAKISTAN</u>
(a) Killed	15	34 (at Sardar Post)
(b) Wounded	40 (2 Officers)	150 (at Biar Bet) 6 tks destroyed
(c) Missing/POW	2 (Officers)	5 PsOW (1 Officer)

In sum, for India the Kutch Operation was a wrong war with the right enemy, at a wrong place(74). For Pakistan, it was a victorious war, out of which it learnt a wrong lesson that it could win a cake-walk victory in Kashmir. This fake sense of victory whetted Pakistani appetite for Kashmir. This led to the September War ultimately.

*** *** ***

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. XI, New Edition, Oxford (1908), pp. 84-85
2. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol.VIII (Kathiawar), Bombay, 1884, p.69
3. Aitken, E.H., Gazetteer of the Province of Sind, Karachi, 1907, pp. 4-5.
4. From Official Records.
5. Justice Abler of the Kutch Tribunal, while submitting his note, repudiated that there were any internationally accepted rules on this subject (Award, p.726).
6. Lt Gen Moti Sagar (Retd), who was CGS at Army Headquarters, New Delhi, in April 1965, has observed: "Peculiarity of terrain makes the area into a low water level swamp, with sufficient water to stop vehicular or major manpower movement, but insufficient to permit amphibious equipment. Chhad Bet was a raised ground that had plenty of grass and was being used as grazing ground by both the sides. This was, indeed, the bone of contention." - Report of interview with Lt Gen Moti Sagar, held on 22 May, 1987.
7. Lt Col Ram Singh Yadav, who commanded 2 Para Bn during the Kutch Conflict of 1965 says that "When we were deployed north of Khavda we used to get our water supply from that place only, as supply of drinking water was not locally available north of that place."
8. According to L.P. Singh, ICS (Retd), then Home Secretary, Govt of India, in 1965, the first information about the Pak intruders in the Chhad Bet area in February 1965 was provided by Imdad Ali, Inspector General of Police, Gujarat, and on that basis a CRPF Battalion, which was specially trained in the use of MMG, was airlifted to Kutch from Madras. - Report of Interview with L.P. Singh in New Delhi on 29 December 1987.
9. From Official Records.
10. Apparently, this was the same as Kadhan, found on the maps, midway on the road from Badin to Rahim-Ki-Bazar.
11. Ahmad, Major S., p. 29.
12. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
13. According to L.P. Singh, in April 1965, the Pakistani tanks were detected in the Kutch area by the Police, but when this information was passed on to the Army Hqrs, the Army Officer receiving this information simply refused to believe and thought that the original informant might have been misled by the desert mirage. - Report of Interview, 29 December 1987.

14. Ahmad, Major S., recounts how the last post was dominated by Mara ridge, manned by the Pakistanis. - p.44
15. Report of interview with Gen P.P.Kumaramangalam, DSO (Retd), held in Pune on 29 September 1986.
16. Gen Sundarji observed, "I do not think that our SRP Units patrolled the border regularly. The Indus Rangers started patrolling the track between Ding and Surai, cutting short through the Indian territory near Kanjarkot, and once by chance our SRP patrol noticed this and raised objections, but the Indus Rangers replied that they were patrolling in their own territory and Kanjarkot was within their border. Thus the trouble started." - Report of interview with Gen K.Sundarji, 14 August 1987.
17. Ibid.
18. From Official Records.
19. Ahmad Major S., has said: "The land and carrier based aircrafts carried out extensive reconnaissance and simulated air attacks over the Rann, frequently violating Pakistan's air space. The main purpose of the exercise, so close to Pakistan, was probably to confound and provoke Pakistan's armed forces, particularly the Pakistan Navy and the Air Force, or, perhaps to intimidate Pakistan by a show of formidable force. The Indian Naval Task Force worked its way up the Rann and carried out firing practices. Later it was learnt that immense difficulties were being experienced by the Indian troops in the Rann. Due to absolute lack of potable water locally, the ship's boilers were being used to distil sea water and to supply it to the troops by landing crafts. But, probably, this was found to be impracticable and the Naval Task Force withdrew from the Rann by the end of March". - pp. 34-35. Also From Official Records.
20. According to one Pakistani source, India's aircraft carrier Vikrant along with 7 Destroyers, some Frigates and the Fleet Tanker supported the Army during this exercise. "The Indian Navy was used for transporting men and material to the disputed area. Before landing the troops and equipment the naval guns were allowed to practice gunnery.... These moves by India forced Pakistan to order 8 Infantry Division to move one of its brigades to the affected area." - Ahmad, Brig Gulzar (Retd), p.66.

President Ayub Khan reportedly remarked: "We cannot take these unilateral actions lying down. We must be ready to take them on as and when they indulge in such flagrant violations of existing agreements." - Ibid. p.67.

RESTRICTED

21. From Official Records.
22. From Official Records.
23. The sketch given by Major Ahmad in his book (p.59) shows the attack as having proceeded from east-north-east direction.
24. Ahmad, Major S., pp.45-46.
25. From Official Records.
26. According to Saeed Ahmad, this was Camp 'B' which was vacated by the Indians after a hand-to-hand fight with 'A' Coy of 18 Punjab. It was here that Major Karnail Singh and 16 ORs were taken prisoner by Pakistan.
27. From Official Records.
28. Report of interview with Gen Sundarji, held on 14 August 1987.
29. From Official Records.
30. Ahmad, Major S., p.60.
31. Report of interview with Gen Sundarji, held on 14 August 1987.
32. From Official Records.
According to S. Ahmad, the telephonic conversation between the two Air Chiefs took place on 12 April. p.65.
33. Ibid.
34. Based on Major S. Ahmad's book.
35. Ahmad, Major S., p.66.
36. Ahmad, Major S., pp. 78-81.
37. The Indians left behind not only 3 dead bodies, but also large quantities of arms and equipment, petrol and rations. Ahmad, Brig Gulzar, p.68.
38. Perhaps, Gullu Talao has been mentioned as Hanuman Talai (in Chhad Bet area) by the Indian sources. Ahmad, Major S., p.80.
39. The reluctance of the Indian authorities to move tanks into the area might have been dictated by the certainty of several areas in the Rann getting flooded at the start of the Monsoon which was imminent. On the Pakistani side there was no such problem. However, Saeed Ahmad tells about a regiment of light tanks of Indian 1 Armd Div having been spotted moving north of Khavda (p.62), and of 6 tanks having been knocked out, while they were probing towards Kanjarkot (p.65). However, later he refers only to reports that the Indians had concentrated an AMX Armoured Regt at Dharamsala-Karankaur Bet (p.76). (This appears to be wrong.)
40. Pakistan decided to despatch to 8 Division, a composite armoured regiment, consisting of one Squadron of Medium tanks and one Squadron of M-24 light tanks in response to the alleged Indian moves(p.66).
40. Report of interview with Gen Sundarji, 14 August 1987.

41. Ahmad, Major S., pp. 82-83.
42. Ibid., p. 83.
43. Ibid., p.86.
44. From Official Records.
45. From Official Records.
46. Ahmad, Major S., p.86.
47. Ibid., p.92.
48. Ibid., p.97.
49. From Official Records.
According to S. Ahmad (p.102), a little before midnight of 27/28 April, seven Indian vehicles carrying defence stores, having lost their way and being still unaware that Biar Bet had changed hands the previous night, strayed from south-east towards the outposts of 2 FF. On being engaged, the vehicles halted about 150 yards from the Pak position. They were kept under intermittent fire throughout the night, before they along with their drivers were rounded up the next morning.
50. Ahmad, Major S., pp. 99-100.
51. Ibid., p.101; AR, 21-27 May 1965.
52. Ahmad, Major S., p.104.
53. Ibid., p.106
54. Lal Bahadur Shastri's speech in the Lok Sabha on 28 April 1965.
55. From Official Records.
56. AR, 1959, p.3000.
57. Possibly, it means the one, north of Khavda, as referred to in the Indian records.
58. Report of interview with Brig Nambiar (Retd), 22 November 1986.
59. Chaudhuri, General J.N., p.57.
60. Report of Interview with Gen Sundarji, 14 August 1987.
61. Brig Nambiar (Retd), who commanded 50 Para Bde in the Rann in 1965, observed: "We were provided with no intelligence about the enemy. We only vaguely knew that one Pak Division was facing us." - Report of interview, 22 November 1986.
62. Chaudhuri, Gen J.N., p.56.
63. Ibid., p.60.
64. Report of interview with Brig Nambiar, 22 November 1986.
65. Report of interview with Lt Gen Moti Sagar (Retd), 22 May 1987.
Report of interview with L.P.Singh, 29 December 1987.
66. Report of interview with Lt Gen Moti Sagar (Retd), 22 May 1987.
67. Ibid.
68. Report of interview with Lt Col Ram Singh Yadav (Retd), 28 October 1987.
69. Report of interview with General Sundarji, 14 August 1987.
70. Report of interview with Lt Col Ram Singh Yadav

RESTRICTED

- (Retd), 28 October 1987.
71. Report of interview with Brig Nambiar (Retd), 22 November 1986.
 72. Report of interview with Lt Col Ram Singh Yadav (Retd), 28 October 1987.
 73. From Official Records.
 74. Report of interview with Gen P.P.Kumaramangalam (Retd), 29 September 1986.

*** *** ***