

CHAPTER - IV

OP GIBRALTAR

THE INFILTRATORS

Pakistan had for some considerable time been raising a substantial irregular force trained in guerilla operations for launching aggression into Jammu and Kashmir through large-scale infiltration(1). The Pakistani leaders and press had been talking of starting an "Algerian type" of struggle in Kashmir(2). Gen Md. Musa, the then C-in-C of the Pak Army, has described it as a 'Clandestine War'. The infiltration was planned to be employed on a wide front with a view to forcing dispersal of the Indian forces and undermining the morale of the local population. The primary objective behind the infiltration operation was to create disruption and chaos in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and to incite the people of the State to revolt against the Government. This, in turn, would have facilitated the entry of further waves of infiltrators, followed by regular Pakistani forces for the annexation of the State. A flood of malicious propaganda was let loose to condition the minds of the locals for the coming momentous events. Acts of sabotage and subversion, a familiar feature of Pak intrigues in the Valley, touched a new high during July 1965 and reached its peak in the first week of August. Specially trained agents and saboteurs were infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir for mass-scale subversive activities, in order to generate amongst the populace an atmosphere of despair and fear, with a view to eroding the authority of the civil administration.

The whole operation was planned in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) under the overall command of Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik, General Officer Commanding 12 Infantry Division of the Pakistan Army. The four sector commanders in POK under 12 Infantry Division were made responsible for organising, training and launching of the various infiltration forces from their respective areas(3). The whole force of infiltrators composed of some 30,000 men was named Gibraltar Force(4). Though the training of the Pakistani armed forces personnel in guerilla warfare had been in progress in POK for a long time, the main preparations for the launching of the Gibraltar Force in Jammu and Kashmir started in May 1965.

Basic Organisation

Infiltrators were organised into various task forces and each of these forces was stiffened by inducting officers and some trained troops from the POK battalions for command and control. The remainder of the personnel came from the Razakars and Mujahids. The Razakars formed the bulk, constituting about 70 per cent of this force. This government-sponsored organisation was formed in POK in August 1962(5). Under this, all able-bodied civilians living near the border were recruited and trained. The Mujahid force was organised in POK much later, and they were used primarily as porters. From the interrogation of the captured prisoners it appeared that the Mujahids and the Razakars were not volunteers, and most of them had been recruited forcibly under the orders of the local civil authorities.

The infiltrators comprised eight to ten 'Forces', each having six units of five companies(6). Each force was commanded by a Pak Army Major and had been given a code name. Each company was commanded by a Pak Army officer of the rank of Captain and below and was known by the name of the Commander. A company was made up of one officer, one to three JCOs, half a dozen NCOs and about 35 key personnel from the POK battalions or units of Northern Scouts, 3 to 4 Other Ranks from the Special Service Group, and about 70 Razakars/Mujahids, making a total strength of approximately 120 all ranks. The POK soldiers formed the hard core of the companies and the Special Service Group men handled the explosives for carrying out demolitions and sabotage. The hard core personnel had been carefully selected, and the majority of them came from the commando platoons of the POK battalions. The above organisation, though generally adopted, varied at times. In certain cases the entire company consisted of personnel of regular forces, and in other cases the ratio of regulars and irregulars varied from company to company(7).

Training

The Razakars were given training in POK at Nikial, Khuiratta, Darman, Kalargala, Tarkundi, Bohri Mahal, Pir Kalanjar, Hajira, Kotli and Bher by the POK battalions(8). They were subsequently given intensive training alongwith the regular troops at various centres. Marrying up between the regular troops and the Razakars was carried out during further six weeks' intensive training at the Guerilla Warfare Schools located at Shinkiari, Mang Bajri, Dungi and Sakesar in POK. Training was imparted on the following

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subjects:-

- (a) Laying of ambushes.
- (b) Destruction of bridges and disruption of lines of communication.
- (c) Raids on military formation headquarters and supply dumps.
- (d) Toughening exercises.
- (e) Unarmed combat.

Arms and Equipment

Infiltrators were equipped, in addition to the small arms, with the following:-

- (a) Wireless Set ANGR-9 1 per Force HQ
- (b) Blendicide 83mm rocket 1 per company
- (c) Plastic explosive 100 lbs per company
- (d) Light Machine gun 1 per section
- (e) Transistor 1 per platoon
- (f) Verey light 1 per company
- (g) 12 Bore Shot gun 3 per company

These arms and ammunition, equipment and clothing were supplied by the Pak Government, although in most cases Pakistani markings were erased from the weapons and equipment. Each individual, in addition to the personal weapons and connected ammunition, carried 4 grenades. Ammunition issued was on a lavish scale, 200 rounds per rifle, 200-500 rounds per Sten gun and 750 rounds per light machine gun. In addition to the above, certain forces also had some 2-inch and 3-inch mortars(9). Before launching the infiltrators into Jammu and Kashmir, their uniforms had been withdrawn and civilian clothing - green and Mazari shirts and Salwar - alongwith jungle boots were issued.

Administration

At the time of infiltration, the infiltrators were given seven day's cooked/uncooked rations. The cooked rations were in the form of 'chapati' (a kind of coarse bread made of wheat, maize, etc), 'gur' (molasses) and 'Shakarpara' (dry sweets). They were

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also issued with false identity cards to facilitate local purchase of rations. Adequate money in Indian currency was also provided to enable purchase of supplies from the locals in Jammu and Kashmir. Each company commander was given about 9,000 to 10,000 rupees. This enabled the infiltrators to subsist themselves on local food supplies for a long period. In some cases, when rations and ammunition could not be carried by the infiltrators, mules and porters (mainly Mujahids) were used. Sometimes, even the local labour was commandeered. Major groups of infiltrators were replenished with supplies and ammunition, etc., by mule convoys across the cease-fire line, and by air drops. The mule convoys were better organised in the Budhil and Kandi areas. The air drops were resorted to primarily at night in Budhil and Kandi and the Northern areas (Kel, Keran, Bandipur, etc)(10). During the early days of the operations, the infiltrators paid for all their requirements which were procured from local shops through the pro-Pakistan elements. During the later part, however, they resorted to loot, arson and murder.

Besides replenishment of ammunition for the infiltrators on man-pack basis or by mule convoys and air drops, referred to above, it appears that the planners were also alive to the possibility of creating small dumps of ammunition in some selected places through smuggling over a period, before the launching of the infiltration operation. In fact, at least in one case, a dump of ammunition was discovered in a mosque in Srinagar during the operations against the infiltrators.

For medical cover, the infiltrators were supplied with only a first aid kit. No definite information is available regarding the method adopted for evacuation and medical treatment of the seriously wounded/sick personnel. The wounded were reported to have been either carried away, or left in the houses of sympathisers. It is possible that the returning mule convoys were used for their evacuation. The dead were either left behind or buried in jungles. On the whole, it seems clear that satisfactory medical arrangements were lacking, and this may have been one of the reasons for the low morale of the infiltrators. However, during the course of the operations, they were able to establish some channels for reinforcements and reliefs.

Command and control of the operations was exercised by the HQ Gibraltar Force in POK. For this purpose an ANGR-9 wireless set was provided to each Force for long-range communications. A transistor set

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was also provided down to the Platoon level. Instructions and orders to the infiltrators were also transmitted from the 'Azad Kashmir' Radio in previously arranged codes at fixed times.

Tasks/Objectives

Main objectives behind the launching of the infiltration operations, which were in furtherance of the political aim of annexing Jammu and Kashmir, were:-

- (a) to establish infiltrator bases for operations at various points within the State of Jammu and Kashmir with the help and support of anti-Indian elements;
- (b) to fan out from the bases as and when possible in order to commit acts of sabotage and violence, to terrorise peaceful and loyal citizens and to provide support to pro-Pakistan elements;
- (c) to attack civil and military personnel and government institutions in different parts of the Jammu and Kashmir State so as to disperse the Indian army and the police forces as much as possible;
- (d) to create tension and unrest in Jammu and Kashmir and instigate lawless activities with a view to paralysing the administration and projecting picture of internal revolt in the State; and
- (e) to facilitate the induction of increased numbers of armed forces from Pakistan.

In furtherance of the above objectives, the tasks assigned to the infiltrators were: destruction of bridges and disruption of lines of communication, raids on ammunition dumps and supply dumps, raids on Indian formations and unit headquarters, and ambushing of convoys and patrols. Having carried out these, they were to merge with the local population and await further orders.

Grouping and Induction(11)

The infiltrators were organised into various forces and they operated as follows:-

- (a) Tariq Force - Sonamarg, Dras and Kargil areas.
- (b) Qasim Force - Kupwara, Gurez and Bandipur areas.

- (c) Khalid Force - Trehgaon, Chowkibal, Nangaon and Tithwal areas.
- (d) Salauddin Force - Uri Sector and Srinagar Valley.
- (e) Ghaznavi Force - Mendhar, Rajauri and Naushahra areas.
- (f) Babar Force - Kalidhar Range and Chhamb areas.
- (g) Murtaza Force - Kel area.
- (h) Jacob Force - Minimarg area.
- (i) Nusrat Force - Tithwal area.

In addition to the above, Sikandar Force and some other unidentified groups were also noticed in different areas. Another group of infiltrators from bases in Pakistani territory around Shakargarh indulged in raids in the area south-west of Samba, with a view to disrupting the communications between Pathankot and Jammu.

Sector commanders and Force commanders were assembled in Murree during the second week of July 1965 and addressed by Field Marshal Ayub Khan. Maj Gen Akhtar Hussain Malik, who controlled the operations of the forces from Murree, addressed the Force commanders on 1 August 1965 and impressed upon them the importance of the mission, stating that it was their last chance to liberate Kashmir. Extensive infiltration of the above Forces took place at various points across the cease-fire line and the international border between Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir, starting in August 1965.

Routes of Infiltration

In the hilly terrain between the Jammu and Kashmir and the Pak-Occupied Kashmir there were numerous routes that could be taken. Given below are the major routes, some of which were known to have

been used by the infiltrators:-

INFILTRATION ROUTES INTO JAMMU AND KASHMIR(12)

<u>Route</u>	<u>Important Places on Route</u>	<u>Highest Point on route</u>
Gultari-Drass	Through Gultari, Marpola, Goson, Moradbag on to Dras.	4760 mtrs
Buniyal-Dras	Buniyal, Shandorila, Bhimbet, Dras.	5290 mtrs
Matiyal-Kharbu	Matiyal, Chehumudo, Palawar, Kakshar, Kharbu	5090 mtrs
Dusnail-Chunagund	Dusnail, Kirkitchu, Chunagund	2740 mtrs
Brielman-Kargil	Brielman, Yourbal Tak, Simul, Kargil	5380 mtrs
Natsara-Kargil	Natsara, Olthing Thang, Musbar, Chuli Chang, Batalik, Simul and Kargil.	2440 mtrs

Infiltration Plan

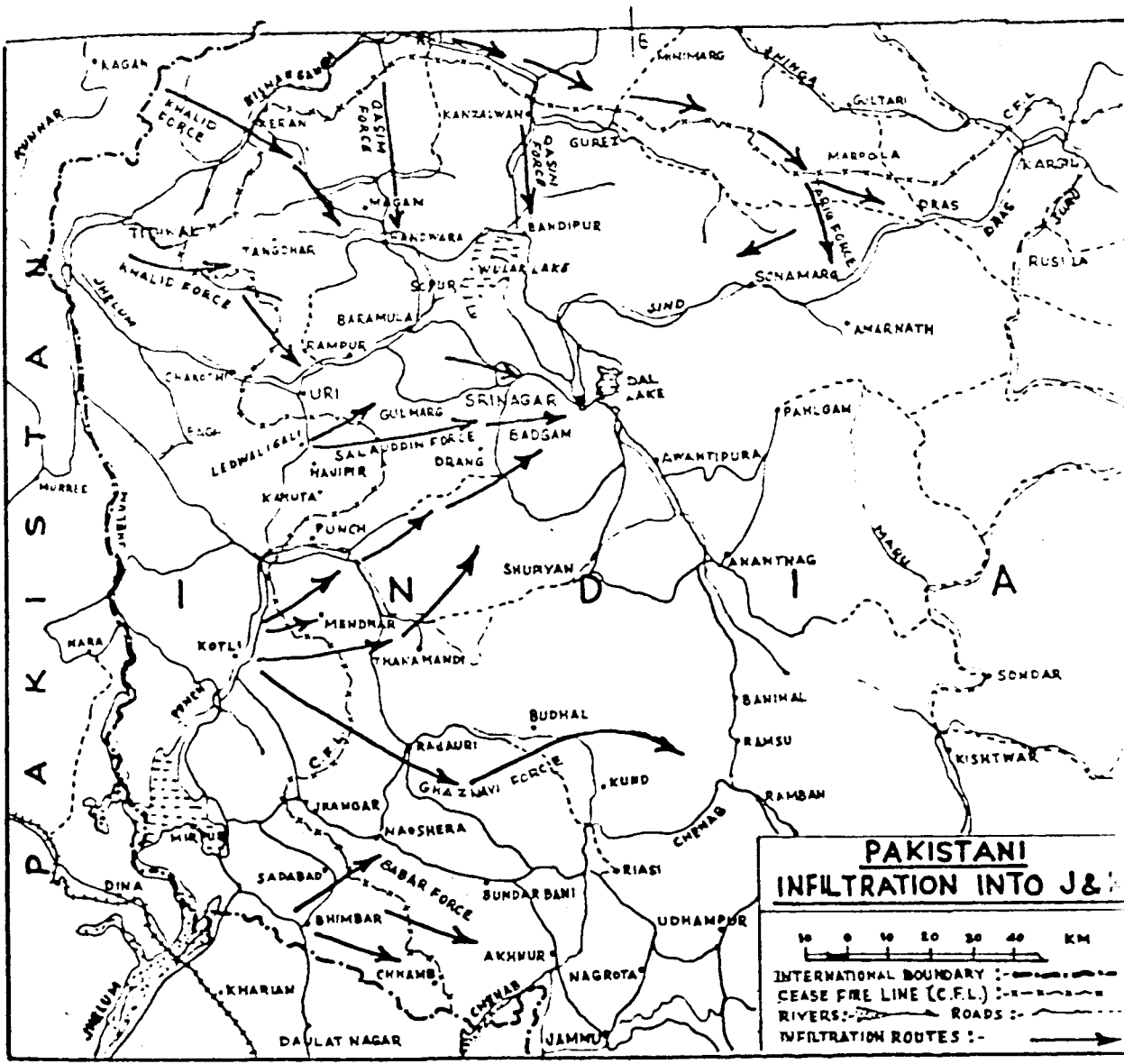
The plan of infiltration was brilliant in conception. The raiders were to infiltrate in small groups between 1 and 5 August 1965, concentrate at selected points and then converge into the Valley from various directions. In the Valley, the raiders hoped to mingle unnoticed with thousands of people congregating to celebrate the festival of Pir Dastagir Sahib on 8 August 1965. On the next day, which coincided with the anniversary of the first arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, the Action Committee had scheduled a processional demonstration in Srinagar. The raiders proposed to sneak into the procession, fully armed, stage an armed revolt and in the process capture the Radio Station, Airfield and other vital centres. Meanwhile, other columns further south, and in the north-east of the Valley were to cut roads Srinagar-Jammu and Srinagar-Kargil to isolate Srinagar. Having this done, it was planned to constitute a 'Revolutionary Council', proclaim it as the lawful government, and broadcast an appeal for recognition and assistance from all countries, especially Pakistan(13). This was to be the signal for the Pakistan Army to move in for the kill. However, the quick reaction of the Indian forces combined with the spontaneous assistance of the loyal locals frustrated this diabolical plan.

ACTIVITIES OF GIBRALTAR FORCE

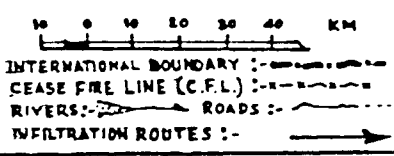
Extensive infiltration of the Gibraltar Force at various points across the 750-km long cease-fire line and the international border between Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir, began on 5 August 1965. The activities of the armed infiltrators covered areas from the south-western tip of Jammu and Punch and Uri in the west, Tithwal in the north-west, Guraiz in the north, and Kargil in the north-east. Initially, about 1,500 of them crossed the Indian border in Jammu and Kashmir surreptitiously in small batches, and concentrated at selected points inside Kashmir to organise themselves into larger groups(14). This force was equipped with light, automatic weapons, and its aim, apart from sabotage, was to indoctrinate the Kashmiris so that they could rise in a rebellion against India. Infiltration was mainly directed towards Kanzalwan, Keran, Tithwal, Kargil, Uri, Gulmarg, Mendhar, Punch, Rajauri, Naushahra and Jammu areas.

The second wave of infiltrators was inducted into Jammu and Kashmir in the third week of August. At this time, which was the period of their peak strength, their number was estimated between 5,000 and 6,000. Taking into account the replacements for those who "exfiltrated", it is estimated that on the whole, a total strength of about 8,000 took part in these operations(15). By about the first week of September 1965 when the open hostilities started between India and Pakistan, a third wave of infiltrators, approximately 5,500 strong, was ready in Pak-Occupied Kashmir for induction(16). But this could not be sent across the Indian border due to the operational pressures in West Punjab.

The infiltrators initially worked independently in small groups. Subsequently, as worthwhile success was not achieved, they changed their tactics and attempted to concentrate themselves in selected areas and operate in larger groups. Some of the infiltrators from various columns managed to exfiltrate without participating in any operations, while others kept drifting and operating indifferently till they ran into another group and merged with it. Towards the later part of their operations they were able to establish their bases and consolidate themselves into strongholds in certain areas. Most of these were in remote, isolated mountainous regions which were not frequented and were not easily accessible.



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INFILTRATION INTO J&K**



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Activities of some of the columns are given below area-wise:-

The Valley: Saluaddin Force operated in the valley. It consisted of six companies. This force had crossed the cease-fire line on 30 July 1965 and reached Chor Panjal on 1 August. At Chor Panjal, the force was split into two columns: one consisting of two companies headed towards Gulmarg, and the remainder towards Khag. On 8 August, it blew up Bimna bridge and killed the police guard(17). It was this group that was responsible for the many incidents of sabotage, arson and violence that took place in Baramula, Badgam, Yusmarg and Srinagar itself. Elements of the group penetrated into four key suburbs of Srinagar, in the vicinity of the cantonment, the military depots, the radio station and the Government secretariat. However, except sniping the police lines, it could not achieve anything substantial. The column failed to get any support or welcome from the locals. In rage and sheer despair, the raiders resorted to arson and set fire to the congested Batamallu locality, burning about 300 houses(18).

Elements of this group operated in the Anantnag-Achibal-Kazigund area. They had turned Khag forest into a stronghold, leading to major encounters with the Indian security forces. As a result, they completely disintegrated, and trekked back to Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, via Sonat Nala, by 15 August. With the expulsion of this force, the worse was over in Kashmir valley.

Kargil Sector: Tariq Force in this sector was given the task to strike towards Dras and Kargil. It was approximately 400 strong, consisting largely of the Karakorum Scouts, Mujahids and Razakars. It also had a complement of some Baluchis of the Pakistan regular army(19). The force infiltrated through Gultari, Marpo La and Kaobal Gali. One of these groups headed for Zoji La and Sonamarg. It attempted to blow up the Hamilton bridge on the Srinagar-Sonamarg road and a cement bridge near Zoji La. Except for minor damage to the bridges, its attempts were foiled by the Indian security forces, which had a head-on clash near Sumbal bridge on 29 August. In this encounter 20 raiders were killed, and the rest fled across the cease-fire line(20). On 15 August, the Indian troops reoccupied the picquets including height 13620 which had been returned to Pakistan on 30 June 1965. After this, the infiltrators quarrelled amongst themselves, mutinied twice, and ultimately on 9 September, this force was reported to have been disbanded.

Kishanganga Sector: This sector can be divided into two parts:

- (a) Area Nausam-Sopore-Bandipur
- (b) Kishanganga Valley.

They were very active in Nausam-Sopore-Bandipur area. In this sector, the Qasim and Khalid forces of the infiltrators operated. The Qasim Force, composed of 500 men, started from Taobat and, reached Bandipur via Razdan Pass. Its principal base was established in the forest area of the Pass itself. This force tried to set fire to the Bandipur police station. However, the attempt was foiled. It also attempted to burn down a bridge near Kanzalwan on 11 August, and again on 15 August. One band made its stronghold at Malud Behak and operated in the area of Woyil bridge. In this area, the Indian security forces used helicopters to mop up the saboteurs and, it is believed, practically every soldier of the Qasim Force was liquidated.

The Khalid Force started from Keran and encircled Handwara from the west. This force attacked the Naugam and Lingyat bridges on 12 and 21 August respectively(21). But the attacks failed miserably. It destroyed the Kazilpur bridge also and attacked Chowkibal. By the end of August, this force was also disbanded.

Tithwal-Tangdhar Sector: The heights in this sector dominated the Muzaffarabad-Kel road, which was the life-line of Pakistani troops stationed in the Kishanganga Valley. Rations, ammunition and reinforcements were despatched by this road to Kel, Guraiz, Minimarg and Kargil. Owing to this, the road had special significance for Pakistan and had enhanced the tactical importance of Tithwal-Tangdhar sector. From 5 August to the end of December 1965, the sector remained under continuous firing. In this sector, the Nusrat force operated nominally, because all along it was supported by regular Pakistani troops and their MMGs and field guns, the bases of which were located near Mirpur. From 13 to 18 August, the Pakistanis raided some Indian posts and indulged in intensive firing(22).

The Indian troops reacted quickly, crossed the cease-fire line on 24 August and occupied three Pakistani posts. It was during this action that a Pakistani Divisional order signed by Maj Gen Akhtar Hussain Malik was captured, and the document conclusively proved that it was Pakistan that had sent the infiltrators into Jammu and Kashmir(23). The

Indian security forces later advanced right up to the line of the Kishanganga and secured the southern bank. Pakistan now feared that the Indian army might cross the river and dominate the northern bank also. To prevent this, on 11 September they blew up all the bridges over this river. The Pakistanis continued their attempts to regain the lost ground throughout November and December 1965, but always failed. These posts were given back to them on 25 February 1966, as a result of the Tashkent Agreement.

Mendhar-Rajauri-Chingas-Jhangar Sector: The Ghaznavi Force entered Jammu from Kotli during the first week of August. It initially consisted of six companies, but later on swelled in to nearly 2,000 men (24). It was perhaps the largest of the guerilla bands. This group operated in Mendhar-Rajauri-Chingas-Jhangar area. They attacked an ammunition depot at Narian but were beaten back by the Indian troops. By 18 August, they got virtual control of Budhil and established their Headquarters in Dudaruni. They were supplied by air and on one occasion got approximately 500 rifles dropped at Dana. The men of this group were sighted as deep as Ramban and Riasi. Timely action saved the bridge over the Chenab at Ramban and other bridges on road Udhampur-Srinagar. They inflicted a considerable number of casualties on the Indian troops in Punch and Mandi. This force had an advantage over the rest of the guerilla army: most of its men belonged to the same ethnic group as the majority of the locals. An all-out drive against the raiders was launched only after the cease-fire. Most of the raiders in this region managed to escape back into Pakistan.

Kalidhar-Samba Sector: The Babar Force, 400-strong, entered the State of Jammu and Kashmir through Bhimber, Sadabad and Penga into Kalidhar, with a view to spreading out in the Naushahra-Sunderbani area. On 9 August, 150 infiltrators were sighted at Banjaro, north of Chhamb, and by 12 August, 300 of them had established a camp in Narijira and Panapura. Some 200 of them penetrated Kalidhar where they were engaged by the Indian security forces and suffered heavy casualties. By the middle of August, they were all forced to retreat into Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir under cover of heavy artillery barrage, provided by the Pak Army.

In addition, another group of infiltrators from bases in Pakistan territory in Shakargarh raided the Samba area in Jammu with a view to disrupting the communications between Pathankot and Jammu, and even ambushed some convoys during August and September.

By about 10 October, after the cease-fire, only about 500 to 600 infiltrators were left behind. Approximately, 1,000 men of Gibraltar Force were liquidated over the whole period since 5 August, with the remainder having exfiltrated into POK, in spite of blockades by the Indian security forces(25).

Though the infiltration operation succeeded in tying down a large number of the Indian security forces, it failed in its overall aim. Despite the fact that the Gibraltar Force failed to rouse a revolt, it did succeed in committing many acts of sabotage and violence, though it did not have as much of success as expected in blowing up bridges, assassination of political leaders, disrupting economic, political and social order, as also cutting the Indian lines of communication.

It was surprising that such a large number of men had managed to slip across the Indian borders, supposed to be so vigilantly guarded. It must at the same time be conceded that this guerilla invasion was one of the best kept secrets in Pakistan. The organisation of the Gibraltar Force, its number, aims and objectives were pieced together later from prisoners' statements and captured documents. The Indian authorities had anticipated a certain amount of activity by infiltrators, but no one visualised a well-coordinated operation on such a massive scale. Even on 2 August 1965, when a high-level conference was held at Srinagar to review the security arrangements on the cease-fire line, there was no inkling of the impending guerilla invasion within 72 hours.

INFILTRATION HIGHLIGHTS

The major incidents that took place during the infiltration operation until the Indian security forces launched the counter-offensive across the cease-fire line on 25 August 1965 are given below in chronological order:

At about mid-day on 5 August 1965, information was received from a local Bakarwal (Shepherd) that a large number of armed strangers had infiltrated into Gulmarg sector. They were reported to be concentrated in area Buna Danwas. Two patrols of approximately one company strength each from 7 Field Regiment and 7 Bihar were sent out on night 5/6 August 1965 to encircle the area and deal with these infiltrators. In the ensuing action the group of infiltrators disintegrated and withdrew into jungles south of Buna Danwas. On searching the area, the patrols recovered four rifles, three sten guns, nine LMG barrels and 26 Grenades(26).

A few hours later, at approximately 1800 hours, a report was received that a few POK troops were seen moving in area Dhabrot near Galuthi in the Mendhar sector. An ad hoc patrol of a platoon strength ex 120 Inf Bde HQ was despatched to intercept the infiltrators. It encountered strong opposition. In the skirmish that followed, the patrol leader, Captain Chander Narain Singh, and three ORs lost their lives during a gallant charge on the enemy. The raiders after the brief but sharp encounter fled back across the cease-fire line, leaving behind a number of arms, and large quantities of ammunition and equipment. Six infiltrators were killed and a number of them wounded(27).

An infiltrator, caught during the clash in area Buna Danwas on 5 August, revealed the startling information that a large number of intruders had moved in from Bugina to Domari Gali in the Tithwal sector. A large influx of infiltrators through Atham Gali, a pass situated directly north of Kupwara, was also reported by a civilian source. On 6 August, strong patrols were despatched to intercept these intruders whose target appeared to be the Road Kupwara-Tithwal, preliminary to penetrating the Valley. Infiltrators also fired at the Rear HQ of 3 JAK Rifles in area Bandipur and attacked a 6 Guards post at Kalaruch. Meanwhile, HQ 68 Inf Bde, with 6 Dogra, was moved to Tangmarg, and was made responsible for the operations in this sector. Towards the evening of 6 August, a number of infiltrator concentrations were reported to HQ 25 Inf Div. The estimated strength of the largest of these was 100 raiders in area Tatta Pani near Kalakot. Comparatively smaller batches were seen in areas Dharamsal and Nagun. A concentration reported in area Dunga Gali, approximately 16 km north-east of Rajauri, caused serious alarm, for it indicated that the enemy had managed to lodge itself well into the interior without detection. Further south, in the Chhamb sector, the presence of infiltrators was detected for the first time when approximately 60 of them, accompanied by porters, were seen about 2 km north of Dewa.

On 7 August 1965, information was received that approximately 200 infiltrators were seen in area Magam, on its way to Srinagar. One coy 6 Dogra and one platoon PAP intercepted the group, killed one and arrested five. An Indian OR was killed in the encounter. Later in the night, the raiders attacked Kralapur and Sonarwain bridges, and damaged them. In the action at Kralapur bridge, 4 Kumaon lost 10 ORs(28). Further west, an ammunition depot near point Trahagam fired upon incessantly was engaged

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throughout the night, an Indian patrol combed the surrounding area and captured three infiltrators. In 25 Inf Div sector, a column of approximately 500 POK troops in mufti was reported to be infiltrating through Kopra forest in the Haji Pir Bulge. They appeared to be heading towards Nawan and Jamianwali Gali, obviously en route to Srinagar via Badgam. A number of clashes took place during that night, the most serious one being at the Gali Picquet (602) - the gateway into the Mandi Valley. Here the Pakistanis launched four vicious attacks in a determined effort to overrun the post. But 7 Sikh, who were in occupation of this picquet, repulsed all these assaults, inflicting severe casualties. Posts 603 and 604 (Doda) in the Punch Sector, were also attacked repeatedly, but in all cases the infiltrators were beaten back with heavy losses. There was yet another encounter with approximately 100 infiltrators south of Balnoi, during which the Indians recovered two rifles and four grenades. Yet another engagement took place in the Bhimber Gali area where the Indian troops clashed with about 200 infiltrators and successfully liquidated the gang.

The same night, in 191 Inf Bde sector, approximately 40 infiltrators launched a raid on 369 Field Company at Jaurian Camp, using 3-inch mortars, MMGs, LMGs and rockets. The Indian troops appeared to have been caught off-guard and in consequence suffered 5 killed and 5 wounded (29). A few vehicles were also damaged. Casualties inflicted on the infiltrators could not be assessed.

In the evening of 8 August, reports trickled in of a large number of infiltrators in the suburbs of Srinagar. A sizeable batch was reported in village Qasba Biru, moving towards the Srinagar airfield - the most sensitive target in the Valley. A company of 8 Jammu and Kashmir Militia, two tank troops of Central India Horse and some infantry were, therefore, immediately deployed for the protection of the airfield. Later in the night, approximately 400 infiltrators, who were seen in area Bimna bridge and Tangpur village, fired on the patrols protecting the bridge. Two companies from Jammu and Kashmir Militia and three platoons of Punjab Armed Police were sent to engage these infiltrators. This force was later reinforced by a company from 2/9 Gorkha Rifles which had just arrived from Jammu. It soon became obvious that the infiltrators were closing in their ring around Srinagar in a determined bid to enter the city.

In 25 Infantry Division sector, the infiltrators fired on petroleum, oil and lubricants dump Narian, but could cause no damage. Patrols sent to search the

surrounding area captured Captain Ghulam Hussain of 8 AK Battalion and Captain Mohammad Sajjad of 18 AK Battalion. These Officers were the first to give a definite insight into the elaborate preparations that had been made for launching the infiltration campaign(30). The infiltrators made a daring raid on Headquarters 120 Infantry Brigade on 8th night. There were, however, no casualties. The same night, for the first time, the whole cease-fire line in 25 Infantry Division sector erupted into life with intensive and continuous fire from across the border. In the Punch area, the enemy introduced a new element in the infiltration campaign by shelling selected targets with 25 pounder guns(31). Meanwhile Pakistan, through Press and Radio, was at great pains to explain away the happenings in Jammu and Kashmir as spontaneous local insurrection in which she had no hand! As the situation in 25 Infantry Division sector was deteriorating rapidly, it was decided to move 52 Mountain Brigade from 26 Infantry Division to Rajauri.

On 9 August, a band of raiders was reported in area Bedori in the Haji Pir bulge. Another strong batch was seen moving forward from Sallar towards Gulmarg, and a third group heading in the direction of Zurahom. Counter-measures were initiated. A sizeable batch of the intruders had trickled into the Mandi Valley in the early hours of 9th morning, and at 0930 hours raided the Mandi Police Station, and occupied the main heights along the track linking the town to Punch. Simultaneously, reports came in of bands of infiltrators concentrating to the east of Mandi at Molsar, Loran and Markot. Mandi town fell to the infiltrators. Telephone lines to Indian picquets 601, 602, 603 and 604 were cut and wireless traffic was heavily jammed by powerful transmitters from across the cease-fire line. Further south, in 191 Infantry Brigade area, approximately 120 infiltrators were reported in the vicinity of Kalit.

During night 9/10 August 1965, some infiltrators were engaged near the cease-fire line by Indian picquets 497 and 499 as they were trying to slip back to the safety of their own territory. This was the first indication of a flow of infiltrator traffic in the reverse direction.

However, in 121 Infantry Brigade sector, the infiltrators were most active during this night. They damaged the bridges at Pashkyum (south-east of Kargil) and Shamsah (19 km north-east of Dras on road Srinagar-Leh)(32). The Suru River Valley, dominated by Point 13620, appeared to be the obvious line of ingress. 163 Infantry Brigade en route to the Valley had to be halted at Kargil until these bridges were

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repaired. During the halt, the Brigade was continuously sniped by Pak posts at Point 13620, Saddle and Black Rocks. The presence of these posts overlooking Kargil continued to pose serious threat to the Indian line of communication in this sector.

On 10 August, in a vigorous counter-drive, the area of Tangpur, on the outskirts of Srinagar, was cleared of the infiltrators, and a large quantity of ammunition and equipment recovered. Meanwhile, four ad hoc companies, organised from 19 Infantry Division, had been concentrated on the Tattoo Ground. At about mid-day the advance party of 163 Infantry Brigade arrived from Leh by road and two companies of 4 Sikh Light Infantry completed their landing at Srinagar airfield(33). With the arrival of these troops, the immediate threat to Srinagar had been foiled, and hence 8 Jammu and Kashmir Militia was ordered to move to Pir Panjal with Bn HQ at Shupiyen.

While the Indian post 635 opposite Daruchhian was engaged with 81 mm mortars, further south, at Jhangar, the administrative base of 4/8 Gorkha Rifles was subjected to heavy firing. But there were no casualties. One Pak Captain and three raiders were captured by 80 Infantry Brigade, and near Jaurian one Pak officer and seven raiders were wounded and three others captured. In the Chhamb sector, infiltrators were reported in Kalidhar-Dewa area, where two infiltrators along with rifles were captured, while they were sneaking back across the cease-fire line. During night 10/11 August, sporadic firing was reported in various parts of Srinagar, and Magam village was reportedly burnt and the police station at Qasba Biru ransacked. Also the Indian posts along the cease-fire line and international border in the 191 Infantry Brigade sector were continuously engaged throughout the night.

On 11 August, one of the Indian ambush patrols was attacked by 300 infiltrators in area Mahadev and the Indian post at Pathreki Gali was subjected to light machine gun and mortar fire. In an encounter near Jaurian, four infiltrators were killed and fourteen captured. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was also recovered(34). In the afternoon of that day, 8 Grenadiers with a company of 7 Sikh under command launched an attack on Mandi under the overall direction of HQ 52 Mountain Brigade. By the evening, the heights guarding the approach to Mandi were secured, and all was set for an assault on this important town next day.

During the night 11/12 August, there was a comparative lull all over Jammu and Kashmir, with the

exception of the Punch and Chhamb sectors. In the Punch sector, Indian picquets 421, 427, 428 and 429 and HQ 93 Inf Bde were shelled continuously. There was also intermittent firing in area Dubey bridge and Bhimber Gali. In 191 Infantry Brigade sector, there was an enemy attack in force, approximately one battalion, on an ambush party positioned between posts 704 and 705. The action developed into a major engagement, and under overwhelming pressure the ambush party was forced to withdraw(35). On 12 August, about 50 infiltrators, seen in area Tosh Maidan, were engaged by the Indian artillery, but casualties could not be assessed. In the Punch sector, 1 Madras cleared Point 4007, killing 12, wounding 4 and capturing 16 infiltrators. This was followed by the capture of Mandi by 52 Mountain Brigade(36). And with that the first ray of light shot into the prevailing dismal situation in the Punch sector.

During night 12/13 August 1965, the enemy continued to harass Srinagar with intermittent firing. The cease-fire line was kept ablaze by Pakistan in 19 Infantry Division sector with incessant firing, which included shelling with 25 pounder guns. In the Punch sector, Khanetar and the Kalai bridge came under heavy small arms fire. At one stage, the threat became so serious that its capture appeared imminent. Indian artillery, however, stepped into the breach and blasted away the infiltrators.

8 Kumaon base at Naugam was attacked at 0600 hrs on 13 August. The attack lasted for two hours during which the unit lost its commanding officer, Lt Col M.V. Gore, and the second-in-command of the battalion was wounded(37). Subsequently, the convoy evacuating casualties was ambushed, and in the confused fighting that followed five Indian ORs were killed and five others wounded. The enemy lost 12 killed in the action. 4 Sikh Light Infantry, which had landed at Srinagar airfield on 11 August 1965, was moved to Baramula. The same day, the infiltrators made an all out bid to capture the Gali picquet. The picquet's garrison, marooned since 7 August refused to yield ground and repulsed the assaults with heavy casualties to the attackers.

Again, from 191 Infantry Brigade sector ominous reports came in of the presence of one squadron Pak tanks in area Mattewala and heavy vehicular movement all along the international border opposite the Chhamb area. A concentration of Pak troops was also reported in area Moel. This was the first indication of the movement of Pak regular troops opposite the Chhamb sector(38).

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It had been under consideration for some time to form a separate Headquarter for dealing with the Pak infiltration in the Kashmir Valley, thus giving 19 Infantry Division a free hand to plan and execute the counter-infiltration operations. On 14 August 1965, this Headquarter came into being and was designated Headquarter SRI Force with Maj Gen Umrao Singh in command. With the formation of this Headquarter, 19 Infantry Division Tactical Headquarter moved back to Baramula. At this stage the enemy went a step further in escalating the aggression; for the first time medium guns were used to shell Uri(39). A request was made to the UNFO Team Baramula for intervention to stop this firing. The UN Observers, although fully posted with the actual state of affairs, expressed their inability to do anything in the matter. The Indian forces, therefore, retaliated with medium guns and engaged Chakothi.

In 191 Infantry Brigade Group, a raid on police station Palanwala was successfully repulsed, and two companies 3 Mahar were despatched to chase the raiders. On 14 August, first reports were received of regular troop movements in the Sialkot sector(40).

On 15 August 1965, a major tragedy struck the Chhamb sector when the enemy artillery directed by an Air Observation Post, shelled the Indian post at Dewa where an Artillery Ammunition dump was located. A stray shell blew up this dump and inflicted heavy casualties which included personnel from the Brigade Headquarter Group. Brigadier B.F. Masters, Commander 191 Infantry Brigade Group, was killed and along with him died Maj Balram of 8 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, 2/Lieut Narinder Singh of 14 Field Regiment, Captain R.K. Chahar, one JCO and four Other Ranks. Two Officers and 38 Other Ranks were wounded and, six guns of 14 Field Regiment were rendered out of action. Palanwala post was abandoned and the lines of communication to all the forward units were disrupted(41).

Headquarters SRI Sector reported that a fire had broken out in area Batamallu in Srinagar. It appeared that the infiltrators having failed in their task at Srinagar were indulging in acts of arson. When approximately 100 infiltrators were seen in area village Khag, the village was shelled and fifteen infiltrators were killed. Meanwhile, in the Punch area, the gallant defenders of the Gali picquet, now severely depleted in strength and administratively isolated for over a week, abandoned the post in the early hours of 15 August. Further south, in 26 Inf Div sector, the Pakistanis extended the hostilities across the international border by ransacking village

Bajpur near Samba(42). Fifteen villagers were slaughtered in this rampage. In the Udhampur sector also infiltrators were reported in various places. 3 Kumaon searched area Bhaj Masta and recovered some ammunition and explosives. On 16 August 1965, the concentration of infiltrators at Pharkian Di Gali was engaged by the Indian troops, and three of them were killed. Information was also received that a company of Pak regular troops had intruded into the Indian territory 3 km west-south-west of Rangwar Gali. Although there was unmistakable evidence of Pakistan's involvement in the infiltration campaign, this was first time that Pak troops had openly crossed the cease-fire line(43).

In the 25 Infantry Division sector, enemy activity was limited to the shelling of some Indian posts, but further south, from the Chhamb area came the depressing news that with the exception of the Indian posts between Moel and Burejal, the remaining Indian picquets guarding the approaches to Dewa had been abandoned. On 17 August 1965 a patrol from 6 Dogra, en route to Chor Panjal, clashed with a strong body of infiltrators and killed seven of them. The next day in the Uri sector, the Indian guns engaged Nauseri, hitting an officers' Mess and a few bunkers. Further east, in the SRI Force area, approximately 200 infiltrators were engaged by the Indian patrols in area Nahom and Hayatpur. As a result two infiltrators were killed. When the Beri Pattan bridge was shelled and damaged by the Pak medium artillery, the Indian troops retaliated with counter-bombardment on a suspected medium gun position. Meanwhile, 2 Sikh secured a firm base west of Dewa. Although they were subjected to artillery fire throughout the night 18/19 August 1965, they held their ground. On 19 August 1965, an enemy patrol was intercepted at Jamianwali Gali, and the infiltrators lost one officer and three raiders, and a Junior Commissioned Officer and 2 raiders were captured. The same day at about 1000 hours, the enemy shelled the Punch Landing Ground, damaging one Otter aircraft and rendering the airfield temporarily unfit for use(44). However, the Landing Ground was repaired by the evening.

On 20 August 1965, while the enemy fired on Field Ammunition Depot Khruah and Field Petroleum Depot Khunmuh, the two major Indian installations in the Chhamb sector, 2 Sikh captured Green Ridge and Red Hill, and 6/5 Gorkha Rifles secured Point 3779.

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On 21 August 1965, GOC XV Corps thus appreciated the prevailing situation:-

(a) 25 Infantry Division Sector

The maximum success gained by the infiltrators was in the Mandi area where they had secured local support. The situation had, however, stabilised, although a small corridor was still in their hands. Punch area still continued to cause anxiety, as the Pakistanis had brought in some 81mm mortars and two medium guns. Although Mendhar area was still infested by a large number of infiltrators, they presented no serious problem.

(b) Chhamb Sector

The second area causing concern was between Kalidhar range and River Chenab. In this area reverses had been suffered primarily due to preponderance of the Pak artillery, the unfortunate death of the Brigade Commander (Brig B.F. Masters) and the blowing up of Dewa Camp. The Indian commanders did not react quickly enough, in contrast with the speedy enemy reactions. But the situation was then under control.

The same day, an attack on an Indian post in the Tithwal sector was repulsed with heavy casualties. On 22 August 1965, in the Northern sector, air violations were reported in areas Bandipur-Sopor and Kupwara. The Indian base at Chowkibal was fired upon by the infiltrators, wounding two other ranks. In the SRI sector, the High Altitude Warfare School came into the picture for the first time when its patrol clashed with a group of raiders in an area near Handwara. The Indians suffered no casualties, and the enemy casualties could not be ascertained. On 23 August 1965, the enemy attempted to blow up a bridge on road Galuthi-Rajauri. The bridge was slightly damaged(45). In the Valley, SRI Force Headquarter reported a concentration of 200 infiltrators in village Malud. Counter-action was promptly taken and the infiltrators were dispersed. The next day, an Indian post in 10 Infantry Division sector was engaged by the Pak artillery and mortar fire, and considerable movement of enemy vehicles was observed by the post in this area.

COUNTER-INFILTRATION OPERATIONS

The Indian authorities soon realised that the guerilla groups were a serious threat to the security of Jammu and Kashmir and that the only effective way of eliminating them was to go on the offensive and cross the cease-fire line to plug their entry routes and destroy their sanctuaries in the Pak-Occupied Kashmir. Debate in the Indian Parliament clearly showed the unanimity of opinion that India should retaliate against Pakistan and take the bases from where the raiders were operating. Once the decision was taken, action was swift. One of the steps in this direction was the recapture of three Pakistani posts on the Kargil heights. That removed a constant danger to the Indian life line between Srinagar and Leh. Some days later, Indian troops struck in the Tithwal sector, and occupied several strategic Pakistani posts, capture of the vital Haji Pir Pass was the brightest achievement of these operations.

Recapture of Kargil Heights

It may be recalled that the Kargil heights, which were captured in May 1965, were returned in end June in response to a UN appeal. In August, two companies of 17 Punjab were manning the Indian picquets and two companies with the battalion HQ were in the helipad area in Kargil. The picquets reported occasional enemy movements on Pt 13620 complex. It appeared that the Pakistanis were only patrolling it by day, but not manning it at night. On 14 August, CO 17 Punjab was ordered to capture Pt 13620 complex at the earliest. The battalion immediately carried out certain regrouping to ensure that its defences remained intact, but a balanced striking force with adequate reserves was created. The regrouping commenced at 1400 hrs and was completed by sun-set. Maj Balwant Singh, OC D Coy, was appointed the task force commander of 2 Rifle Platoons and supporting elements. With these he was ordered to capture Pt 13620, Saddle and Black Rocks by 0500 hrs on 15 August 1965. Three platoons were to assault three different objectives from three different directions. Troops were to climb the slopes through mine-field gaps to be created by engineers that night. Each assaulting group had a Forward Observation Officer(FOO), Mobile Fire Controller(MFC), one section MMG, and detachment of Engineers for breaching and laying of the mines. Operation commenced at 0001 hrs, as planned. It was a silent attack with Radio silence. Complete surprise was achieved, and all the three objectives were captured by the morning of 15 August, without suffering any casualty(46).

Tithwal Sector

The first limited offensive by the Indian security forces, launched in the Tithwal sector, was aimed at securing a series of tactically important features, which was essential to dominate the area in question.

At 2340 hours on 23 August 1965, a combined patrol composed of 2 Rajput and 3/8 Gorkha Rifles secured the Ring Contour Area across the cease-fire line. Although no opposition was encountered on the objective, the enemy shelled the position throughout the night, but the Rajputs and Gorkhas held their ground.

On 24 August 1965, at 2130 hours, 1 Sikh less two companies, supported by 138 Mountain Battery and 17 Field Battery from 7 Field Regiment, attacked the Pak post on Richhmar Ridge, held by a platoon plus of the enemy. The attack was ably led by Maj S. Kapur (subsequently decorated with the Vir Chakra). Taken completely by surprise, the enemy fled in confusion. The assaulting companies pressed on to the PT Ground, occupied by a company less platoon of 16 AK Battalion and elements of 5 Punjab. By 2250 hours, Richhmar Ridge was in the hands of the Indian troops. Casualties suffered by the enemy were eight killed and five captured. The Indian forces incurred casualties of one killed and seven wounded. A large quantity of arms, ammunition and rations was also captured. These included 4x.30 machine guns, 1x.50 machine gun and 4x81mm mortars. These weapons were usefully employed by the battalion in subsequent operations against the enemy(47).

The Sikhs next proceeded to attack the formidable Pir Sahiba feature on night 25/26 August. 138 Mountain Battery was in support. The enemy opposition was estimated as one company. Indian troops stealthily crept up the treacherous slopes of this mountain and, when within assaulting distance, made a bold dash for the post. The enemy fought bravely but could not stand up to the grim determination of the Sikhs. From the new positions, the Indian troops could now overlook an extensive area, and, in particular, could watch important routes which the Pakistani saboteurs had been using to enter Kashmir. In the first week of September, Indian troops improved their position by a slight northward move and captured new mountain heights.

Next, 3/8 Gorkha Rifles, supported by field, mountain and light artillery, attacked the massive

Sunjoi feature on night 3/4 September. The post was held by one company of AK troops and a company plus of Kurram Militia. After a brave charge across the minefield, followed by bitter hand-to-hand fighting, during which the Khukri was freely used, the Pakistanis were evicted from the objective. The enemy casualties were twenty-eight killed, as compared to sixteen on the Indian side. A large quantity of enemy arms and ammunition was also captured(48).

The adversary reacted sharply to the capture of Sunjoi and launched two furious counter-attacks on night 4/5 September and 6/7 September to regain this important feature. However, both these assaults were repulsed. Enemy casualties were one Officer and seven Other Ranks killed, and the Indian troops lost an Officer and one Other Rank. In this action the Indian troops captured an operation order issued by General Officer Comanding 12 Infantry Division of Pakistan(49). The operation order revealed that the enemy in brigade strength, under Brigadier Fazle Rahim Khilji, MC, was to infiltrate from different directions to cut off the lines of communication of the Indian Brigade in the area, and thereafter mount attacks on the HQ, its gun area and administrative bases.

With the capture of Sunjoi, the Indian troops reached the outskirts of Mirpur, a few kilometres north-east of Muzaffarabad. Now they dominated the whole area east of the Kishanganga river.

After their success at Sunjoi feature, 3/8 Gorkha Rifles, supported by a mountain and a field battery, were next detailed to capture the enemy post at the Ring Contour overlooking the Mirpur Bridge. Night 10/11 September was selected for launching this action. Although the feature fell after a fierce hand-to-hand fighting, the withdrawing enemy destroyed the Mirpur Bridge - a task which was to have been carried out by the Indian troops. The enemy casualties were eight Other Ranks killed and forty wounded(50). Large quantities of ammunition and rations were again captured. On 12 September, patrols from the battalions found the post at Parni deserted and Mirpur clear of the enemy.

Next was the turn of Point 9013, held by two companies plus of 23 AK Battalion. The approaches to the position were heavily mined. On night 20/21 September, 4 Kumaon attacked the post and after three hours of intensive fighting secured the feature. Indian artillery was used to great effect, and heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy - 55 dead bodies, including one of an Officer, were counted at

the scene of action. Indian casualties were 5 killed and 2 Officers and 31 Other Ranks wounded(51). The capture of Point 9013 gave Indian troops complete domination of the Mirpur area up to Jura Bridge on the river Kishanganga.

Capture of Haji Pir Pass

The next main objective of Indian troops was to capture the Haji Pir Pass. In the scheme of Pakistani infiltration into Kashmir, Haji Pir was a vital link. All communication between the infiltrators in Uri-Punch area passed through it, and it was in a way the life-line for the saboteurs. The Pass was dominated by three neighbouring hill features - on the east by Bedori (3760 metres high), on the west by Sank (2895 metres) and Ledwali Gali (3140 metres) to the south-west. It was considered essential to seize these posts before proceeding to the Haji Pir Pass (2637 metres). Bedori is situated 14 km south-east of Uri and 4 km south of the cease-fire line. Haji Pir Pass is about 10 km south-west of Bedori.

The Haji Pir Operation involved the launching of a large scale pincer movement consisting of an offensive along the general axis Uri-Haji Pir Pass, in combination with a thrust from the south via the Punch-Kahuta approach. It was appreciated that the link-up between these forces would cut off all routes of approach into the crucial area of the bulge. 19 Infantry Division was made responsible for the thrust from the north, with Haji Pir Pass as the objective. 68 Infantry Brigade was placed under command of the formation for this task, and the operation was given the code name "OP BAKSHI". The following troops were placed under command 68 Infantry Brigade for this action:

- (a) 1 Para
- (b) 19 Punjab
- (c) 4 Rajput
- (d) 6 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles
- (e) 4 Sikh Light Infantry
- (f) 164 Field Regiment less one battery.
- (g) 144 Mountain Battery.
- (h) B Troop 39 Medium Regiment.
- (i) 18 Field Battery.
- (j) One section 4.2-inch mortars.

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The link-up action from the south was to be undertaken by 93 Infantry Brigade of the 25 Infantry Division, using a minimum of two battalions and was designated "OP FAULAD".

Estimated enemy dispositions facing the 68 Infantry Brigade advance were some 14 rifle companies or three and a half battalions, including 20 Punjab Battalion. Out of these, approximately one battalion was holding the area opposite the Indian picquet on Point 8370. Enemy defences were known to be well-prepared and properly coordinated. It was also known that the enemy had a large number of LMGs and MMGs in his defence positions.

The two-pronged pincer was to advance on the Haji Pir Pass in the following manner:-

- (1) Right Arm: Uri - Sank - Ledwali Gali - Haji Pir Pass.
- (2) Left Arm : Uri - Bedori - Kuthnar Di Gali - Kiran - Haji Pir.

The whole operation was planned in 3 Phases:

Phase I

- (a) Capture of Ring Counter and Pathra by 19 Punjab by 0100 hrs on 25 August.
- (b) Capture of Sank Ridge upto Ledwali Gali and Sawan Pathri by 1 Para by 0500 hrs on 25 August.

Phase II

- (a) Capture of Bedori and Kuthnar Di Gali by 19 Punjab by 0600 hrs on 25 August.
- (b) Securing the ring counters and capturing Haji Pir Pass by 4 Rajput by 1200 hrs on 25 August.

Phase III

Mopping up by 19 Punjab less company with under command one Coy 4 Rajput.

4 Sikh LI and 6 Jammu and Kashmir Rif were to provide troops for the firm bases.

H Hour - Not before 2000 hrs on 24 August 1965(52).

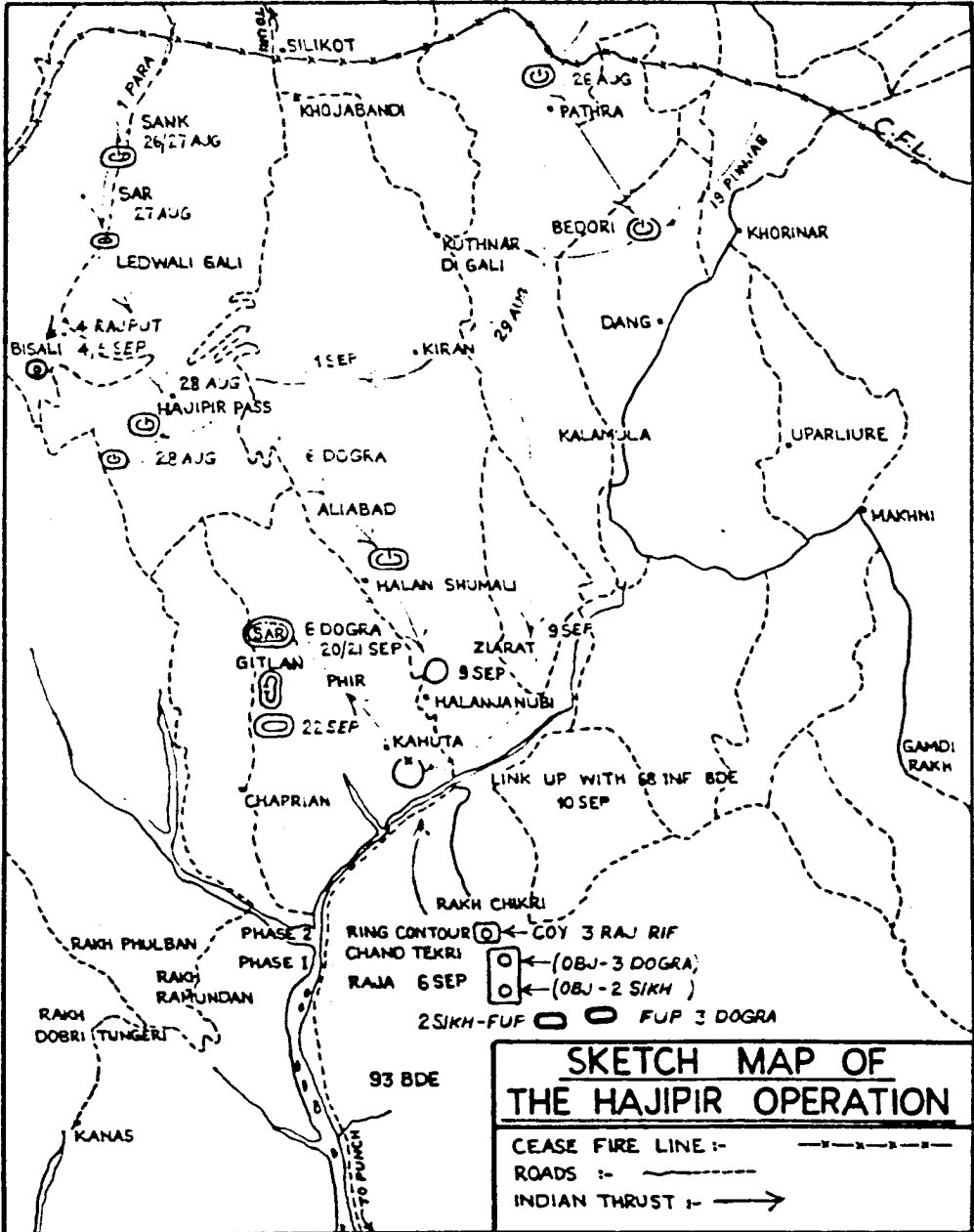
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The operations of the right and the left pincers were thus entrusted to 1 Para (Punjab) and 19 Punjab respectively. These battalions holding position in the Uri sector were to be relieved by 4 Sikh LI and 6 Jammu and Kashmir Rif on 23/24 and 22/23 night respectively for the initial attack to begin at 2150 hours on 24 August 1965. The 19 Punjab was relieved by 6 Jammu and Kashmir on 23rd night as per plan but owing to heavy rains the 4 Sikh LI could not relieve 1 Para in time to concentrate for the impending operation(53). This necessitated the postponement of operation by 24 hours. Further, 4 Rajput, which was to follow the 4 Sikh LI on its way to Uri, had to pass through village Lagma. Unfortunately, heavy rains flooded Uri nullah and made it impassable on foot. The Brigade Commander, realising that the news of advance of 4 Rajput towards Sank must have been communicated to the enemy by his agents in the Lagma village, changed his plan slightly. The Rajputs instead of being moved behind 1 Para in Sank area, were shifted to the area behind 19 Punjab.

Operation Bakshi

The Operation commenced at 2150 hours on 25 August 1965 after a delay of 24 hours. On the right wing, the attack was preceded by shelling of suspected enemy positions at Point 9591, Sawan Pathri and Agiwas in the vicinity of Sank. 1 Para launched the pre-dawn attack on Sank ridge in two-coy strength. 'A' coy followed by 'C' coy reached the base of Sank. The enemy held fire till the leading troops reached within 45 metres of the perimeter fencing and then opened up with all his weapons. No.3 Pl 'A' coy hit the alert enemy position head-on and suffered heavily. The battle continued within 45 metres of the fenced trenches of the enemy till 0930 hours when the effort was called off owing to heavy casualties, to be renewed again in the night. Thus, in spite of heavy artillery support, 1 Para could not reach the objective. The approach to the ridge was very difficult and the heavy rains of the previous night had made it very slippery.

Contact was broken on 26th morning with the enemy so as to prepare for the night attack again. The second attack was put at 2230 hours the same night. 'B' coy followed by 'D' coy moved forward towards Pt 9591. The enemy troops rushed from their trenches and opened up with MMG, LMG and other small arms. The Indians also opened up effective firing, forcing the enemy to fall back upon his trenches. By 0430 hours 27 August, 'B' coy had reached within 450 metres of the enemy positions, formed up in front



of the enemy positions on Sank, and charged frontally. In a daring platoon attack, enemy MMGs and LMGs were silenced. Thus beaten, the enemy withdrew to Sar feature leaving 16 dead behind, but managed to evacuate about 100 wounded(54).

Though the enemy had been eliminated from Sank, the position could not be secured owing to menacing fire from Sar. 'D' coy was, therefore, asked to clear the enemy from this feature. The coy soon captured Sar and advanced upon Ledwali Gali, where the enemy made the last stand to facilitate the withdrawal of his troops from the surrounding area by 1100 hours. 'B' coy on the other hand secured Sawan Pathri and Agiwas against minor opposition from the defending troops by 1400 hours. 'C' coy which had in the meantime reached Sank was ordered to clear area south of Sank, and it did it by last light.

At this stage, a small, self-contained, mixed column from 'A' and 'D' coys was formed under the determined leadership of Maj Ranjit Singh Dayal to advance to the Haji Pir Pass. The approach involved a climb of over 1220 metres, and it had to be done during the hours of darkness. The force starting from Ledwali Gali was to infiltrate through Hyderabad nullah on night of 27/28 August and capture ring contours 1194 and 1094 one after another. The column started descending, at 1530 hours on 27 August, from Ledwali Gali into the Hyderabad nullah along the spur, running south-west before climbing to the Pass. Soon, the enemy started MMG fire from the western shoulder of the Pass. Small arms fire from area east of Ledwali Gali was also met. The coy commander thereupon ordered the FOO to register the post proper and its eastern and western shoulders. The small arms menace was eliminated in a quick action by a platoon of the column. After silencing the enemy fire with heavy shelling, the column moved along the left bank of the Hyderabad nullah, alongside the hill, before crossing over to the pass side. About 1730 hours, it started raining heavily making the going very difficult(55). By 1900 hours the coy reached Hyderabad nullah. It was now completely dark. The commander decided to climb the pass. On the way, the Coy surrounded a house and captured one LMG and 9 rifles with 10 personnel of Azad Kashmir militia. At 0430 hours, the coy hit the old Uri-Punch road, about 10 km below the pass. Here the troops were given a much needed rest for two hours in a very cold and bitter morning before the final assault.

At 0700 hours, the column was again on the march. Moving alongside the road, it reached 700 metres short of the pass by 0900 hours. The enemy,

who had lost touch with the advancing coy the earlier evening following heavy rains and approaching night, appeared surprised to see the Indians right on the pass. They, however, opened up with MMG from the western shoulder of the pass and with LMG and rifle shots from the pass area itself. In the meantime fire was directed on the enemy targets and the coy commander ordered the two platoons to climb up on to the spur and assault enemy from the western side of the pass and then roll down to eliminate the LMGs on the pass. The enemy could not stand this daring day-light attack and withdrew in confusion to a feature to the west of the pass. Soon the LMG on the pass was silenced, and by 1000 hours on 28 August, the formidable pass fell to the column, and 1 Para was in complete control of the objective.

The enemy mounted a furious counter-attack on 29 August in a desperate bid to recapture it. However, the attack was repulsed. To consolidate its position, the battalion captured Ring Contour on 30 August and Point 8786 a day later. Maj R.S. Dayal, who had so ably led his troops in a series of brilliant actions culminating in the capture of the Pass, was awarded the MVC.

The advance on the left flank of the pass, however, did not go so well. At 'H' Hour, i.e. 2150 hours on 25 August, 19 Punjab started its advance to capture Bedori. In Phase I of its operation, which started in inclement weather conditions, no enemy resistance was met, and Point 10944, north of Pathra, and Pathra were secured by midnight. By 0430 hours of 26 August, 'C' and 'D' coys of the battalion were poised for attack on the massive Bedori hill to begin Phase II of the operation. But when just at the base, the battalion encountered heavy enemy MMG fire. Further, it was realised that approach to the objective, i.e. the ridge along which the troops were advancing, was extremely narrow with sheer drops on either side. Thus any advance from the north-west direction was considered almost impossible.

This failure of 19 Punjab led to the conclusion that the only way to reach Bedori lay through the Bedori springs in the north-east. But the employment of 19 Punjab in this newly discovered approach would have delayed the capture of Bedori by 36 hours, thus giving enemy enough time to reinforce Bedori and Haji Pir. With a view to securing the Bedori ridge quickly, 7 Bihar was called up to attack the post. 7 Bihar which had only one Coy to spare for the attack failed to achieve the target(56). An attempt by 4 Rajput from the north on 27 August was also foiled.

Finally, OC 19 Punjab volunteered to make another try to capture Bedori from the north-east approach through Kunrali, Gagarhill, Tilpatra, Jabar, Bedori Spring, and Bedori Pass. The battalion less 'A' coy started at 0500 hours on 28 August and reached Heman Buniyar by 0715 hours in transport. Thence it moved to Bedori springs, already secured by 7 Bihar, and concentrated there for the assault.

At 0330 hours on 29 August, the troops crossed the FUP for assault on Bedori, 3,760 metres above the sea level and 610 metres higher than the FUP. The dominating feature of Bedori was finally captured by 'B' and 'C' coys of 19 Punjab by 0600 hours. In this assault on Bedori, a 3.7 mountain gun played a significant part. On the 28th when the Punjabis planned to attack the Bedori Pass, they found that the enemy had built up stone 'sangars' at Bedori, taking advantage of the rocky nature of the feature. They, therefore, requested for a mountain gun which could destroy the sangars by direct shooting. This gun, which had arrived 30 minutes before the last light on 28 August, not only destroyed the enemy sangars, but also shattered his morale completely(57). By 29 August, 19 Punjab was again on the move to Kuthnar Di Gali and further on to Kiran. A link-up with 1 Para was effected on 1 September.

The battle for Haji Pir was a prestigious operation, and the Indian troops spared no effort to make it a great success. It was well planned and skilfully executed. The courage and determination of the commanders as well as the high morale of the troops ensured its success.

Operation Faulad

Between Punch and Kahuta there were many hill features which dominated the Punch-Haji Pir track. The enemy picquets on these features had cement emplacements for MMGs and shell proof bunkers. All the approaches to these posts were covered by MMGs, guns and mortars. 93 Infantry Brigade planned to achieve the Punch-Haji Pir link-up by capturing these picquets en route to Kahuta. Of these the most important were the Raja and Chand Tekri picquets, both formidable bastions of enemy defences, encircled with wire and mine obstacles.

93 Infantry Brigade, after an initial setback, launched its final assault northwards to establish the link-up. The main characteristics of 'OP Faulad' were the gallant actions that were fought for the capture of the Raja and Chand Tekri picquets, both of which were considered to be virtually impregnable. The massive features of Raja and Chand Tekri dominated

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most of the area, east of the Betar Nullah, along which ran a track that linked Punch with Haji Pir Pass. The enemy posts located on these features served as the main pivots and staging camps for all infiltrator activities in the Punch sector. The capture of these picquets was necessary, not only to seal off the Haji Pir area but also for the destruction of the two major bases of enemy operations.

On account of their vital importance both the posts were held in strength. The total opposition was estimated at a battalion less company, supported by 2x3.7-inch howitzers and 2x81 mm mortars. The Pakistanis were entrenched in shell-proof shelters, bristling with automatic weapons. The picquets were ringed with barbed wires and mines. In short, they were miniature of fortresses that challenged the best in any unit.

On night 5/6 September 1965, a simultaneous attack was launched on Raja and Chand Tekri by 2 Sikh and 3 Dogra respectively. The battle opened with an intense artillery bombardment, but it had little effort on the build-up positions. The approach to the objectives also lay along steep and slippery slopes, and very often the assaulting troops had to crawl on all fours. As they approached the posts they were met by heavy automatic fire. The assaulting troops wavered momentarily, bewildered by the intensity of enemy fire. However, inspired by bold leadership, the leading troops quickly recovered to dash through the mines and wires and were soon locked in a grim hand-to-hand battle for over two hours before the picquets fell. The defenders fought with determination. The garrison at Raja picquet fought to the last man. The casualties on the Indian side were heavy too. Amongst the dead were Major G.C. Verma and Captain G.S. Bawa, of the Dogras, who fell while personally leading the assaulting wave. The intrepid commanding officer of 2 Sikh, Lt Col N.N. Khanna, was also fatally wounded as he led his battalion into the attack. For this act of bravery Lt Col N.N. Khanna was awarded MVC(58).

With the fall of Raja and Chand Tekri, Gibraltar Force's back in this sector was completely broken and thereafter Indian troops had no difficulty in mopping up and liquidating the remaining pockets of resistance in the area. However, the enemy fought desperate rearguard actions to extricate his troops locked up in "the Bulge". The final link-up was completed with the capture of Kahuta on 10 September 1965. And with that the Indian security forces closed the mouth of the Bulge and sealed the Haji Pir sector. All enemy resistance east of the Betar Nullah ceased.

Helicopter Support

During the dark days of Operation Gibraltar, a helicopter task force, initially consisting of two Squadrons, but later raised to three, was formed to assist in fighting against the Pak armed infiltrators who had entered Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965. This task force was mainly based in Srinagar, and it carried out 79 offensive sorties against the infiltrators from 20 August 1965, till the end of the hostilities. These IAF helicopters, suitably modified, bombed and strafed the positions of infiltrators in many areas, especially Haji Pir Pass, Tangdhar, Badgam, Mandi, Budil, and the hills around Gurais. Although these offensive sorties could not inflict much damage on the enemy, they certainly exerted a great demoralising effect on the Pakistani guerillas. The helicopters also played an important logistical role by dropping approximately 92,000 kg of essential stores and urgently needed ammunition to army columns operating in difficult areas, lacking suitable ground communication. They also performed a useful task by speedily evacuating critical casualties from inaccessible areas, flying a total of 198 trips, each loaded to maximum capacity. Some of these helicopters, including three Alouettes, were used by senior army officers to get a good view of the areas of operations, so that quick decisions could be taken to plan and execute counter-offensives against the infiltrators(59). Thus, the Indian Air Force contributed its air effort, limited to helicopter sorties only, till 1 September 1965, when its other aircraft also joined the fray.

THE UN ROLE

Pakistan consistently disowned any connection with OP Gibraltar, and Z.A. Bhutto, the then Foreign Minister, blandly denied Pakistani participation or direction of the guerilla invasion of Kashmir. His protestation that the raiders were not Pakistanis, but local "freedom fighters" was, however, exposed by the UN disclosures. The official reports of General R.H. Nimmo, Chief of UN Military Observer Group in Kashmir indicted Pakistan for committing aggression in Kashmir by sending across the cease-fire line thousands of armed infiltrators. The UN Secretary-General, U. Thant, in his report to the Security Council pointed his finger at Pakistan as the party responsible for the flare-up. In his report, dated 3 September 1965, to the Security Council, he said: "General Nimmo has indicated to me that the series of violations that began on 5 August were to a considerable extent in subsequent days in the form of

armed men, generally not in uniform, crossing the CFL from the Pakistan side for the purpose of armed action on the Indian side. This is a conclusion reached by General Nimmo on the basis of investigations by the United Nations Observers, in the light of the extensiveness and character of the raiding activities and their proximity to the CFL, even though in most cases the actual identity of those engaging in the armed attacks on the Indian side of the Line and their actual crossing of it could not be verified by direct observation or evidence"(60).

U. Thant added: "As regards violations by artillery, there was heavy and prolonged artillery fire across the Line from the Pakistan side in the Chhamb-Bhimber area on 15-16 August, and on 19 and 26 August the town of Punch was shelled from the Pakistan side, some of these shells hitting the building occupied by UN Military Observers"(61).

According to the Chief Military Observer's report to the UN Secretary-General, dated 30 August 1965, between 5 August (the date on which the infiltrators began to pour into Jammu and Kashmir) and 30 August, there were 23 cases of violations. Of these, no less than 19 were committed by the Pakistanis on the Indian side of the cease-fire line in which the raiders attacked the Indian army positions and patrols. Only four out of the total 23 incidents were attributed to Indians, and occurred during August 12-24 by way of retaliation, and this was openly acknowledged before the UN Observers(62).

In discussing those incidents occurring during the initial phases of the guerilla invasion between 5 August and 10 August, General Nimmo established several basic facts. He demonstrated, for example, that a number of attacks were made, that they occurred over 400 miles apart along the CFL, and that, in at least one incident, a soldier of the regular Azad Kashmir infantry was involved. One of the most serious attacks, on the night of 7/8 August, resulted in the raiders' capture of the town of Mandi, near Punch, in the west-central area and its occupation for four days. General Nimmo's report further said: "The number of raiders was estimated to exceed 1,000. The available evidence indicated that some of the raiders must have come from across the CFL. As of August 24, the raiders were still holding some Indian picquets (outposts) north of Mandi...."(63). Another attack in the Kargil sector, on the northern stretch of the CFL, was verified and the dress of one dead raider, as per the report, "was similar to the uniform of Pakistan frontier corps of scouts", a unit controlled by the Pakistan Army. At another point

near Baramula, on the road to Srinagar, attacks on the night of August 7/8 were confirmed. "The observers interviewed one of the captured raiders, who stated that he was a soldier of the 16 Azad Kashmir Infantry battalion and that the raiding party was composed of about 300 soldiers of his battalion and 100 'Mujahids' (armed civilians trained in guerilla tactics). United Nations Observers noted that some of the materials said to have been abandoned by the raiders were manufactured in Pakistan"(64).

The Secretary-General noted in his report to the Security Council on 3 September, that the UN group preferred to report its conclusions in secret, and consequently, the majority of investigated incidents during the Indo-Pakistan conflict were not disclosed publicly. He further said that he sounded out both governments in August on the advisability of publishing the reports available up to that time. India voiced no objection, but "The Government of Pakistan was strongly negative"(65). Hence, U. Thant decided to withhold publication of reports temporarily, and they did not become public until September 1965. The Secretary-General said he concluded "that a public statement by the Secretary-General at that time would serve no constructive purpose and might well do more harm than good. My first and primary objective has to be to see the fighting end rather than indicating or denouncing any party for starting and continuing it. I thought it might be helpful to make another quiet effort toward achieving observance of the cease-fire through a new approach to the two Governments"(66). However, Russell Brines, in his book, The Indo-Pakistan Conflict, has pointed out that "prompt publication of the UN findings obviously would have helped to clarify the situation at a particularly critical period. The result might have been an entirely different global picture of the conflict and less criticism of India for her share in extending it. In this respect, the UN failed again to serve as an impartial fact-finding body at a time when these services were urgently needed. Another consequence was further encouragement for disguised warfare. India was unsuccessful in subsequent attempts to induce the United Nations to brand Pakistan as an aggressor"(67).

The publication or the disclosure of UN findings in mid-August would have resulted in the loss of face for Pakistan for its disguised aggression, and might have prevented the large-scale hostilities that followed. Opinion in India contended that suppression of the reports encouraged Pakistan to embark on intensifying and extending the Pak aggression.

WHY "GIBRALTAR" FAILED

Although the infiltrators did succeed in tying down a large number of India's security forces and created a situation of great concern, they, by and large, did not succeed in their mission. Possible reasons are:

The political atmosphere inside Jammu and Kashmir was misjudged by Pakistan. Pakistan had expected substantial help from the Kashmiri Muslims. The infiltrators got minimal support and sympathy from locals and hardly any open support as was expected, except in some outlying areas, particularly near the cease-fire line. The people of Kashmir refused to be taken in by communal propaganda, launched in full force, by the infiltrators and Pakistan and the so-called 'Azad Kashmir' Radio. Pakistan's anti-India propaganda made little impact on the majority of the Kashmiris. Even the pro-Pakistani political parties at that time kept themselves on the fence and did not come out in open support of the infiltrators.

Pakistan Army Officers have openly debated these points now, and pointed out that no Kashmiri leader had been taken into confidence, to preserve secrecy of Operation Gibraltar. So they were taken by surprise and gave no help to the infiltrators. On the other hand, if they had been informed in advance, Pakistan feared that the Kashmiri leaders would inform the Indian authorities(68). So, in effect, the Kashmiris were to be 'liberated' even if they did not want it.

Morale of the Mujahids and Razakars, who formed about 70 per cent of the Force, seemed to have been affected by their involuntary role or forced conscription. There were a large number of desertions amongst them, particularly in the Northern area, and the Indian forces sealed the cease-fire line, making their return difficult. The infiltrators lost contact with their central base camp and found themselves lost in a hostile land.

Pakistan had overestimated the capacity of the guerillas and underestimated the force and capacity of the Indian security personnel. Inadequate administrative cover to the infiltrators might also be responsible for their low morale and desertions. Even during the period of their peak strength, their efforts were inadequate both in numbers and determination.

Induction of the second wave of infiltrators was delayed, to await results of the first wave. Induction of waves of infiltrators at shorter

intervals would have caused more strain on the already stretched resources of the Indian security forces and the results could have been better from Pakistan's point of view.

Guerilla warfare needs an adequate cadre of highly motivated leaders and men. Possibly, in this case these were not available either in requisite number or quality. A basic fault in the plan was that the guerillas were outsiders. A guerilla movement can succeed only if the local people support it. In this case, the locals had no affinity with most of the infiltrators from Pakistan. Most of the Pakistani guerillas did not know the Kashmiri language. While they used to eat bread, the Kashmiris' staple food was rice. Again, the Mujahids were not aware that the metric system of weights and measures had been introduced in Jammu and Kashmir long ago. So, when they went to any shop in Jammu and Kashmir, their lack of knowledge of the metric system would at once prove that they were Pakistanis. In many cases, the Kashmiris gave away the guerillas to the authorities.

Although the infiltration operations were backed by a cry for Jehad, enough motivation did not seem to have been provided to the infiltrators. Majority of them, apparently, were misled regarding the nature of their job. But most important, the Indian security forces dealt with the infiltrators effectively.

However, the Pakistani guerillas had achieved at least one indirect success: They tied down about 4 Indian Divisions in Jammu and Kashmir in mopping up the Pak infiltrators during the whole of September 1965. Otherwise, had these Indian Divisions been available to fight the Pakistanis in the Punjab Theatre, the fate of the Pak army would have been really dismal. In the final analysis, Operation Gibraltar led to the Indo-Pak War of September 1965, upsetting all Pak calculations that India would not violate the International Boundary and start a war on the Punjab front.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Brines, p.301.

It is interesting to learn from a Pakistani why the infiltrators were given the name of Gibraltar Force. "Most muslims know about the famed Arab General Abdur Rahman Tariq whose forces landed on the Jablul Tariq (Gibraltar) and the Commander asked his men to burn the boats. When his men asked him how could they return to Arabia, their homeland after the boats were burnt, he told that now Spain and Gibraltar were their homeland and there was no question of their returning to former homeland" - Mir Abdul Aziz writing in "The Muslim" (Islamabad) of 9 September 1986, reproduced in February 1987 issue of "Strategic Digest" published by Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi.

The name "Gibraltar Force" reveals the intention of Pakistani Maj Gen Akhtar Malik and his men to take over Kashmir, just as Gen Tariq had taken over Spain and crushed the local population.

5. From Official Records.
6. Brines, p.302.
7. From Official Records.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Appendix 'A' - Text of proposed proclamation.
14. From Official Records.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Mankekar, D.R., p.64.
19. From Official Records.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. In this relief operation 4 Sikh LI had to follow a circuitous route to avoid Lagma village on the actual route. This village was supposed to be infested with enemy agents and there was a genuine fear that any move made through the village would become known to the enemy. Further, the move was to be made at night to keep utmost secrecy.
54. From Official Records.
55. This in a way proved to be a blessing in disguise. It firstly helped in concealing the direction of the approach of the column and secondly per force broke contact with the enemy. As a result of this an element of surprise was introduced in Indian assault on Haji Pir.
56. From Official Records.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Report of the UN Secretary-General, dated 3 September 1965, to the Security Council.
61. Ibid.
62. Mankekar, D.R., pp.82-83.
63. Second Report of the UN Secretary-General, dated 6 September 1965, to the Security Council; Brines, p.305.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Brines, p.314.
68. For details, please see the most interesting debate in "The Muslim" of Islamabad in Sep-Oct 1986 and pages 36-37 of "My Version" by Gen Musa, who was the C-in-C of the Pakistan Army in 1965, reproduced in Strategic Digest of Feb 1987, published by the IDSA, New Delhi.