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comprised of

- (1) Abkhaz Army of about 3000 to 4000 men.
- (2) The Abkhaz Militia numbering 250 to 300 men who used to operate as quasi-police.
- (3) Abkhaz Security Services of 100 to 150 men who used to function as secret service.
- (4) 13 Military Observers co-located with CISPKF.

e. **Partisans:** It was believed that, there were 5 to 8 partisan/terrorist groups operating in Gali. The 2,500,000 Internally Displaced Persons provided a hotbed of unrest and a fertile recruiting ground for potential partisans. According to Abkhazian claims, a group named "White Legion" organized by the Georgian Ministry of Security with 200 to 250 men and another group named "Forest Brothers" trained and equipped by Georgian Ministry of interior with 150 men were active in the area. Other groups were unidentified.

### STATUS OF THE MISSION AS I TOOK OVER

11. **Role of UNOMIG:** As per the UN mandate, the role of the UNOMIG was to monitor and report the implementation of the Moscow Agreement and create conducive environments through dialogue for the internally Displaced Persons (IDP) to return to their homes. So far as my knowledge goes, from the beginning till the closure of the Mission, violations of the said Agreement was continuing, and very little success was achieved regarding the IDP problem.

12. **Difficulties that Prevailed.** Due to precarious security situation, UNOMIG had been facing lots of difficulties from the very beginning when I took over. The main difficulties were.

a. Because of the mine campaign launched by the clandestine groups against the CISPKF and Abkhaz forces, all the team bases were closed except two Sector Headquarters at Gali and Zugdidi. Absence of UN Forces in security zone, eroded UN credibility in the conflict zone.

b. The administrative Headquarters was located at PITSUNDA 80 Kilometers away from the operational area.

c. South African (MAMBA) mine-proof vehicles, which were used in some other missions successfully for a long time, have just started arriving and was not introduced till then.

d. The medical evacuation system was non-existent due to non-availability of resources.

e. Patrolling was restricted to two city areas namely Gali and Zugdidi only.

13. **Challenges that Emerged out of these Difficulties:** The challenges were:

a. Showing UN presence throughout the affected area instead of two cities only.

b. Establishing confidence of general public on UN efforts.

c. Streamlining the administrative support and bringing the Administrative Headquarters closer to the Operational Headquarters and bases.

d. Introduction of MAMBA vehicles for patrolling.

e. Introduction of an efficient and faster evacuation system.

14. **My Concept of Operation:** I planned to materialize UNOMIG's mandate through observation, dialogue, monitoring and investigation by patrolling throughout the Security Zone and Restricted Weapons Zone. The aim was that UNOMIG patrol should be able to visit each village or location in the Security Zone twice a week and in the Restricted Weapon Zone once a week and Kodory Valery at least once a month in summer. Except in very rare emergency cases, patrolling would be conducted during daylight hours only.

### COMPLICATIONS IN DEALING WITH THE BELLIGERENT PARTIES.

15. Government of Georgia is an established government whereas the breakaway Abkhaz Government is not a recognized one. Conversely, being the signatories to the Moscow agreement, both the parties demand their legitimacy; and there is the main conflict.

16. Recruiting people from the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) to fight the Abkaziens: A good number of ministries in the Georgian government like Ministry of Security, Ministry of interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and parliamentary Defence Committee etc. used to deal with the issue without central co-



ordination. The Georgian Government was not willing to declare formal war against the Abkhazian separatists because declaring a war might stop the flow aid from the developed countries as well as destabilize the economy. To compensate this, the Georgian government organized clandestine groups by recruiting people from the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) to fight the Abkaziens; like 'White Legions', 'Forest Brothers' etc.

17. An Abkhazian government in Exile was formed by the Mingrelians migrated from Abkhazia to Georgia after the initiation of the hostilities. This government used to enjoy the total support of the Georgian Government.

18. The breakaway Abkhaz Government was also organized following Soviet pattern and a good number of ministries were involved in handling the issue having no central co-ordination.

19. It was essential to maintain contact and liaison with all the parties for the implementation of the United Nations mandate. However, it was seldom possible to get identical views from different agencies of the same government. As such decisions taken even at the highest level after prolonged negotiations were difficult to implement on the ground.

20. **Relationship with the CISPKF:** The main responsibility of CISPKF was to ensure implementation of the Moscow agreement. UNOMIG, through its mandate, was responsible for observing the operations and activities of CISPKF. This was a very delicate responsibility. CISPKF was responsible for providing security to UNOMIG as the UN Forces were unarmed. Any adverse reporting by UN on the CISPKF used to have impact on UN Forces' security status. Moreover adverse reporting used to create strained relationship between the UN and CISPKF forces. CISPKF forces wanted to have joint patrolling with UN. For maintaining UN neutrality, and also to avoid being targeted by the anti-Russian Forces, I deliberately avoided the Joint patrolling. However, I must admire that CISPKF have suffered substantial number of casualties while performing duties in the Area. Relationship between the forces used to be severely constrained every three months, particularly after the publication of Quarterly Security Council Reports. However, with regular visits, liaison and exchange of information, I managed to maintain a satisfactory working environment.

21. **Relation with the Friends of the Secretary General (Friends of Georgia):** The role of the Friends of the Secretary General was to advise the Secretary General in resolving the issue. These countries had their own agenda in solving the issue, and one of the countries, Russia, was but also a party to the conflict. Maintaining liaison and contact with these parties was essential for knowing their views and getting their assistance in implementing the UN Mandate. I had to visit regularly the representatives of countries of Friends of Secretary General to inform them about the developments.

22. **Relationship with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):** The OSCE had also a mandate to support the United Nations efforts in Georgia-Abkazia conflict. Members of OSCE are the major investors in Georgia. Therefore, they were keen to

be involved in the affairs of resolving the issue. As the Chief Military Observer, I also had to keep close contact with their representative as well.

23. **Relationship with the UN Headquarters:** Department of the Peacekeeping Operations of United Nations controls the peacekeeping operations around the Globe. This department used to be staffed by the non-military persons. There was a military adviser to the Secretary General who was also the military adviser to the DPKO. But his office was so small that he could not make effective contribution to the command and control of all the Peace Support Operations around the Globe. In the mission area, the Special Representative of the Secretary General who head the mission is usually a diplomat. Since all the activities including the military activity need to be approved by him, it took longer time to reach a decision due to the procedural complications.

24. Here I must point out that, in UN system, tasking and allocation of resources is seldom done in the military way, i.e. carrying out a detail mission and task analysis and then allocating resources. But in the present case, the resources are allocated first and then the mission is tasked. As a result, often the resources become inadequate to accomplish the given task. UNOMIG was also not an exception.

b. Conflicting parties were also not at all ready to compromise on any point to resolve the conflict.

c. The UN mandates was inadequate to implement the peace agreement.

d. Resources, particularly the security assets and logistic support, were too meagre.

e. Expectation of the Local Population from UNOMIG was too high.

25. **Experience as a Diplomat:** None expects a military solution to this type of problems and so, the primary responsibility of resolving these conflicts is vested to the political and diplomatic means. As Chief Military Observer being a man in uniform, many a time my role got much closer to a diplomat. My diplomatic tasks mainly included contact, liaison and dialogue with:

a. The warring factions on the ground to prevent resumption of hostilities.

b. Local leaders/public representatives of the conflicting parties at field level.

c. Humanitarian Assistance Groups and NGOs.

d. Diplomats and ambassadors of Friends of Secretary General and other parties involved in the resolution of the conflict.

e. The local population of the parties in conflict.

26. A military person builds up his career and prepares himself to fight with the potential adversaries. But when he is in a Peace Support Mission, he encounters the belligerents as a mediating party. As an observer he is an unarmed person standing between two warring factions. Yet, he is the strongest force there, because he carries the mandate of the United Nations for peace.

27. The UNOMIG was an arduous and hazardous Peace Support Operation of the UN with recurrence of serious security situation for the UN Forces. Since UOMIG

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