

Letters to the Editor

Letters are invited on subjects which have been dealt in the Journal, or which are of general interest to the services.

I

Sir,

GULF WAR - LESSONS

Maj Gen VK Madhok in his article "Gulf War and the Indian Armed Forces - Some Immediate Lessons" published in the Jan-Mar, 91 issue of the Journal, has attempted to draw some useful lessons from the Gulf War for our armed forces to ponder upon. All such lessons, however, pertain to realms of high technology, a coherent organisation and superior strategy, as being the main factors for the success achieved in the Gulf War.

It will therefore be interesting to know that, when Gen Norman Schwarzkopf was asked, as to of all the other military reasons, what in his opinion was the one signal battle winning factor that contributed to his victory in Op Desert Storm, his answer was "I would put it to the fact that, having once given me a clear line of objectives, never once, did either President George Bush, or Defence Secretary Dick Cheney, or the Chairman JCS Colin Powell, ever interfered in the way I conducted the operation".

If our politicians and our higher military command at Delhi, had learnt that signal lesson 5 years back, perhaps, Op Blue Star and OP Pawan would have taken a different turn.

Yours Sincerely

8 June, 1991
PUNE

N B Grant
Brigadier

II

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the two successive articles on the Gulf war in your Jan-Mar 92 issue, one each by Lord Bramall and Lt. Gen. Kalkat. The latter's piece was particularly well presented.

I am keen to generate some thought in the alternate vein - what should Iraq have done for ensuring a better performance? Notwithstanding the advantage of the lessons in hindsight after Desert Shield and Desert Storm, could we have a post operation war game on how Saddam Hussein could/should have played his cards both politically as well as militarily so

that he could have remained "one up" from the day he invaded kuwait? Some hypothetical Iraqi opening gambits are offered in this connexion :-

- (1) Mustering enough political support from the Islamic world - with ostensibly justifiable causes - prior to invading Kuwait, possibly using oil and religion as trump cards.
- (2) Deploying forces well inside Saudi Arabia to give adequate depth to Kuwait.
- (3) Causing maximum attrition/physical interference during building up of Desert Shield by employing the air force, the navy (particularly submarines) and long range missiles.
- (4) Once the ground battle was joined, using armour in the classic role especially for encounter battles, since the terrain offered unlimited scope for this.
- (5) Using artillery the Russian way. The Coalition Forces method seems somewhat similar, as brought out by Lord Bramall - see page 21, para 2 of his article.
- (6) Using ECCM effectively to put the Coalition Forces' EW and ECM measures into disarray. (One is reminded of what Warsaw Pact did to NATO in this context during the Czech invasion of 1968.)
- (7) Engineering all possible wiles - a la Shakuni - to draw Israel into the war by launching ground, sea and air attacks on that country and not just a few SCUDs as was done.

I am sure there would be many more. Could we have some discussion on this après-combat scenario please?

Yours Sincerely

May 5, 1992
CALCUTTA

Lt Col JK Dutt (Retd)

III

Dear Sir,

Apropos 'Reminiscences of An Ambassador' published in U.S.I Journal (Oct-Dec 91).

What a pity! Had Gen S K Sinha been in the UK, he would have been knighted for his contribution to diplomacy. But in India, Well.....

Yours Sincerely

February 21, 1992
12 SIKH LI
C/o 56 APO

Major Sunil S Parihar