

The 1965 War-A Comedy of Errors

Operation Gibraltar

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Unfortunately most of our history, particularly that relating to the conduct of military operations, remains shrouded in mystery, since none of the actual details is made public. Consequently, even those like myself who possess some knowledge of the actual events need to piece these together with educated speculations to fill in the gaps. Today, after thirty eight years of this war, the true story remains untold. Within the military an effort has been made to detail and analyze the actual events, but even these efforts might not be the whole truth, nor have they been made public. Therefore, those who choose to read this version with skepticism might be more sensible than those who consider this an accurate version, but I will attempt to relate the events as I am aware of them. If these read like a comedy of errors----or should it be tragedy, I can only suggest that occasionally truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

Early the same year Pakistan army had successfully defended itself against the Indian attempted incursion in the Rann of Kutch, but that chapter was closed since the dispute had been referred for arbitration. Why therefore should Pakistan embark on a venture that might lead to war remains an unanswered question to date, particularly when we were aware that such a venture in which we were considered the aggressor would result in the severance of aid from the US, which ultimately happened? It is a matter of historical record that Bhutto, then foreign minister, convinced Ayub Khan, the president, that the Indian response to our incursions in Kashmir would not be across the international boundary and would be confined to Kashmir. He must have offered powerful diplomatic arguments as forcefully and articulately as he could, but despite that I find it difficult to comprehend how Ayub accepted such an argument which was militarily untenable and, while Ayub could be accused of many things, he was far from being militarily unwise.

Secondly, the undertaking of guerrilla operations necessitate special conditions, not only must the terrain be suitable, which it was, but there must be guaranteed local support, without which guerrilla operations are not sustainable. Preferably there should be a preliminary reconnaissance and liaison which sets the ground for such an operation. For some obscure reason, Pakistan undertook Operation Gibraltar, without preparing the grounds for it, or seeking guarantees of local support, or even attempting to assess the mood of the Kashmiri people. They only relied on the assessment offered by some adventurous element of Kashmiris from Azad Kashmir without verifying this assessment. One cannot but wonder why? What was the reason for such haste, even if such an adventure was to be undertaken? I am afraid that I can only speculate an answer to that question.

For the record both, the ISI and the Military Intelligence disagreed with Bhutto's assessment, but were ignored. Both also suggested that the assessment of the situation in IHK may be erroneous.

1965 witnessed a number of events. Firstly, one of Ayub's sons kidnapped the daughter of the IG Police of West Pakistan, Mr Anwar Ali. This was more than even the ever loyal Nawab of Kalabagh could bear and, when Ayub prevented him from taking any action, he resigned. In 1964 Ayub contested the elections against Mohtarima Fatima Jinnah. Personally speaking, her election to office would have been disastrous and, in my opinion, Ayub would have won any way. Nonetheless, he rigged the elections, fearing defeat. Following that, two of his sons open fire on demonstrators in Karachi killing thirty odd people and wounding many more. There were also a number of other incidents that began to come to light in this period, relating to Ayub's nepotism. As a consequence of all these events, Ayub had lost a lot of political ground. Perhaps he felt that by becoming the liberator of Kashmir he would redeem himself in the eyes of the people, or that through such a venture he hoped to unite the people, for there is little doubt that there has never been greater unity in the country than in the period of the war and immediately after.

Whatever his reasons, Pakistan went into Operation Gibraltar without any preliminary preparations and undertook a guerrilla operation inside Indian held Kashmir with a large number of regular soldiers, some SSG elements and a smattering of irregulars, expecting to be welcomed by the local population and raise them up in arms against the Indian government. They were destined to be rudely disillusioned. Far from rising up in arms, the local population denied any support and, in many instances handed over the infiltrators to Indian troops. An act for which they should not be held to blame in any way, since by then they were reconciled to staying within the Indian union and Pakistan had made no preparations for such a venture. It was to take another twenty four years for them to rise indigenously against the Indian union. Gibraltar soon became a disaster. The majority of the infiltrators were captured by the Indian troops, though some managed to ex-filtrate.

In 1965, the division responsible for the defense of Kashmir and Northern Areas had about 400 miles to defend and was stretched thin on the ground. Gibraltar necessitated the release of more troops for infiltration, since acclimatization was a major consideration and these were the only troops acclimatized to operate in the inhospitable terrain of Kashmir. The failure of Gibraltar was followed by a number of Indian assaults on various posts held by the Pakistan army which fell to the Indians. Maj Gen Akhtar Malik, the divisional commander, was an intelligent and bold commander who led from the front. However, in this situation there was little that he could do; stretched thin on ground, with little or no reserves, with a front of 400 miles to cover, he could not even reach the localities under attack, let alone influence events in any way. Since Gibraltar had been planned to succeed, there were no contingencies catering for its failure, another inexplicable oversight, since all militaries are taught to consider all possibilities and be prepared for the one they have not thought of. It was in this environment that Operation Grand Slam was launched to set things right.

Operation Grand Slam

Operation Grand Slam was one of a number of contingency plans that had been prepared to support Gibraltar. Since Gibraltar's failure was considered inconceivable, this plan intended to sever the road link between India and Indian held Kashmir once the valley was up in flames. Now that Gibraltar had not just failed but had resulted in the loss of some key posts in Kashmir, the operation was undertaken to relieve pressure on the troops defending Kashmir. Many writers have attributed the plan to Bhutto which is inaccurate. This was a prepared contingency plan and one that appealed to Bhutto; since he was amongst the favored ministers of the time he might have influenced the choice of the contingency selected, but even if he did, it was militarily the most viable and sensible option.. As an aside, recently Ms Bhutto has been castigated by some and defended by others for revealing some details of a military plan to an Indian journalist. Whether or not she should have, is another matter, but in defense of Gen Musharaf it must be stated that what he presented was a contingency plan. To distort it in a manner as to paint him a war monger is unfair without understanding the contingency. He offers a broad-side with sufficient frequency to pick on one that is unfair.

Operation Grand Slam was four phased; the capture of Chamb, the crossing of river Tawi and consolidation, followed by the capture of Akhnur, and finally severing the Indian lines of communication and capturing Rajauri. Despite the difficulties of terrain, specially entailing a river crossing, the possibility for success lay in the bold audacity of the plan, which necessitated speed in execution, since if there was sufficient time permitted to the Indians, they would reinforce Akhnur and it would be impossible to capture. I have said a few words on Maj Gen Akhtar Malik, but these are insufficient. He was a bold audacious commander who remained unruffled under pressure and inspired a confidence in his men, not just the officers but even down to the soldier, that could make them rise above themselves; the epitome of the commander for such a venture.

When the operation was initially planned, GHQ was conscious of the fact that he was commanding an over extended division, which was under immense pressure from the enemy. Despite this, he was chosen to command this offensive. In fact, at most times he was commanding forces greater than 1 corps, our only corps at that time. Once again, no record is available as to the causes and I have to again resort to speculation: in my view, apart from the fact that he was the commander most suited for undertaking such an operation, there was also the realization that there was little he could do to influence events in Kashmir and, since Grand Slam was initially linked to the success and later to the failure of Gibraltar, unity of command may have been a consideration for the achievement of the aim, because of which he was selected to command this operation. One has also to bear in mind that this was a period when the Pakistan army had only two Lt Gens, only one of them commanding a corps, Bakhtiar Rana, and the other on deputation to CENTO, Altaf Qadir, and only a handful of Maj Gens, unlike the present when both are overflowing every conceivable container.

The operation was to commence at 05:00 a m on September 1st, but was delayed by a day. It started as planned Chamb fell within the hour and soon after first light around 07:00 a m on September 2nd our troops started crossing the river Tawi. Operations from here onwards continued with speed and by 01:00 p m troops had consolidated and were ready

to move into concentration areas from which an attack on Akhnur could have commenced well before last light around 03:00 p m. However we were not destined to get to Akhnur which remained, in the words of Dr Ahmed Faruqi, “a town too far”.

Akhtar Malik being the kind of person he was, was to be found where the action was. Unfortunately, since his command was of another formation, he also did not have the facility of staff officers. Consequently, he had found little time to communicate with GHQ, which had no idea of the battle situation. Gen Musa therefore, flew in to Kharian on a helicopter around 11:30 a m on September 2nd to find out first hand. When he could not discover much more there, he decided to fly towards the border and enroute he spotted some vehicles and ordered the pilot to land. Prior to the commencement of Grand Slam, another offensive division commanded by Maj Gen Yahya had been asked to concentrate at Gujrat to meet any unforeseen contingency. These vehicles that Gen Musa spotted were those of Yahya and his staff out on a reconnaissance mission. From here Musa managed to establish contact with Akhtar Malik who was ordered to report to the C-in-C Musa. Akhtar Malik found the C-in-C by about 01:00 p m.

Though the official reason for the change of command of Operation Grand Slam at this stage was that Akhtar Malik could not handle troops from Northern Areas to Kharian, but that holds little credence, since he was assigned the task knowing that he would be required to handle troops over this stretch. Ayub has been accused of changing the command so that Yahya got the glory and could be appointed the next chief, but records indicate that this decision was taken by Musa and subsequently ratified through a signal by GHQ. Consequently, once again I am forced to speculate on the decision taken there to change the command of the offensive and hand it over to Yahya; and I can think of none except that Musa was annoyed at not having been kept informed and had been waiting a few hours. Once contact had been established, he could well have received an update on the wireless, rather than waste precious time in ordering the successful commander back. Whatever the reason for changing horses midstream, precious time was lost. It took time for Akhtar Malik to return, time for him to brief Yahya, time for Yahya to assume command, and time for him to understand the situation on ground, before issuing orders. Enough time for Akhnur to be reinforced and never again be attainable by Pakistani troops. In fairness to Yahya, who has often been accused of this failure, probably any other in his place would have taken as much time and suffered the same fate. Perhaps the troops were also disheartened by the change of command, perhaps even the flamboyant Akhtar Malik would not have been able to get there. Perhaps if Akhnur had been captured and the Indian lines of communication severed, the Indian attack on Sialkot could never have occurred! Perhaps. But that we will never know. What we do know is that Akhnur was never captured and this led us into the attack on Lahore and later Sialkot in the wee hours of September 6th 1965. If nothing else, Grand Slam did succeed in releasing pressure on the troops defending the LOC in Kashmir and Northern Areas.

The Sialkot Sector

Although the actual attack on Lahore preceded the attack on Sialkot by twenty four hours but Sialkot needs to be understood before Lahore. Some element of our troops always man the border, and on September 3rd a patrol ventured across the line of control and captured an Indian dispatch rider who was carrying the comprehensive orders of Indian 1 Armored Division for the Indian offensive. Nobody believed it: numerous examples of disinformation were cited, like the “dead soldier” found by German troops during the Second World War who was also found carrying the complete orders for war providing the wrong location of the second front about to be opened. While intelligence assessments are hardly to be blamed in such a situation, whichever conclusion they arrive at, GHQ’s decision not to order precautionary deployment defies understanding. It was left to formations to take “precautionary measures”. In the case of the Sialkot division, it moved into forward concentration areas, but neither dug its defensive positions, nor laid any mines.

In the early hours of the morning of September 6th, about the time that the attack on Lahore began around 03:30 a m, the bridge over Ravi at Jasser began to be shelled. Sometime later the bridge was attacked by a small raiding party. It is not clear how the confusion occurred, but then that is the fog of war, the company commander at the bridge ordered its demolition, while most of his force was still across; they either swam back or were captured. Probably, to justify his actions, he grossly exaggerated the attacking forces, leading the division commander to believe that this was the location of the main attack on his sector. In response to this around midday the GOC sent a brigade with an additional armored regiment to stabilize the situation at Jasser. Later it was discovered that Jasser was merely a diversion, and the main attack was to follow twenty four hours later. However, the forces sent to stabilize the situation at Jasser were called “committed reserves”, a term denoting troops committed to defending an area, but available as reserves if their area did not face a threat.

They were a few miles short of Jasser when the main attack began opposite Pasrur-Chawinda-Phillaurah, the positions they were supposed to be defending, and the brigade with the armored regiment was ordered back. The division was in a state of total chaos and confusion. Considering that this formation had moved into battle locations, even if these had not been prepared, it should have been more prepared than other divisions.

The Sialkot division was commanded by Brigadier Ismail, an army service corps officer. In those days it was not unusual for a brigadier to take command of a division on three month’s probation, before being approved for promotion. Ismail was at this stage. Not only was he from a non-fighting arm, but was under probation and thus insecure, and his insecurity and lack of confidence was infectious. It appeared that nobody knew what to do. Throughout his command there were spates of contradictory orders, units to be relieved pulled out without being relieved, giving the Indians a free run. This state of chaos was to be a feature of the entire Sialkot operation, until the command was changed, but by then the worst was over.

The main Indian attack began early on September 7th, with the infantry forming a bridge head, a defended area for forces, specially armored forces to build up, before proceeding

further. Indian 1 Armored division built into the bridge head and then commenced advance around 10:30 a.m. Fortunately for us, the Indians too could not take advantage of the total vacuum that existed through all the confusion. It appears (from their own analyses later) that the armored division could not believe that there was no defense. They were certain that they were being lured in to a trap. Perhaps this was due to the fact that they were aware of their battle orders being captured and could not believe that Pakistan army would not have acted upon this knowledge. Consequently, where they could have been running full pace, they crawled, and extremely slowly, allowing us to atone for our errors.

Only those who have seen formations in move having to turn back can actually imagine the confusion of halting and turning back from close to Jasser. In such a move, infantry elements are likely to be leading, with the armor in between, followed by artillery and then other support elements, for the return they need to get into the same order of march. One can but imagine doing that on a narrow road. However, in view of the emergency, the armored unit led the return, followed by the artillery then infantry and the rest. This was to be a blessing in disguise.

Maj Muhammed Ahmed, one of the squadron commanders of the armored regiment was in the lead as they approached Pasrur, then Phillaurah in the early hours of September 8th when he spotted tanks ahead of him. Fortunately, he was in a copse, with the advancing Indian tanks offering him a broad side. This intrepid officer took the initiative, which most officers are supposed to, but seldom do, and opened fire. These Indian tanks were elements of the leading brigade of the Indian armored division. He hit a large number of tanks of the leading Indian unit and some of the following one. This was enough to convince the Indians that they had indeed been lured into a trap. Meantime the rest of the same armored unit moved on from a flank towards Chawinda, where some more of the Indian armored division units had halted upon news of the ambush in Phillaurah. They too opened fire to cause more casualties. Ironically, this was the very area they were supposed to have been defending. Had they been doing so, they would have been facing the enemy and, perhaps, would never have had the opportunity of taking on the Indian forces from a flank to inflict the kind of casualties that they actually did.

Fortunately for us, the Indians had been over cautious when the opportunity was offered, an intrepid squadron commander halted their attack from a fortunate "ambush", and the rest of the unit also caught some of the armored unit unawares. This was later referred to as the greatest tank battle since the Second World War. The Indian armored division never recovered; we had been saved by the courage of a "lucky" squadron commander, who was afforded this opportunity because his regiment had been ordered away from its defensive position because of the ineptness of his division commander! It was at this stage that GHQ finally realized that the Indian main offensive was directed at Sialkot, not Lahore, and that the captured orders were in fact true. On the same day, September 8th, Tikka Khan was asked to take command of the Sialkot division and our second armored division was also ordered in to Sialkot sector. While this was referred to as an armored division, it was actually no more than a brigade. However, from September 9th onwards, the Sialkot sector was a see saw of attacks by the Indians and counter attacks by the

armored division with various infantry elements in support, which on the balance tilted in favor of our own forces, primarily because the Indian 1 Armored Division never recovered from its setback. Though the battle at Sialkot was far from over, but the worst was past and we can afford to omit other details to move on to Lahore.

The Lahore Sector

Having discussed the Sialkot operation, we are aware that Sialkot was the main effort of the Indian army and Lahore the secondary one. Apart from the successful diversionary attack at Jasser, the secondary attack preceded the main attack by twenty four hours, probably intended to divert our reserves in that direction to allow the main effort a free run. Lahore cantonment hosted two divisions in those days. The original division, which I will refer to as the Lahore division, was being commanded by Maj Gen Sarfraz Khan and was actually responsible for the defense of Lahore. The other had been recently raised under the command of Maj Gen Hameed and had been given dual tasks of defense and offense at Kasur; I will refer to it as the Kasur division.

Since GHQ had not given firm instructions to formations and had left it to them to take precautionary measures, both these divisions took actions as they thought fit. The Lahore division had deployed some of its artillery and troops as early as September 3rd. On the evening of September 5th some representatives of the International Aid Agency came by road from India across Wagah and were to dine with Sarfraz. They had been brought in three Indian army jeeps. After dropping them, one of the drivers made some excuse to return and the other two jumped into his jeep to return to India. Perhaps they were intended to report on our deployment and, perhaps their sudden departure warned Sarfraz; whatever the reason, he ordered deployment that very night. Consequently, the Lahore division was almost prepared and in position when the attack broke in the early hours of September 6th.

The Kasur division, on the other hand, had deployed some of its elements as a precautionary step by September 4th, and had also moved some of its elements to forward concentration area including the division HQ, but a fair portion of the division was still in Lahore. Consequently, when battle commenced, some of the troops were doing physical training when they were ordered to mobilize for battle locations! Fortunately, the Lahore division was facing the brunt of the Indian attack and the overflow into the area of the Kasur division was within the capability of the troops already deployed. Although an Indian division was supposed to attack Kasur, but the attack was sufficiently delayed that the division was prepared for it and, in fact, preempted it.

Amongst the hastily prepared contingency plans was an offensive by our armored division from Kasur towards Jandiala Guru, a distance of about sixty miles: a bold, ambitious plan, which could have had greater chances of success if the Indians were allowed to penetrate a little deeper into our territory, leaving a relative vacuum for this division to exploit. However the orders to the defensive formations were that no penetration was to be allowed. Consequently, while the Indian offensive continued to make some headway, but it was neither very deep, nor threatening Lahore, even though

All India Radio and the BBC announced on the evening of September 6th that Indian troops had entered Lahore.

An armored division is a massive formation with over 2000 vehicles. If it has to cross an obstacle like a canal, it needs more than one bridge, or it will consume an inordinate period of time. The Kasur division managed to attack, capture Hussainiwala Headworks and establish a bridgehead during the night of September 6th/7th, but it was not a very large bridgehead. During the day, one of the brigades of our armored division managed to partially cross over and expand the bridgehead. Since the activities of the three formations here, two infantry divisions and an armored division were totally uncoordinated, without the benefit of a corps HQ, the confusion continued to be compounded. Apart from vying for road space and priority of movement, no one seemed aware of what each formation was up to. Therefore, the armored division which was supposed to concentrate by nightfall September 7th, continued to be delayed. During the night of September 7th/8th another brigade of the armored division managed to cross over, but it was to take another twenty four hours before the entire division managed to get across.

Gen Chaudhry, the C-in-C Indian army at that time, records in his memoirs that when he learnt of the crossing of the Pakistani armored division on the morning of September 7th, he almost decided to call off the offensive, but then thought he would await developments for twenty four hours. The direction of this operation threatened the rear of the Indian secondary effort at Lahore and the lines of communication of the Indian main effort at Sialkot. In conception a plan that could be considered flawless in terms of operational strategy. But bold plans need bold commanders to execute them, and somebody needs to see to logistic and support details that can make them successful. The GOC of the armored division was Maj Gen Nasir Ahmed, an infantry officer with little understanding of handling mechanized forces. Apart from the fact that it took three days to cross over, during which a large number of vehicles and tanks remained exposed to enemy aircrafts, parked in the bridgehead as if they were parked outside a cinema hall, which took considerable toll, not enough dynamism was injected into the operation. It remained static, once again giving the Indians enough time to regroup.

Two things that Nasir was certain of was that tanks withdrew to leaguer at night and, when faced with anti tank weapons needed infantry to take the position before they resumed advance; he was unaware of concepts of maneuverability, or bypassing opposition to threaten its rear. Consequently, when the division advanced, it went seven kilometers forward, before withdrawing three to leaguer! There were also other difficulties, the American tanks recently inducted were too heavy and would bog down where the water table was high. Meantime the Indians strengthened their defenses to protect their rear and released water along the line of advance of the armored division. Not only did the operation fizzle out, we left behind a large number of tanks totally intact, which the Indians paraded before us, to our shame after the war was over. The battle of Lahore too was far from over, but we can omit further details. However, it would be inappropriate not to mention that it was in defense of Lahore that Maj Aziz Bhatti was posthumously awarded the Nishan-e-Haider.

A Brief Analysis

Before beginning my analysis I wish to point out that I have only mentioned the courage of some in passing. This is not because there were not many instances of individual courage. In fact there were so many tales of moving courage that they could fill a book, but I have stuck to attempting to present an overview and therefore, only those instances of individual courage germane to the story have merited mention.

To begin with, the reason for initiating conflict in the aftermath of a peaceful solution to the Rann of Kutch conflict, conscious of the possible diplomatic risks involved in initiating it, remains difficult to comprehend. These reasons must have been singularly compelling to force undertaking Operation Gibraltar in such haste, without preparation, with insufficient information, based on a militarily untenable premise that the Indian response would be confined to Kashmir. There is little doubt of the fact that it was doomed to failure. Nonetheless, those who conceived this operation had not even considered the possibility of its failure, or prepared contingencies for such an eventuality. That it resulted in thinning troops from an already overstretched deployment, which resulted, on the failure of the operation, in loss of a number of posts, some of them key ones, never to be regained by us, was also never considered.

Operation Grand Slam prepared as one of the contingencies to support the success of Gibraltar, had to be resorted to, so as to relieve pressure on the troops defending Kashmir. It was entrusted to, arguably, the only GOC of the time with the qualities to succeed. This was done despite the fact that he was commanding the division defending Kashmir and Northern Areas, for reasons that we can but conjecture. Having done so, within hours of his unexpectedly swift success in completing the first two phases of the attack, when he was within sight of Akhnur, the command was inexplicably changed. The ostensible reason for this change was that he could not command his division and this offensive simultaneously. Since he was given the command of this offensive knowing that he would have to command both, this reason is untenable, and we must again conjecture as to why. Whether or not Akhtar Malik would have been able to get to Akhnur and then Rajauri, we will never know, but enough precious time was lost in this change of command to make it impossible to get there, thereafter. While the “ifs” of events are always guesses, but if Rajauri, or even Akhnur had fallen, military sense suggests that it would have been exceedingly risky for the Indians to undertake an offensive in Sialkot, with troops threatening their rear.

In Sialkot, the division led by an incompetent brigadier under probation was subjected to chaos, but this chaos was to be the cause of our success. While the Indian armored division advanced slower than a snail, probably influenced by the knowledge that copies of their orders had been captured by us, they felt they were being lured into a trap, the armored unit that was to be defending the area of Phillaurah-Chawinda-Pasrur had been sent post haste to react to a successful Indian diversionary attack on Jasser Bridge and, only on commencement of the Indian offensive was ordered back.. Since the armored regiment was returning from that direction it came up on the flank of the advancing

Indians, thus inflicting heavy casualties, saving Sialkot division and convincing the Indian armored division that they had indeed been lured in.

In Lahore, for some inexplicable reason Maj Gen Sarfraz ordered his division to move in to battle positions on the night of September 5th/6th, saving us from embarrassment. Sufficient elements of the Kasur division were also in location to prevent the Indians from overrunning the defenses. The Kasur division managed to make a bridgehead at Khem Karan and despite the confusion and lack of coordination between the forces in Lahore, caused by the lack of a corps or coordinating HQ, the armored division managed to cross over by the morning of September 9th. However, due to the lack of imagination and incompetence of its commander could not make headway: thus rendering another imaginative maneuver, a failure.

The war from both sides reads like a comedy of errors. Both sides had opportunities they failed to capitalize on. Both sides enjoyed unexpected successes; India with the diversionary attack at Jasser, and Pakistan, both in crossing Tawi and in approaching the advancing Indian armored division from a flank. The last resulting from the divisional commander's ineptitude, but this was the only advantage fully exploited by either side, because it was offered at a *tactical* level to officers who had not yet lost their initiative. From my perspective this is the single most important aspect of the conduct of this war. This war took place at a time when the commanders on neither side had much exposure to learning operational strategy, and exploiting fleeting opportunities. Thus, with the exception of people like Akhtar Malik, senior commanders followed the letter of each book, rather than its spirit, but mid ranking and junior officers were well exposed to, and understood the exploitation of fleeting tactical opportunities, though in this case, the tactical opportunity produced strategic results.

In conclusion, let me add that while my story has focused on the land operations, but both the navy and the air force made remarkable contributions to this war, specially the PAF. For fighter planes, relying almost exclusively on virtually obsolescent F-86s, which had been found wanting against MIG-19s by the American pilots in the Korean War, trusting their superior training and maintenance, the PAF out-flew and out-fought the IAF who had not only MIG-19s, but also MIG-21s and even MIG-23s. Without the remarkable success of the PAF, the blundering land forces could not even have forced the stalemate that they finally managed.

