

The Business

Chief Editor

Irfan Athar Qazi

E-mail: editorthebusiness@yahoo.com

thebusinesslhr@gmail.com

Tijarat House, 14-Davis Road, Lahore
0423-6312280, 6312480, 6312429, 6312462
Cell # 0321-4598258 Fax: 042-36362767

1270-B, Peoples Colony No I, Off: Chenone
Road, Faisalabad, Ph: 041-8555582
Cell: 0307-6000375, 0321-4598258

ISLAMABAD / RAWALPINDI

N-125 Circular Road, Ph: 051-5551654,
5532761, Cell # 0300-8567331

KARACHI

3rd Floor Kehkashan Mall 172-I Block II PECHS
Opp Rehmania Masjid Main Tariq Road
Ph: 021-34524550, Cell # 0300-8251534

Supreme Court opinion

The federal government via the President has sent a reference to the Supreme Court for its opinion on Reko Diq project under Article 186 of the Constitution. The Supreme Court will consider a question so referred and report its opinion on the question to the President." Reko Diq is known to possess the world's largest copper and gold deposits with the capacity to produce 200,000 tons of copper and 250,000 ounces of gold for more than 50 years with a cumulative revenue of over 100 billion dollar. Three observations are relevant. First, it was agreed back in March 2022 when Imran Khan was the Prime Minister that Barrick Gold Corporation will restart stalled Reko Diq project with the then government revealing to the media (though without releasing any supporting documents) that the agreed framework of the settlement constituted the following: (i) the Chilean partner Antofagasta will exit the project and withdraw its claim of 3.9 billion dollars in return for payment of 900 million dollars; Barrick will hold 50 percent of the project with a mining lease, exploration licence and surface rights, the federal government and Balochistan government will have one quarter each; (ii) the 11 billion-dollar award by an international arbitration court against Pakistan for denying the two companies the licence to develop Reko Diq; and (iii) create 8,000 jobs for Pakistanis.

The presidential reference seeks to ask the court to give its opinion on whether the constitution, the laws or the public policy prevent the federal and Balochistan governments from entering into the Reko Diq agreement or affect its validity. However, details of the agreement are still not available as it is unclear whether Barrick Gold will set up a refinery in Pakistan or take the precious metals out of the country like the Chinese operator in Saindak project, and if there is to be a cap on excavation especially if the company is allowed to export the minerals in raw form. Needless to say that there is a global competition to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and emerging economies like Pakistan have to compete with other destinations available to foreign investors. FDI is essential for us to strengthen our external account and continue to finance our import and development needs.

A mere look at the foreign reserves of Bangladesh and India and the number of Fortune 500 companies that have directly invested in those economies would suffice to highlight the importance of FDI for our country. And finally, it has to be clearly understood that FDI would not come to a war zone or a destination that is prone to terrorist activity. In fact, in such a situation the existing FDI, if any, in the country would bail out without much loss of much time.

The nuclear threat

DR IMRAN KHALID

There is visible nervousness. Events of the last three weeks are indicating gradual penetration of disappointment, lassitude and desperation in Putin's camp. Indubitably, Putin is worried about the repeated failures of the Russian forces in the Ukraine misadventure.

Putin's desperation, as evident from his brutal and ruthless shelling on Ukrainian cities, is related to his humiliation at the hands of the Ukrainian resistance forces in recent days. The loss of Kharkiv was the first major setback that exposed the logistical and operational weaknesses of the invading Russian forces. This was followed by the fall of the city of Lyman in Donetsk Oblast, a railway junction with immense strategic importance that also became a symbol of Putin's failures in Ukraine.

Just a week later, an explosion ruptured the Kerch Bridge, which was constructed on the personal orders of Putin to link the Russian mainland with the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula across the Kerch Strait. The massive damage to the Kerch Bridge, inaugurated by Putin as a symbol of resurrection of the Russian federation and pompously projected as impermeable to attack by the Russian media, was a big chastening blow to Putin.

These quick setbacks within the span of a few days triggered a despondency that started enveloping the Russian troops and catapulted Putin into a swirl of despair to hurriedly announce the mobilization of reserves, issue threat of tactical nuclear weapons, and then stage the annexation drama. This was the first major sign of Putin's brittleness – a man who for the last two decades has carefully cast himself as the invincible macho man. Ever since

February 24, when the Russian troops marched into Ukrainian territory to conduct a 'special military operation', there has never been a moment when Putin appeared this weak, disoriented, exhausted and frustrated. Apparently in a desolate payback to the Kerch incident, he has suddenly unleashed an indiscriminate shower of missiles on different Ukrainian cities including Kyiv. He is trying to appear confident by continuously moving around different capitals of the region in the name of various conferences and summits – the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in mid-September in Samarkand and now the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Astana.

He has met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan four times in the last three months as a part of his frantic diplomatic exertions to offset the Western campaign to push Russia into further diplomatic isolation after the annexation of the eastern Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. The recent UN resolution against this annexation, though symbolic at the most, marshaled the highest number of votes against Russia since the invasion.

A deeper dissection of Putin's actions in the last few weeks would reveal that he has overestimated the capabilities of the Russian army and flagrantly miscalculated the thrust of the Ukrainian resistance. For many months, the Western media has been talking about the major gaps and weaknesses of the ill-disciplined Russian army that lacks the competence and aptitude to withstand the stress of a prolonged war of attrition.

The Russian army is sinking deeper into this quagmire and its image as a fighting force is practically "shattered" after a series of routs. With each pass-

ing day, its image as an ill-disciplined fighting machine, equipped with obsolete weapons and supported by an antiquated supply chain and logistical support, is being further highlighted. Western capitals have been quite optimistic after the Kharkiv episode as the "beginning of the end of the Ukraine invasion". They believe that the weapons provided by them, particularly the M777 howitzers and HIMARS, are helping the Ukrainians outfight the Russians. It is not difficult to understand Putin's frustration, unable to digest the retreat of his army.

The massive shelling on Ukrainian towns has aggravated fears in the West – as well as Kyiv – about Putin's possible move to go ahead with the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the coming days to muffle Russia's humiliating defeat. Despite a weak and loose control over the region, Putin hastily 'legalized' the annexation of a big chunk of the occupied territories into the fold of the Russian Federation without proper preparation and consolidation on the ground. Western leadership is also taking Putin's nuclear threat quite seriously. As Putin's comeuppance continues unabating, fears are ramping up in the West that he might resort to nuclear weapons to salvage his faltering military campaign. US President Joe Biden has said that Putin isn't "joking when he talks about potential use of tactical nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons" and warned that we are facing "the prospect of Armageddon" for the first time since the Cuban missile crisis. Biden is right in feeling anxious about the possibilities of nuclear use, which – while still low – are higher than they have been in decades. That would be a dreadful scenario and the war would spiral out of control in no time.

A gradual consensus is evolving

among the Western leaders about adopting a stern stance against Putin's nuclear threats. "There is the nuclear threat, and Putin is saying he is not bluffing. Well, he cannot afford bluffing... And any nuclear attack against Ukraine will create an answer – not a nuclear answer but such a powerful answer from the military side that the Russian army will be annihilated, and Putin should not be bluffing," bluntly retorted Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief. The nuclear threat saga has a different angle too and that is related to its timing – both Russia and Nato are scheduled to hold their annual nuclear exercises in the next few days. Nato will hold its nuclear exercises, 'Steadfast Noon', in the third week of October. These week-long maneuvers are conducted at the same time every year. Russia also holds its annual nuclear exercises in the same part of the year. Putin's nuclear threat ahead of the planned nuclear exercises by the two adversaries has intensified the tension. Against this backdrop, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has also issued a discreet warning to Russia: "We will not go into exactly how we will respond, but of course this will fundamentally change the nature of the conflict. It will mean that a very important line has been crossed." The current stiffness in the tone of the Western leadership is reflecting that the West is quite serious in rebuffing Putin's nuclear saber-rattling as a ploy to threaten them and get away with re-drawing the international borders.

They think, and rightly so, that if Putin is allowed to play nuclear tunes in the Ukraine imbroglio, then it would embolden other nuclear-armed states to follow suit in settling their disputes with other states. Such a scenario will certainly shake the very foundation of the post-1945 world order.



Pakistan's participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations – A professionally rewarding experience

BRIG (RETD) DR TUGHRAL YAMIN

The United Nations Organisation (UNO) was created in the aftermath of the Second World War to save the future generations from the scourge of war. Whether it has been able to do so or not is a subject for intense debate, but the fact is that it continues to operate as a world body and member states still continue to attend its sessions and the world leaders gather there every September to give their vision of a peaceful world. The UN considers it important to give diplomacy a chance as the primary tool to prevent conflict from occurring and escalating. It was also considered useful to use other peaceful means such as negotiations, mediations and arbitration to resolve conflict.

To begin with it was not the intention of the UN to intervene militarily. But soon it was quite clear that preventive diplomacy could not always prevent conflicts and peace negotiations did not always bear results acceptable to all parties to the conflict. It was felt necessary that to stop bloodshed and to keep the belligerents apart, there had to be some kind of international military or police presence in the conflict zones. This was the primary reason for resorting to peacekeeping operations.

Peacekeeping operations were premised on three cardinal principles: A. Consent of parties; B. Impartiality; and C. Use of force only in self defense. The military observers that were deployed in Palestine and disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir were unarmed observers. Their job was and is to report ceasefire violations. They did not have the mandate to hold anyone accountable or to prevent anyone from doing so.

With time, the UN peacekeeping operations have become more robust and now involve active intervention by military forces. The first fully equipped military force to be deployed in large numbers in a conflict zone was the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) in the Suez Canal Area in 1956. Since the UN does not have a standing army, the troop contributions were made by member states. Eleven nations contributed troops for UNEF. This has been the norm for peacekeeping operations. Soldiers wear their own army's uniform but don the blue beret or helmet to signify that they are serving the UN. This provides the mem-

ber states a certain international visibility in military operations for peaceful purposes.

The first time Pakistan was asked to provide troops for UN operations was in Congo in the 1960. The pioneering batch of peacekeepers from Pakistan was logistics troops (Army Service Corps and Ordnance). Since then Pakistan has sent over 219,000 soldiers (both men and women, combatants as well as Headquarters and support staff) on 46 missions in conflict zones across the world. 168 of them have laid down their lives while serving humanity. Those who have sacrificed their lives on UN duty have been posthumously awarded the Dag Hammarskjöld medal (instituted in the memory of the second Secretary-General, who died in a plane crash while negotiating peace for the conflict in Congo in 1961). All those who have served on UN missions are awarded campaign medals in acknowledgement of their services.

Pakistani peacekeepers have served in various regions of the world including Africa, Asia, Europe and America and have operated with many armies and commanders and staffs of various nations. The UN missions have given them the opportunity to operate together with a number of armies, including Indian Army, which under normal circumstances is considered an adversary.

Pakistan has been the leading troop contributing country among the member states for the past few decades. For some time, it was the largest troop contributor in the world. As of today, it is the sixth largest troop contributor and despite its own security requirements, has deployed approximately 4,500 peacekeepers on eight missions.

Pakistan has also provided political and military leadership to UN missions. These positions have included that of the Military Advisor to the Secretary-General (Lieutenant General Maqsood Ahmed), Force Commanders (Lieutenant Generals Sajjad Akram and Sikandar Afzal, Major Generals Iqbal Asi, Tayyab Azam, Hafiz Masroor, Muhammad Khalid, and Zia Ur Rehman); and Chief Military Observers (Lieutenant Generals Imtiaz Shaheen, Tariq Waseem Ghazi and Syed Athar Ali, Major Generals Sikander Shami, Anis Ahmad Bajwa, Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak and Muhammad Tahir).

Some of our top diplomats have also served as the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General

(SRSGs) in mission areas. Prominent among these have been Ambassadors Jamshed Marker, Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, Iqbal Riza, Ashraf Jahangir Qazi and Shahryar Khan.

UN Peacekeeping is considered to be an important tenet of our foreign policy. It allows the nation to display its credentials as a member state committed to the cause of international peace and one that does not shirk the responsibility that the UN assigns it. It also provides an opportunity to showcase a professionally well trained army that can successfully undertake complex missions in dangerous circumstances.

To ensure that the peacekeepers understand the nuances and finer aspects of peacekeeping, the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS) at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Islamabad, provides pre-departure training to prospective peacekeepers. This Centre has the unique honor of having been visited by two UN Secretary-Generals, i.e., Ban Ki-moon and António Guterres. The first one inaugurated it in 2013 and the second one declared it as the regional hub of excellence for peacekeeping. The Centre not only provides training to its own officers and men but also those from the friendly countries.

At the individual level, peacekeeping duties provide a soldier good international exposure. A random survey carried out from a representative sample of officers and men of 7FF that has just returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from their peacekeeping duties has yielded interesting insights.

7FF has been deployed on the peacekeeping mission in Somalia in the early 1990s, and it is quite possible that the young soldiers might have heard stories from their fathers or uncles about their peacekeeping experiences in the horn of Africa; the mission in DRC was quite an eye opener for this new crop of peacekeepers, for e.g., it provided the 21st century peacekeeper and some of his comrades a first time opportunity to travel abroad. Introduction to international travel was a life-changing experience in itself.

Working in a conflict zone far away from the home is a novel affair and needs adjusting to. To be operating far away from family and friends and when home is really far-off and not just a weekend or a few hours bus journey away, can be extremely lonesome. Working in an alien culture and a different way of life can

be quite surreal and challenging. Although our soldiers have been involved in counter-insurgency operations for over two decades and are familiar in engaging shadowy figures, who do not wear any distinguishing uniforms and can conveniently escape by merging into the crowd after carrying out bombing or firing, yet it is an eerie feeling, when the foe is completely unknown.

Despite the hazards and challenges, the peacekeepers found it to be a professionally rewarding experience to participate in peacekeeping operations. Most were of the opinion that it provides new insights in fighting a war in different operational zones and environments. Many of them thought that the peacekeeping experience had improved their professional outlook on how modern armies operate and how they can improve their own drills and procedures.

The Government of Pakistan understands that peacekeeping provides it the means to project its soft image abroad and that's why it is willing to send its soldiers on peacekeeping duties despite heavy security commitments at home. Pakistan Army on its part strives to improve its international profile by constantly monitoring the trends and requirements of international peacekeeping. Keeping in view the prerequisite of maintaining gender balance in peacekeeping duties, Pakistan Army has introduced Female Engagement Teams (FETs).

Women have been a part of the peacekeeping operations for a long time, but it has mostly been in the area of medical support as doctors and nurses. Now Pakistani women also find an opportunity to serve as military observers, staff officers, communication officers, lawyers and engineers on peacekeeping missions. The women of the FETs have found good response from the women and other vulnerable segments of the society, such as children and old people, who trust them and turn to them for help. Pakistani peacekeeping experience has been a professionally rewarding experience and it has helped improve the image of the country.

The writer is a retired Brigadier and PhD. Member he is the Associate Dean and founding president of Centre of International Peace & Stability (CIPS) at the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad.