

The Tribune, 1 January 2005

**Maritime counter-terrorism** (Gen V.P. Malik (retd))

Counter-terrorist operations on the high seas may not require immediate Army support, particularly when the Navy has got its own Marine Commando Force. But when maritime terrorists are on the run, they will invariably move towards hideouts on land. This could be an island, or anywhere along the main coastline. As you get closer to the seashores, the chances of taking assistance of the Army (Special Forces) or asking it to conduct larger operations will tend to increase. Similarly, while on the high seas, near the coastline or on the mainland, there could be a requirement of aerial surveillance with fighter aircraft or Unarmed Aerial Vehicle (UAV) of the Air Force. A seamless planning is, therefore, necessary to cater for such an eventuality.

The Tribune, 3 January 2005

**Army, Navy in top relief gear**

Chennai, January 2: The Indian Navy and the Army have been pressed into service for relief operations in the tsunami-affected areas of Tamil Nadu while the administration, as a preventive measure against the outbreak of the epidemic, conducted mass immunisation programmes among the victims. The Indian Navy's relief operations moved into top gear when INS Khanjar sailed into Nagapattinam with 25 medical personnel and large quantities of medicines early this morning.

The Hindu, 7 January 2005

**Navy on alert for relief efforts, says Natwar Singh**

JAKARTA, JAN. 6. The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, today assured the leaders of the States along the Indian Ocean rim and in South-East Asia that New Delhi would be "happy to place the strengths of the Indian Navy for use in humanitarian relief in the region." Addressing the extraordinary summit on the tsunami disaster, organised by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mr. Singh said: "We have placed a hospital ship off the coast of Aceh, Indonesia, which has been the worst hit area. This ship is providing emergency rations, medicines, tents and first-aid kits. It is also equipped to set up on-shore medical facilities.

Dawn, 7 January 2005

**New weapons and equipment for Creeks Battalion**

ISLAMABAD, Jan 6: The Creeks Battalion of the Pakistan Navy has been reinforced with new weapons and equipment for combat patrolling, anti-aircraft defence, anti-terrorism and anti-smuggling operations, officials told Dawn. The battalion had been raised in 1999 for the defence of Sir Creek Area on the south-eastern border. "The battalion's capability to undertake anti-terrorism operations, stop smuggling and check illegal activities on Pakistan's coastal belt, has been enhanced with the induction of a Military Assault Boat (MAB) and a Hovercraft," said an official.

The Times of India, 9 January 2005

**Navy makes a 'blue-water' mark** (Rajat Pandit)

NEW DELHI: Like it or not, India's rapidly expanding role as a "super regional power" is here to stay. This was the subtle message being conveyed by Indian warships as they streamed to the shores of Sri Lanka and Maldives with much-needed help within hours of the tsunami disaster, much before anyone else. The subsequent dispatch of hospital ship INS Nirupak and corvette INS Khukri to Indonesia under Operation Gambhir, even as India itself battled the disaster on its own coast, only embellished this tsunami diplomacy. With two warships now on their way back from Maldives after successfully completing their "first-aid" mission code named Operation Castor, Navy officers on Thursday exuded satisfaction at the way their "blue-water" force has proved to be "a versatile and effective instrument of India's foreign policy". "We have proved the Navy can be used as a diplomatic instrument in support of our political and geo-strategic objectives. Unlike the Army and Air Force, the Navy is a trans-national force, not circumscribed by a country's international boundaries or airspace," said a senior officer.

The Hindu, 11 January 2005

**Navy's relief mission on course** (P. S. Suryanarayana)

JAKARTA, JAN. 10. The Indian Navy's relief mission is well on course at Meulaboh town, which was the worst affected by the earthquake and the tsunami along the Aceh coastline of Indonesia, sources monitoring the relief operations said. Today's inclement weather in the area posed challenges, but the mission is still on, and the military equipment and personnel of the two Navy ships deployed there, "are safe," the sources said. The Indian Navy personnel are now functioning entirely "in coordination with the Indonesian military and civilian authorities." They arrived off the Meulaboh coastline on January 5 and set up relief facilities the following day.

The Hindu, 14 January 2005

**Navy's prowess draws praise** (Sandeep Dikshit)

NEW DELHI, JAN. 13. While ceding space to civic relief agencies in many coastal areas, the armed forces are continuing with their relief operations in other inaccessible or badly affected areas such as Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, the Andaman and Nicobar island chain, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. "We will continue to be at places where civilian relief network needs to be supplemented or augmented," said official sources. The Navy has called off its operations in the Maldives but together with the Air Force and the Army, it is still providing medical and other assistance in Sri Lanka along with ships from the navies of the United States, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Indian armed forces were the first to reach both Sri Lanka and the Maldives soon after the tsunami struck. They then extended relief assistance to Indonesia and according to the latest reports, one warship, INS Khukri, has returned for fresh supplies while another converted into a hospital is still berthed at Meulaboh.

Hindustan Times, 18 January 2005

**India has so far sent 500 mt of relief to Lanka** (PK Balachandran)

Colombo, January 17: India has so far sent 500 metric tonnes of relief supplies to tsunami-ravaged Sri Lanka with the aircraft of the Indian Air Force and ships of the Indian Navy providing a "continuous bridge" between India and the affected parts of Sri Lanka. The Indian Air Force had flown 340 sorties to deliver relief supplies and rescue people in the 12 districts hit by the killer waves on December 26, the Indian High Commission said on Monday. Fourteen Indian ships had brought relief supplies, disaster-management personnel, medical specialists, para medical staff, engineers and technicians to the island. At the request of the Sri Lankan authorities, the Indian Navy's survey ship INS Sutlej had completed surveys of Galle and Colombo harbours.

The Times of India, 22 January 2005

**India gets thumbs up for relief in Sri Lanka**

NEW DELHI: Nearly 15 years after they were forced to leave Sri Lanka, Indian military personnel are earning kudos for providing timely support to the islanders devastated by the tsunami disaster. "We are very grateful to India for helping us," Captain Ravi Wijegunaratne, the military attaché at Sri Lanka's high commission here, told IANS. "It (timely help) shows that we are great friends." He was referring to the assistance provided by at least 1,500 Indian soldiers across the tsunami-hit areas of Sri Lanka. The soldiers, who form part of New Delhi's largest peacetime military deployment, are running kitchens, providing medical assistance to survivors and cleaning up harbours and waterways. Though a group of US Marines arrived with relief supplies Jan 10 and instantly overshadowed the Indians, there is a growing realisation among the people of Sri Lanka that it is the Indians who helped them in their time of need.

The Telegraph (India), 22 January 2005

**Promotion parity on cards**

New Delhi, Jan. 21: The defence ministry is likely to extend a new promotion policy to cover the officer cadre of the Indian Air Force and the Navy, after the two services pointed out that there was a disparity with the army. The government last month decided to partly implement the recommendations of the Ajai Vikram Singh committee report, which suggests restructuring the officer cadre of the army, with the creation of 500 additional posts at the rank of lieutenant colonels. The defence ministry had constituted the committee in 2001 to study manpower planning in the armed services. IAF chief, Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi, who took over earlier this month, said here today that defence minister Pranab Mukherjee had assured him that an order notifying the new policy would be issued shortly. A naval officer said the order was likely by the end of the month. The navy has an officer strength of about 11,000 and there is a shortage of about 1,000 - mostly at the ranks of lieutenant to lieutenant commanders.

The Telegraph (India), 28 January 2005

**Naval fleet on way back after earning applause from Lanka govt and Tigers** (Sujan Dutta)

New Delhi, Jan. 27: The naval headquarters here has ordered all ships and aircraft deployed for tsunami relief in the Indian Ocean region back to their home ports by January 31, not only because they have completed the immediate tasks on hand but also because "it is better to quit when you are still welcome". "I think we have sent the signal that we can look after the region," a senior officer said to illustrate the navy's strategic interest in tsunami relief. Indian naval ships were deployed for three overseas operations - named Gambhir (Indonesia), Rainbow (Sri Lanka) and Castor (the Maldives) - after the December 26 tsunami wreaked havoc in countries in the Indian Ocean region, in which the Indian Navy sees itself as a dominant power. The navy set sail for international assignments within 24 hours of the tsunami. Of the three international operations, it is the one in Sri Lanka that the naval headquarters and the defence ministry have carried out delicately with some trepidation. The bitter experience of Operation Pawan, the Indian peacekeeping force in 1987-89, in the island nation has still not been lived down.

The Pioneer, 29 January 2005

**Rs 742-cr package for maritime security**

The Government has accorded top priority to the threat perception about terrorism and smuggling in sea and approved a Rs. 742 crore scheme to strengthen maritime security by enhancing patrolling and surveillance in the coastal areas. The approval for toning up the maritime security was given by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on Friday. The two-hour CCS also reviewed the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the Naxalite-affected areas and Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil apprised the CCS about the steps taken to address the problem. Briefing newsmen after the CCS meeting, Union Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said the scheme was worked out by the Home Ministry costing Rs. 400 crore over a five-year period and a recurring expenditure of Rs. 111 crore.

The Times of India, 31 January 2005

**May the Force be with you...** (Rajat Pandit)

The killer tsunami was silently making its way to the island at a furious pace deep under the ocean. The mobilisation - under Operation Madad for the Indian east coast and Operation Seawaves for the A&N archipelago, apart from operations on foreign shores - was indeed colossal. The IAF, with 10 heavy-lift IL-76 aircraft, 30 AN-32 transport planes, 20 Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters, apart from Dorniers and Avros, conducted round-the-clock sorties to evacuate over 16,000 people and airlift nearly 2,000 tonnes of supplies. The Navy deployed 32 ships, 21 helicopters and eight aircraft, along with over 5,500 personnel. The Coast Guard chipped in with 19 ships, while the Army pumped in scores of medical, engineering and other teams. "Our warships, some converted into hospital ships, and aircraft carried almost 750 tonnes of material, apart from rescuing thousands of stranded persons," says a Navy officer.