UN Attack Helicopters in the Heart of Africa:
MONUC, 2004 onwards

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The African “Great Lakes” …
Congo 1960-64

- Independence from Belgium (1960)
  - Lumumba (PM)/ Kasavubu (Pres)

- Katangan secession
  - Moise Tshombe & *Union Minière*
  - suppressed by UN (1962-63)
Creation of “UN Air Force” (1961)

• Hammarskjold’s leadership
  – Armed aircraft: Ethiopia, India, Sweden

• Pres. Kennedy offers eight US jets
  – Joint Chiefs: “seek out and destroy on ground or in the air the Fouga Magister jets”
  – Thant declined
US Airlift

50 C-130s transported 9,000 UN troops in two weeks
Swedish Saab J29 Jets

"Flying Barrels"

27 October 1961

UN photo 72365
Ethiopian Sabre Jets
Indian Canberra Bombers
Flying in Formation:

2 IAF B(1) Canberras; 2 Swedish J29s Saabs; 2 Ethiopian F-86 Sabres
Securing road blocks & positions around Elisabethville, 3 January 1963
De facto No-fly Zone (NFZ)

• “A protocol for carrying out the provisions of the cease-fire, including such matters as prisoner exchange and the fixing of troop positions, was signed on 13 October 1961 at Ellsabethville. While the protocol allowed firing back in case of attack, it prohibited Katangese and ONUC troop movements.

• Meanwhile, the remaining Katanga mercenaries were leading the gendarmerie in a long series of violations of the cease-fire agreement, going so far as to launch offensive air action along the Kasai-Katanga frontier. This was sternly protested by the United Nations, which warned that Katangese aircraft involved - all of them piloted by mercenaries - would be brought down.”

(emphasis added)
UN Forcefully Ended a Secession
ONUC Conclusions I

• Showed utility of **air intelligence** and **air combat**

• Air Intelligence
  – Utility of aerial recce
    • Limits of aerial recce: Italian airmen case (13 November 1961)
  – Need for gathering intell on air capabilities, incl. in foreign countries

• Air Combat
  – Establish ROEs and Force Directives (**see paper**)
  – Recognize the dangers of collateral damage
    • Accused of bombing a hospital and hotel
    • Mortar fire on a hospital
But ....

• Mission challenged and exhausted UN
  – At HQ long before DPKO created
  – Controversial among states and in media
    • Katanga lobby
    • UK, France fears
    • Soviet objections
    • Non-aligned movement
    • Dynamics (Tshombe Prime Minister)
  – Expensive: almost sent UN into bankruptcy
  – Difficulties in field: C2, armaments (bombs), casualties, bad press
  – Messy situation

• No mission in Africa until 1989 (Namibia)
Congolese Leadership

- Mobutu (1964-1997) - Zaire
  - Civil War (1996-1997)
  - MNF (LGen Baril)

- Laurent Kabila (1997-2001)

- Joseph Kabila (2001-)
  - Elections 2006, 2011
UN Back in the Congo ...

Indian MI-24 attack helicopter
MONUC

- “Chapter VII” (2003-)
- Protection of civilians
  - Warlords (CNDP), foreign rebels (FRDC), foreign armies, government troops
- Air power
  - Airlift
  - Air recce
  - Kinetic
  - Training
MONUC Aviation

- Over 100 aircraft
- 1,600 personnel

- Helicopters:
  - Lama (Allouette III)
  - to Mi-76
  - MI-35 (Mi-24/25)

- Runway rehab.
- $200 million of 1.1 billion MONUC budget

- 20,000 personnel flown annually
- 175,000 hours with no fatalities
Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP)

• Laurent Nkunda, “chairman”
  – Former general in FARDC (Forces Armées DRC)
  – 81st and 83rd Brigades

• Bukavu 2004
• Goma 2006, 2008

Banyamulenge = ethnic Tutsi Rwandans in Kivus

Enemy of FDLR (ex-FAR) Rwandan
Mi-35 Attack Helicopter

Front View;
MI-35 in MONUC, No.104 Helicopter Unit of the Indian Air Force, 21 January 2006;
URL: http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/Images/Special/Features/Congo/Photo_2006123102447578.jpg.html

Mi-24; the Mi-35 is a variant of the Mi-24 and Mi-25

UN Photo, C. Herwig
Distributing Leaflets

Information leaflets on the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation (DDRRR) programme distributed in stronghold areas of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR).

17 July 2008, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo
UN Photo/Marie Frechon, Photo # 202011
Phase III: Progressive DDRRR

- Demobilize
- Disarm
- Repatriate
- Resettle
- Reintegrate

- MONUC Shifts to DDR in the East
  - Katanga
  - Kivus
Concept of Operations: AH Ops

Mission:

- Deterrence through presence
- Suppression of ground threats from Surface-to-Air Missile, Small Arms Fire and Heavy Machine Gun Fire.

Projected Mission Profiles:

- Armed Deterrent Presence for DDR (On Station or On Call)
- Armed Reconnaissance – Area & Route
- Armed Airmobile Escort – TF Deployment & QRF
- Armed Convoy Escort – Mission Sustainment
- UN Facility & Personnel Protection
UNAMSIL Air Ops (F)  Lt Col Oleg Grekov

UNAMSIL as a Model

Combat Requests

- FC’s intent
- Elaboration of OPLAN (F)
- Planning AirOps and Coordination with Ground Units (Part of OPLAN)
- Written Operation Order (Air Ops(F); Approved by FC
- Sec Comd, ALO
- AVN Units
- Air Support, CAO

N.B! If Task includes the Use of Weapon by Attack Helos, then either SRSG or FC must personally sign it.

Actions on Call

Sec 7. PARA 4: In case of immediate hostile activities with the potential to cause casualties to UN personnel the cmd of unit (F) may directly request FHQ concurrently with Sec HQ for air support by acft through Duty OFFR of FHQ (ext. 6453, fax 6344; VHF ch 03, c/s “Tango Delta"

Rebels

Ground Unit (F)

Sec Comd

FHQ – Duty Offr

Verbally

OPO

FC(COS)

Air Ops (F)

AVN UNIT

Air Support, AirOps CAO
“UN helicopter patrols area of the Congo where LRA rebels believed to be hiding in 2005.”
“The Mi-25 Squadron of IAF, a part of Indian Aviation Contingent based at Goma in DRC, created a record of sorts on 19 Jul 06 when it completed 1000 hrs of flying in just 10 months of their induction. The sqn operates Mi-25 attack helicopters, and is commanded by Wg Cdr M C Mishra. The squadron nicknamed “VIPERS” is engaged in peacekeeping operations in this country troubled by internal strife and turmoil. “
“Congo (Kinshasa), June 30, 2005. IAF Mi-25 Z-3129 / UN-859 at Kinhasa: This rare type is identified by the absence of chin mounted machine gun. Gun pods are mounted on the wings.”
“Indian Mil-35 on escort duties on MONUC”
“Mi-35s ready to go on a mission: The attack component of the Indian Air Contingent is provided by Mi-35s seconded from No.104 Helicopter Squadron of the IAF.”
“Indian Camp: An aerial photograph shows the layout of the camp of the Indian air contingent.”
“First briefing of Indian Air Contingent officers at Bukavu.”
“photo shows six of the Mi-17s taking off from the Indian base. The choppers are carrying Pakistani troops on the mission.”
“Local terrain necessitates usage of helicopters.”
Imagery from MONUC’s MI-35 sensor system

MI-35 Attack helicopter (AH) during the attack on Goma September 2008

Photo credits: MONUC
Forward-looking Infrared (FLIR) camera freeze frame showing two suspected rebels approaching a vehicle on road.
MONUC Case Conclusions

• Air power helped save Goma
  – 2006 and 2008

• “Peace Enforcement” requires robust peacekeeping
  – Deterrence

• Application of the “Peacekeeping Trinity”? Matter of Degree
  – Consent
  – Impartiality
  – Min use of force (defensive)
Lessons – “Wider Peacekeeping”
UN UAVs?

Israeli

Australian

Japanese

American

Canadian

Hand launched
Towards better equipped missions
To be continued ...