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D/DPS(A)/97/PS12(A)

18 Feb 00

S01 H&A DS Sec

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MFO MEDAL

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Please find attached a paper by [REDACTED] asking for the recognition of the MFO medal. I would be grateful for a reply in due course.

[REDACTED]

Major

S02 PS12(A)

MT6/75 [REDACTED]

CHOTS: PS12a(A)

Attached: [REDACTED] paper dated 15 Feb 00.

From: [REDACTED]



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15<sup>th</sup> February 2000

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE WITH THE MFO

Thank you for your time on the telephone. I enclose a case for the MFO Medal as discussed. One reason for submitting the case, is that in my current appointment I travel all over the world and keep bumping into the ribbon. It does seem to be rather an emotive issue and I was sworn to do something about the 'United Kingdom's intransigence' by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Commander Republic of Fiji Military Forces. But without doubt it is the Kiwis who feel hardest done by as they are toeing the British Line but feel their chests are bare than Australians!

Equally there are many Brits who feel cheated and I believe with good reason. The MFO was every bit as testing as some of the Balkan tours, and while this in itself no measure of merit. to the aggrieved all things are relative!

May I leave this in your capable hands, and wish you well for your imminent posting.

*Yours ever*

*[Signature]*

## RECOGNITION OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE IN THE SINAI PENINSULAR WITH THE MULTINATIONAL FORCE & OBSERVERS

### References:

- A. DIDPS(A)/97/6/1PSI2(A) dated 8 Mar 99
- B. Appendix 3 to Annex A to DIDSSEC 4/17/9 dated Mar 99
- C. Soldier Magazine, Nov 99 Issue Page 8

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In the aftermath of the Arab Israeli Wars, a unique peace keeping force, The Multinational Force & Observers (MFO), was established in the Sinai Peninsular. The United Kingdom participated in the force for ten years but is the only participating nation not to recognise service in the Sinai. This paper considers the implications, identifies the case for such recognition and makes suitable recommendations.

### BACKGROUND TO THE MFO

2. The MFO was established in the Sinai Desert to act as a buffer between the armies of Egypt and Israel following the Camp David Accords in 1979. The Sinai was the scene of major conflict during both the Arab Israeli War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, and remained a focus of considerable tension for many years afterwards. A United Nations proposal to raise a peace keeping force had earlier been vetoed by the Security Council, (specifically by the Russians who believed a UN Force would have been pro Israeli) and the ensuing creation of the MFO was seen as a masterstroke of diplomacy for which President Jimmy Carter won wide acclaim.

3. Military contingents from the original 11 member nations deployed to the Sinai on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1982.<sup>1</sup> The MFO totalling 2400 personnel, patrolled in three distinct operational zones running North to South throughout the Peninsular. The Force included Maritime, Land and Air components and although the national participation and regional circumstances have since changed, the MFO is still very much a viable peacekeeping operation.

### UNITED KINGDOM'S PARTICIPATION

4. The United Kingdom provided a contingent of 35 personnel which deployed for a 6 month tour of duty. The senior British Officer was a Lieutenant Colonel, and a wide variety of posts were held by the British Contingent (BRITCON) including liaison officers, ADC to three star Norwegian Force Commander, and the Force Sergeant Major. BRITCON was predominantly drawn from the Army with one or two exceptions.

<sup>1</sup> Original participants were: Australia, Colombia, Fiji, France, Holland, Italy, Norway, New Zealand, UK, Uruguay, USA.

5. UK contributed to the Force for 10 years which means that approximately 700 servicemen and women and a few civilians were involved in the operation. According to a recent trawl conducted by APC Glasgow ( at Enclosure 1 ) 210 personnel are still serving.

#### THE MFO MEDAL

6. Service with the MFO (minimum 56 days) was recognised with the award of the unique MFO Medal struck on 25th April 1982. This award was agreed by all original signatories. Regrettably however the United Kingdom's 'in house' position was that the medal could not be worn by its troops. It is believed the reason revolved around the fact that unlike the UN, the MFO did not represent a sovereign state. <sup>1</sup> No other British medal or bar was issued in lieu of the MFO medal.

#### THE COMMONWEALTH DIMENSION

7. The contribution to the MFO by other Commonwealth Nations was in some cases much bigger than UK's. The Fijian Army for example committed and still provides an Infantry Battalion (FUIBATT). The total number of Commonwealth troops who have served with the MFO is not known.

8. While Commonwealth Forces aspire to follow UK MOD's guidance on the wearing of foreign medals this has clearly not been possible in this case, as all nations have identified the need to recognise service in the Sinai. MFO medal ribbons are proudly worn in Canada, Fiji (including by the Commander of the Fijian Defence Forces who has two Bars!) and Australia, the latter in addition to their own medal. New Zealand wanted to recognise service with the MFO while toeing the UK Line and for this reason struck the New Zealand GSM with the Sinai bar (there are now subsequent bars). In summary participating Commonwealth Forces are at best confused by UK's lead on this subject and have all felt a need to recognise service with the MFO thus:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Recognition of MFO Medal</u>	<u>National Medal</u>
a. Australia	Yes	Yes in addition
b. New Zealand	No	Yes in lieu
c. Fiji	Yes	No
d. Canada	Yes	No

9. The UK's position undermines the value of this important international effort which is recognised by the Commonwealth ( and all other participating) nations whose commitment is ongoing and has been for nearly two decades.

<sup>1</sup> It is not known if this is fact or anecdotal.

### THE RELEVANCE OF THE MFO

10. While it is now easy to discard the Israeli/Egyptian Border as relatively peaceful, without doubt due in part to the success of the MFO, this was certainly not the case in 1982. This was very much a pioneering breakthrough in an uncertain era and was a potential tinder box in a particularly volatile region. Although the bulk of tasks consisted of monitoring Egyptian and Israeli Forces, the MFO was also involved in sensitive confidence building and liaison work. In addition a great deal of dangerous mine clearing work was also undertaken with 5779 devices being neutralised in the first year alone.

11. The MFO was every bit as important as other current Peace Support Operations (PSOs) for which recognition is readily awarded. To deny the MFO servicemen and women such recognition is difficult to comprehend both for the British and particularly the Commonwealth Armed Forces who aspire to follow UK's lead whenever possible. It should also be remembered, that had the Security Council not vetoed a peacekeeping force, the United Nations would have deployed a force which would have been awarded UN medals for precisely the same peace keeping work!

### THE ACCEPTANCE AND WEARING OF FOREIGN MEDALS

12. In explaining the rules and regulations regarding the awarding and wearing of foreign medals, at Reference A, PS 12 state at paragraph 20.

'... However, there are occasions where British Service personnel are serving in bi- or multi-national operations and there is no UK/NATO/WEU medal. Regulations need to be made to allow them to accept a campaign medal from an ally ...'

Comment: There clearly is an MFO medal. However the MFO cannot be termed an ally but a unique PSO Force to which UK was a fully committed member.

13. Further at paragraph 3 to Reference B,

... When a member of the Armed Forces is part of a bi- or multinational force, either as an individual or as a member of a formed unit and the force is on operations and

- a. There is no UK campaign medal
- b. No bar to a UK General Service Medal
- d. No campaign medal or bar to a medal issued by a multi-national organisation whose acceptance and wear has been authorised by Her Majesty The Queen and a campaign medal has been offered by one of the

participating countries for the operation in question, application may be made to Her Majesty The Queen to accept and wear such a campaign medal. This application can only be made once it is clear that no UK medal/bar or multi-national medal will be instituted for the operation in question.

Comment: The MFO Medal has not been offered by one of the '... participating countries ...' but by all of them. The ruling in this (draft) paragraph seems to encapsulate precisely the situation regarding the MFO.

14. The MFO, per se, is not an ally or participating country, The wording in paras 12 and 13 above (underlined and in italics) is quite specific and refers to medals being awarded to UK servicemen by other nations. It appears that it is for this reason that the award is not recognised although other requirements do appear to be satisfied. It is not known if an application in this regard has ever been submitted to Her Majesty the Queen - if it has it failed, perhaps because all the factors submitted herewith may not have been considered fully.

#### ALTERNATIVE RECOGNITION

15. The concept of a "... humanitarian or peacekeeping medal. .. for ... operations which do not warrant the Operational Service Medal (OSM) (which replaces the GSM 1962 WEF 1 Jan 2000) ... and do not attract the issue of a UN or NATO medal. ..." is one alternative. When details are published "... in a DCI ..." retrospective awards will probably be ruled out. However the OSM could be fitting and overdue recognition to those who served in the Sinai which could in part redress the status quo.

16. It is difficult to believe that 700 British servicemen, and many more from the Commonwealth, have served in an important international peacekeeping effort which is apparently not valued. This should not be taken as a petulant remark but rather as 'a fair reflection of opinion' by participants from the UK and overseas.

#### CONCLUSIONS

17. The MFO was created because the Security Council vetoed the deployment of a UN Force. The irony is that MFO's unique status is the very reason for its own medal being barred by UK. Had a UN Force deployed, its members would have been awarded a UN Medal for precisely the same peace keeping mission.

18. Great Britain's policy has been ignored by all participating Commonwealth nations, less New Zealand who deliberately struck their own award. UK is the only nation which affords the MFO no recognition of any kind. In the international forum this is not only embarrassing but it overtly belittles the efforts of those involved in an important

† November 1999 issue of Soldier Magazine

peace keeping operation. It is firmly believed that failure to recognise this theatre in any way undermines the very real commitment demonstrated by so many servicemen and women and pays lip service to their endeavours and of the United Kingdom's foreign policy of the day.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

19. It is recommended that recognition of service with the MFO for British and Commonwealth troops is long overdue.

20. The case for the MFO medal should be re examined. If it is deemed inappropriate for this award to be acknowledged, alternative recognition should be considered.

21. The outcome of such deliberations should be announced within the British Army and to those Commonwealth Nations which have contributed both currently and in the past to the major peace keeping effort in the Sinai Peninsular.