

## **In The Rupununi Uprising Affair, the Officer's Code of Conduct was Abandoned.**

War places men (and women) under extreme duress and abnormal conditions that can make ordinarily decent men heroes or scoundrels. In the last century, in spite of the fact that modern and highly 'civilized' nations were signatories to the Rules of War - Geneva Convention, there have been wars (more so especially in internal conflicts) in which atrocities were committed. In the present century, even though we have great technological progress (e.g. video-camera and TV), and international recognition/awareness of human rights, there are still violations of the Geneva Conventions (VGC), and highly visible atrocities are being committed.

For example, in the present war in Iraq, there was the involvement of some of the most well-trained and disciplined armies (US and British forces with long histories of military traditions) in the war. Yet during their tenure here, there was the inhumane treatment of prisoners. An example is the infamous Abu Ghraib prison; VGC took place right under the noses of many credited military officers and well-versed politicians. It occurred during the tenure of highly regarded personnel such as the military governor - Mr Paul Bremer, secretary of state-Mr Colin Powell, secretary of defence – Mr Donald Rumsfeld, and President of the USA - Mr George Bush. Mr D. Rumsfeld had even visited Iraq several times. How could the Abu Ghraib mistreatment occurred, despite all these checks and balances, embedded journalists, etc.? It seems that there cannot be enough safeguards during conflicts.

[In the Guyana situation (with regards to the Rupununi Uprising) there was absolutely no such safeguards (No Press, No Opposition allowed) were in place, much less recognition of the Geneva Convention for a group of people embroiled unwillingly in a conflict.]

Hence the arguments of Mr J Singh (SN, 18<sup>th</sup> Sept., 2005) that:(1) Sandhurst-trained military officers were present; (2) the Army Chief of Staff - Colonel Roland Pope, Governor General- Sir David Rose, and Minister of Govt.- Mr P. Reid visited; and (3) Officers categorically denying any knowledge of such improprieties (e.g. human rights violations), are not necessarily valid ones.

I can cite numerous examples (of commonwealth countries India-Pakistan, Pakistan-Bangladesh, Nigeria-Ibo, Uganda (Idi Amin), Britain- Irish/IRA etc), where British/Sandhurst-trained officers were in charge and yet atrocities occurred. In addition, numerous colonial peoples of the former British Empire have been severely chastised (in some cases for centuries) by the graduates of the 'honourable and revered' institutions of Imperial Britain. (e.g. Sandhurst's Motto: '**Serve to Lead**' was violated so often or disregarded with respect to colonial peoples – e.g. Africa, China, and India)

Field- Marshall Viscount Montgomery of Alamein KG GCB KGB DSO DL in a book about Sandhurst (1961, by Sir John Smyth VC MC MP) wrote (in the forward): '**The best type of courage is moral courage which, to me, means standing firm by what you believe to be right – and not being afraid to do so...**' Unfortunately, both the respected Col R. Pope (Chief of Staff (COS), on Secondment from the British Army), and Sir David Rose (Governor General (GG) and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Guyana) apparently did not publicly display the professional decency and/or moral courage to oppose/protest/voice the wrongful treatment meted out (by the Burnham/PNC Govt.) to the respected Major Raymond Sattaur (heir apparent to Col R. Pope), and/or other decent officers whose loyalty was suspect (i.e. believed untrustworthy or of questionable loyalty because of ethnicity and /or of their beliefs in the most cherished concept of

neutrality of the army). Therefore both the Chief of Staff and Commander in Chief failed the men under their command.

In addition, neither of these men protested that the Burnham/PNC Govt. was violating (the previously agreed to) recommendations of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). Any high placed official in the military and police would have been aware of the disastrous consequences that lie with non-implementation of these recommendations. In fact, one of the reasons for the presence of Col R. Pope (and others of the British army) was to help train officers as recommended by the ICJ. It is truly sad that neither of these respected men measured up to the high standards set by the famous military genius, Montgomery, with regards to the code of conduct of officers of the British Army.

Dr C. Jagan (leader of the opposition) and the PPP were making very serious charges about the conduct of the army publicly (in Parliament and in the Mirror Newspapers), yet neither of these respected Gentlemen, the Chief of Staff and Commander of the armed Forces, called Dr C. Jagan and asked him to produce his evidence of misconduct and /or withdraw his allegations. We would think that any Chief of Staff and/or Commander in Chief (of a democracy) would be so incensed about the charges brought against the army under his/their watch and they would definitely want to launch an investigation, immediately. Since no investigation was held, this would therefore constitute a dereliction of duty and /or responsibility.

In addition, neither of these respected gentlemen of honour had the nerve to tell the Minister of Defence and Prime Minister, Mr LFS Burnham, that the 1968 elections were rigged and therefore his PNC/Govt. was itself illegal. All of Guyana and the whole world knew about this anomaly. Sir David Rose did not protest nor resign in protest. Sad to say, it seems like Sir David Rose opted for political/career expediency and not in the interests of the people of Guyana, he had solemnly sworn to serve. (I am willing to withdraw this statement if there is evidence to the contrary. I hope that Sir David Rose registered a vehement protest since that would be the least that he could have done. This is the least we would expect from a later decorated National Hero.)

My argument is that these men in high position (cited by Mr J Singh) did not take a morally courageous stand when/where it would have mattered greatly in the life of this young nation. Maybe, the world would have noticed our plight, and possibly it would have prevented us from going downhill fast (and/or fan out across the globe)! The Burnham/PNC now knew that the men who mattered most would not oppose him and his regime. (Col R. Pope was a foreigner and probably did not want to get involved in local politics and has an excuse; with Sir David Rose, an excuse for the non-execution of his primary duties is unknown.) One may reasonably speculate, that most likely, they would not oppose Burnham/PNC because both the British and American Govts wanted Dr Jagan and the PPP out of office. This pathway seemed the lesser of two evils.

Since the army brass (COS and GG) did not accept their responsibilities of preserving/defending the integrity of the army officers and soldiers, the question is: Whom can the honest men turn to for help and have their identities protected? It would certainly not be their COS, and their Commander in Chief. Most likely, decent army personnel quit in disgust.

From the above, we see that the witnesses Col R. Pope (COS) and Sir David Rose (GG and Commander in Chief) called forward by Mr J Singh are at best themselves of questionable conduct in dealing with situations that require great moral courage that **means standing firm by what you believe to be right – and not being afraid to do so.**

Yours sincerely,  
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