

commander do if the path of the convoy being escorted is blocked by unarmed women and children?

(iv) **Lack of mandate**

**It is a little known fact that, at least till I left the mission area in March 1993, there was no “peacekeeping” mandate for Bosnia-Herzegovina.** There were many occasions on which UNPROFOR was criticized by the media, NGOs operating in the field, and by some political leaders, for not using ‘military muscle’ to intervene in the fighting between the belligerents or to prevent alleged attacks on innocent civilians ostensibly taking place in one place or another. The dilemma that faced us as senior military commanders was quite unrelated to either the capacity for taking hard decisions or that of personal courage.

- Should the decision have been to send a military contingent to deal with a situation that one’s own troops are not witness to, and in the process, the contingent suffers personnel casualties, the parent government of the contingent would be well within its right to query why the mandate was exceeded. On the other hand, should the very same decision have been questioned by the leader tasked to carry out the intervention, on the grounds of it being outside the provisions of the mandate, the commander would need to now deal with what has become a ‘discipline’ problem.

No manual provides answers to such situations; nor do the political leaders or bureaucrats who legislate from positions of authority; nor do the hyper critical media persons. Such problems can only be resolved on the basis of a clear mandate and a clearly defined overall political purpose.

(v) **Mission creep**

**In the absence of such a clear general mandate, there is an almost inevitable process of mission creep.** In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), as it was called, was set up with a mandate for tasks connected with three United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia. Military, police and civilian personnel, and the equipment had not arrived in full even by end-June 1992. The Security Council however commenced conferring extensions of mandate without ensuring that the negotiated base for execution of such additional tasks had been laid, and without providing for the resources in personnel and equipment. In the six months between end-June and December 1992, I received nine extensions of the mandate, namely:

- reopening of Sarajevo airport for humanitarian purposes
- establishment of a joint commission and functions in what was called “pink zones” in Croatia
- monitoring of heavy weapons around Sarajevo