Peace Support Intervention Operations

South African Capability is Inadequate

Peace Support Intervention Operations

Some situations will require forceful military intervention to bring about a situation that allows peace-enforcement, let alone peacekeeping.

There are also other situations that demand intervention by a military force, for instance:

- Non-combatant evacuations; and
- Some humanitarian crises where armed groups prevent aid being delivered effectively, as in Somalia in the 1990s.

Some of these intervention operations will differ from war-fighting only in their scale, not in their intensity.

Key Factors to Consider:

- **The nature of the opposing forces:**
  - Non-state actors, such as armed gangs, militias and guerrillas, some of the latter with heavy weapons.
  - Elements of regular forces.
  - Special forces of other countries.
- **The challenge of the strategic distances involved:**
  - For deployment and for logistic support.
- **The challenge of the operational distances involved:**
  - For deployment, redeployment; and logistic support.
- **The challenges to tactical movement:**
  - Terrain; and
  - Often few and poor roads.

Intervention Operations: Opposing Forces

Even the non-state, irregular forces are increasingly:

- ***Experienced*, often with a decade or more of operations under their belt;**
- ***Well-trained and led*, often by former regular officers and NCOs, some educated and trained by major armies;**
- ***Well-armed and equipped*, with heavy weapons, vehicles, communications equipment, and even air supply; and**
- ***Are often operating on their home ground*, intimately familiar with the terrain and the people.**

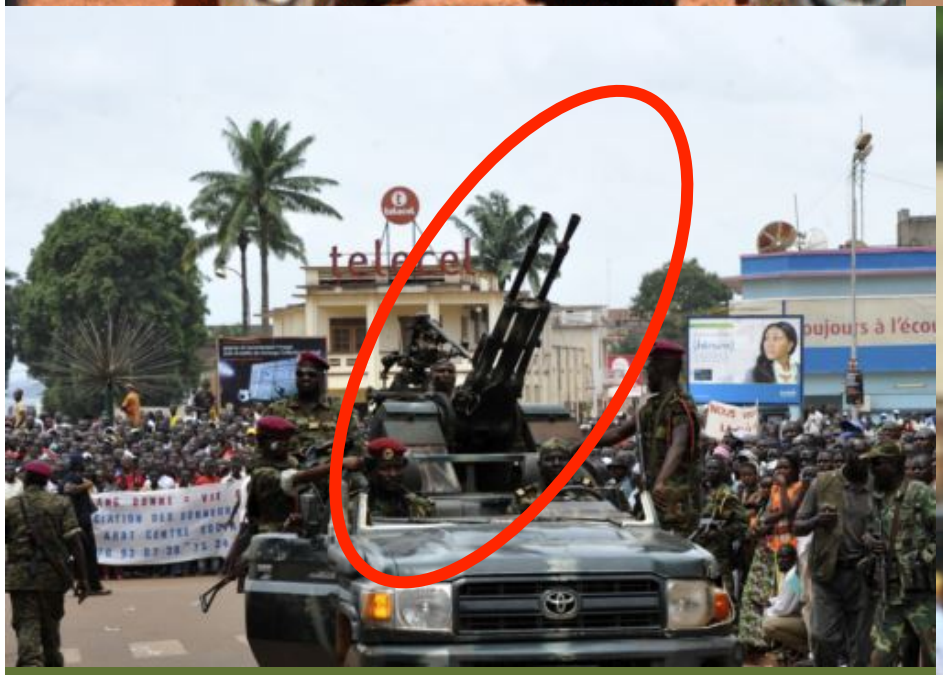
And the nature of the opposing force can change drastically in a *very* short time.

No Longer the Norm

Seleka in December 2012 – 1 000 to 1 200 Poorly Armed and Led

Seleka in December 2012

Seleka in March 2013



Darfur – The Opposing Irregular Forces

Government Militia

Janjaweed

JEM Guerrillas

NLF ‘Technical’

Mali: Rebel Forces

DRC - M23: Serious Guerrillas

DRC - M23: Heavy Weapons

Regular Forces

Ugandan T-90S and Su-30MK

Kenyan BRDM-3

Kenyan Ka-52

The Tyranny of Distance

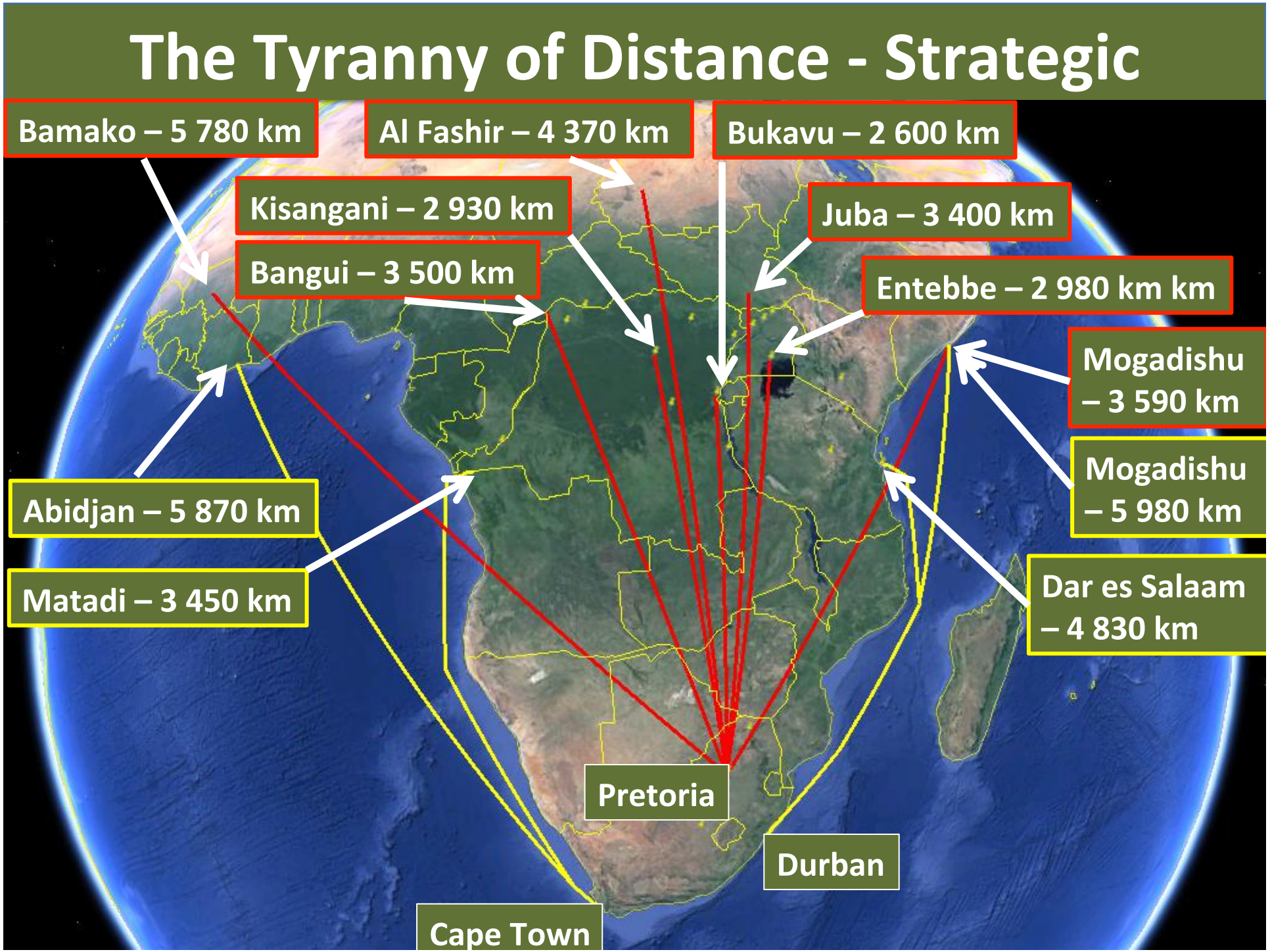
The practicability of intervention operations in Africa will be determined by:

- **The distance to the theatre of operations;**
- **The distance from the port/airport serving as mounting or staging base to the area of operations;**
- **The distances within that area of operations;**
- **The state of the airfields in that area of operations; and**
- **The state of the roads within that area of operations.**

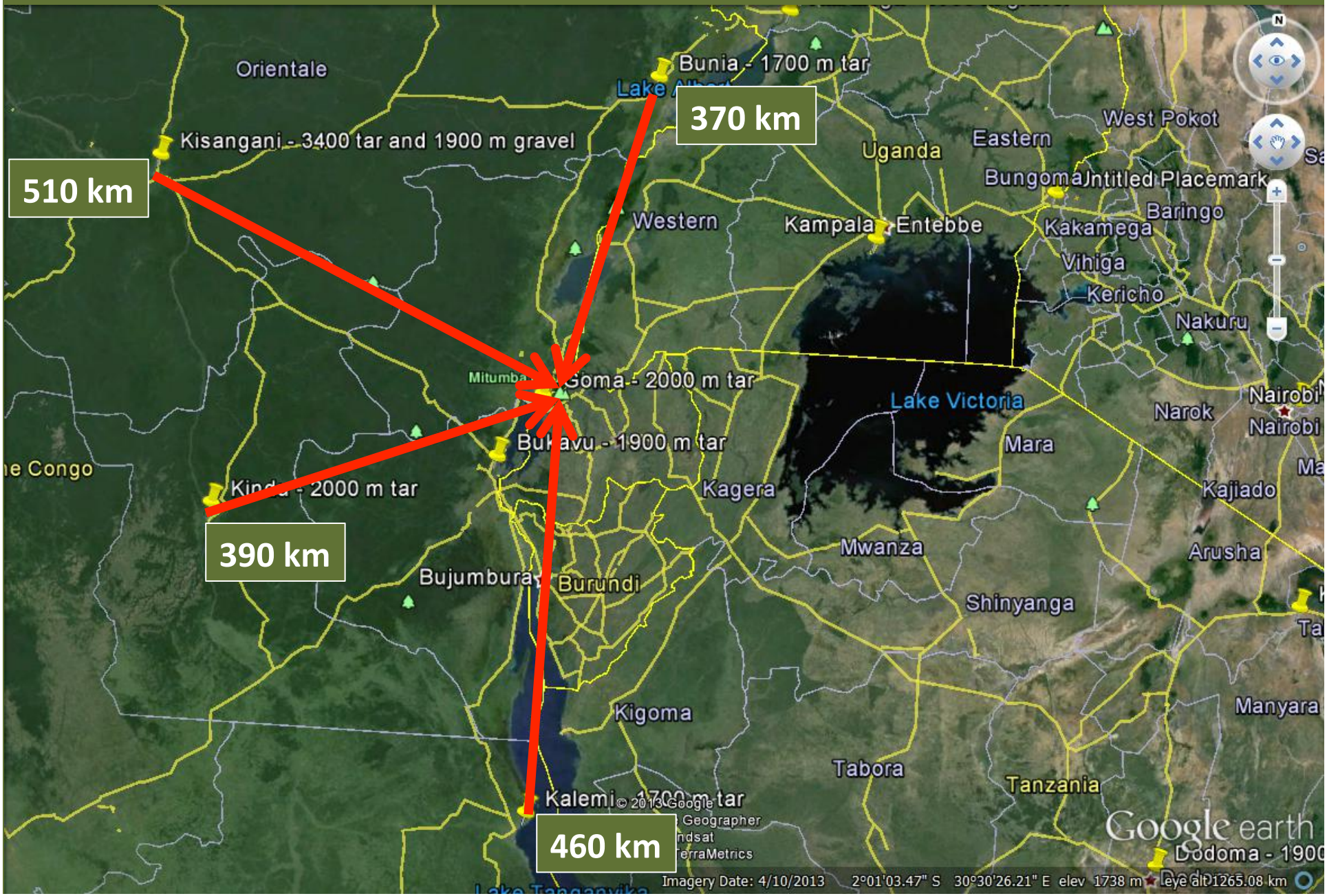
For airlift operations it is critical to bear in mind not only the ability of the runway to handle heavy transport operations, but also:

- **The size of the dispersal area, which will govern the rate at which aircraft can be turned around (unloaded and refuelled);**
- **Whether there is safe fuel available; and whether it is safe to keep aircraft on the ground for refuelling.**

The Tyranny of Distance - Strategic



The Tyranny of Distance: Operational



Terrain: Central African Republic

Terrain: North Kivu, Eastern DRC

Terrain: Sudan - Northern Darfur

Roads, Bridges and Airfields can be Basic

Operation Palliser - Sierra Leone (2000)

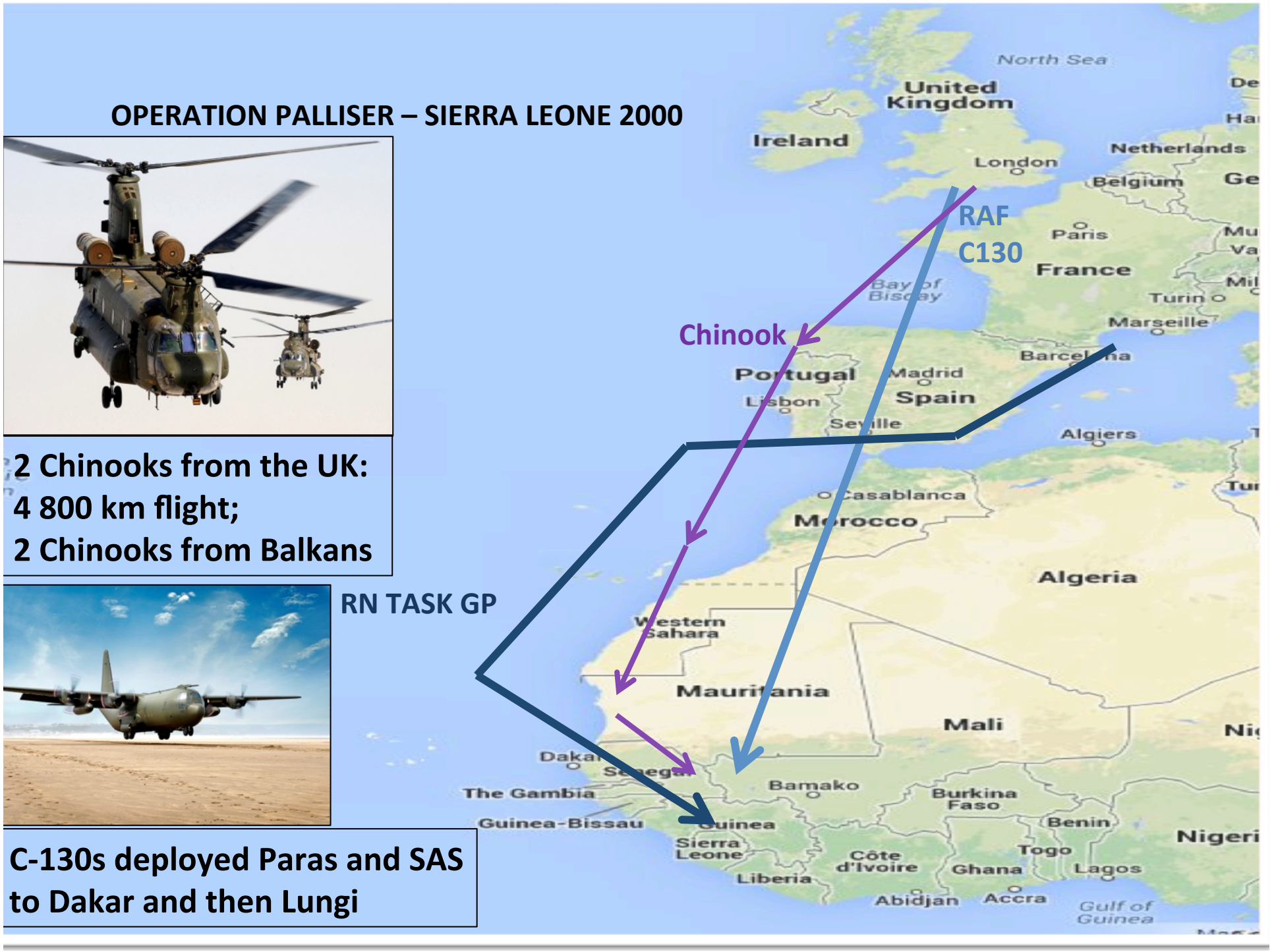
- May 2000 – RUF rebels approaching Freetown; elements of UN force besieged in other towns.
- 6 May: Operational Reconnaissance and Liaison Team.
- 7 May: 1 Para Bn to Dakar; C Coy and SAS from their to Lungi Airport, Freetown; Remainder 8 May.
- 7 May: 4 Chinooks self-deploy from UK and Balkans.
- 8 May: Begin evacuation.
- 14 May: HMS Illustrious, HMS Argyll and the Amphibious Ready Group (42 Cdo, helicopters) aboard HMS Ocean and LSLs.
- Total strength around 4 500.

OPERATION PALLISER – SIERRA LEONE 2000

2 Chinooks from the UK:
4 800 km flight;
2 Chinooks from Balkans

RN TASK GP

C-130s deployed Paras and SAS to Dakar and then Lungi

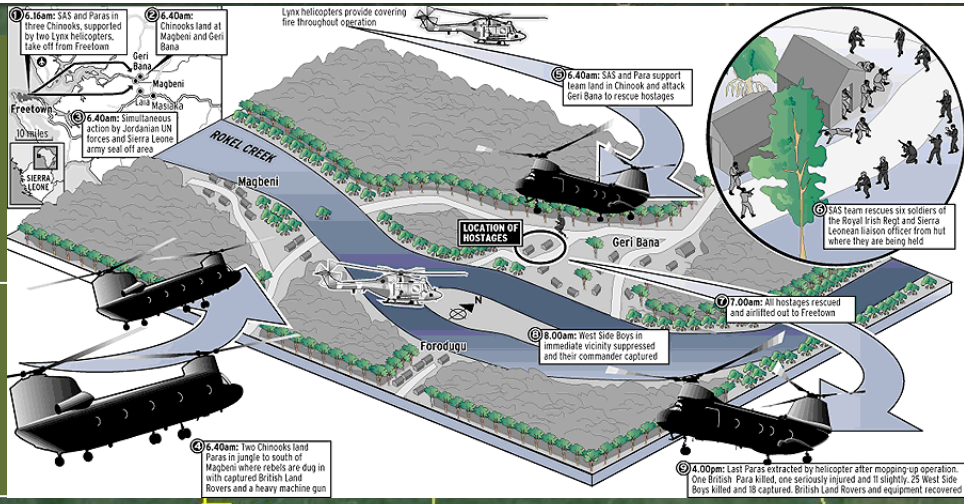


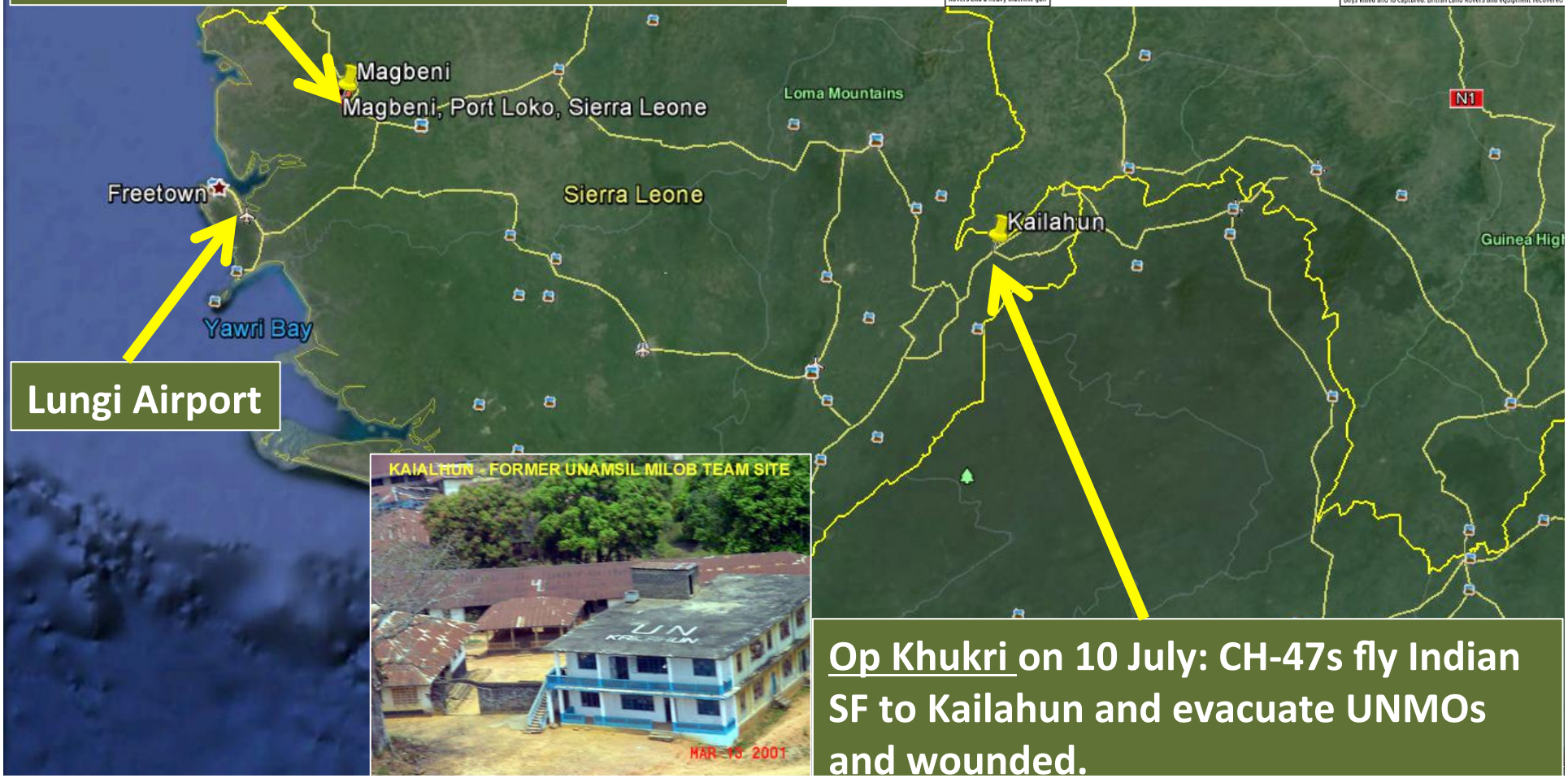
Operation Palliser - Sierra Leone (2000)

The Naval Component: Helicopter Carrier, Aircraft Carrier, Landing Ships, Frigates and Replenishment Ship; Harriers, Helicopters and Landing Craft

Operation Palliser - Subsidiary Operations

Op Barras 10 September: CH-47s deploy A Company 1 Para and D Sqn 22 SAS to rescue patrol held by irregulars.



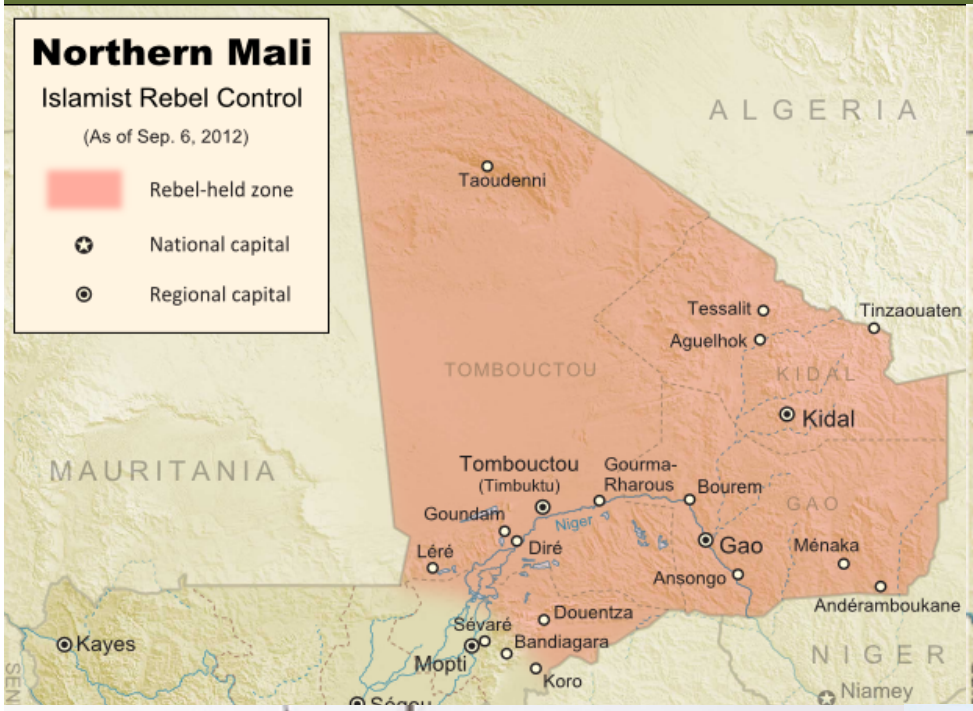


Op Khukri on 10 July: CH-47s fly Indian SF to Kailahun and evacuate UNMOs and wounded.

Operation Serval – Mali (2013)

- Tuareg rebellion commenced in mid-January 2012.
- By mid-July rebels held most of northern Mali.
- January 2013 rebel forces resume offensive and France intervenes, striking rebel forces and driving them back.
- Total French deployment around 4 000 in-country.
- Chad forces join French; other African forces deploy rear area security forces.

Mali: Areas held by Rebel Forces



French Intervention in Mali: Op Serval

LHD Dixmunde landed heavy vehicles at Dakar

C-17s flew vehicles to Bamako

FRANCE
2e RIMa
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
WESTERN SAHARA
MAURITANIA
MALI
SF
NIGER
21e RIMa
CHAD
SUDAN
ERITEA
YEMEN
OMA
SENEGAL
THE GAMBIA
GUINEA-BISSAU
GUINEA
BURKINA FASO
1er REC
BENIN
NIGERIA
SIREEA LEONE
LIBERIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
TOGO
GHANA
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CAMEROON
3e RPIMa
1er RHP
17e RGP
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
GABON
CONGO
DR CONGO
6e BIMa

The French Intervention in Mali

The French Intervention in Mali

The French Intervention in Mali

MONUSCO: Force Intervention Brigade

Comparing MONUSCO's 'Intervention brigade' with the two operations outlined and, indeed, with earlier operations in Africa, this brigade seems decidedly too small, ill-armed and ill-equipped to be successful, the more so as the framework security brigade in North Kivu has been reduced by 25% to provide one of the FIB's three battalions:

- **North Kivu is the size of Croatia, and has some 6 million people living in it, many refugees in the forest.**
- **It is for the most part mountainous and heavily forested.**
- **Depending on the sources, the various 'armed groups' add up to between 4 000 and 14 000, and could be reinforced.**
- **This is a counter-guerrilla operation: Remember the rule of thumb – ten soldiers per guerrilla?**

MONUSCO: Force Intervention Brigade

MONUSCO proposes to deal with those 'armed groups' with just three infantry battalions in the intervention brigade and just three for static security purposes.

Even to an optimist, that force seems inadequate:

- **Too few troops for protection missions;**
- **Too few troops for the offensive brigade;**
- **Too few special forces to find the armed groups;**
- **Inadequate air reconnaissance/surveillance capability;**
- **Inadequate tactical airlift;**
- **Utterly inadequate close air support and heavy weapons;**
- **No troops to secure areas cleared of 'armed groups'.**

If M23 and the other serious guerrillas groups decide to 'sit this one out', it will be a pointless walk in the woods. If they decide to fight, there is real risk of it becoming messy.

MONUSCO: Force Intervention Brigade

Worse, it seems that South African officers with experience of operations in the DRC, Burundi and Darfur argued for at least South Africa to deploy a battalion group – a reinforced infantry battalion, including an additional infantry company and heavier weapons, but were told no, the standard 850-strong infantry battalion with light APCs will suffice.

Perhaps this should not be a surprise:

- What can we expect from a UN that does not even have a grasp of its history? It talks of this as its first "offensive" mission. What about the 1961/62 UN operations against Katanga's attempted secession?
- When was a UN operation serious, with adequate forces, weapons and rules of engagement?

South Africa: Required Military Capability

South Africa needs to take a lead in the future, not depend on far away diplomats out of touch with reality. But that will require adequate military capability.

Deployable and sustainable forces:

- **Early-entry and follow-on forces;**
- **Forces for sustained deployment;**
- **Forces suited to different missions and different terrain; and**
- **A ready reserve to handle unexpected developments.**

The ability to 'poise' forces at a forward base or offshore.

Strategic lift: Air, sea and rail; and vehicles suited to the air- and sealift available.

Operational lift: Air, road, river; and light vehicles for rapid operational and tactical airlift.

South Africa: The Way Forward

Expanded SANDF Capabilities Required:

- Expand and enhance SF including, insertion means;
- Expand and properly equip early-entry forces;
- Acquire precision weapons, contained effect munitions;
- Acquire heavy and light airlift and tanker capability;
- Acquire sealift capability and additional support ships;
- Acquire heavy-lift helicopters;
- Develop inshore, lake and riverine capability;
- Replace medium and heavy equipment

Expand Regional Capability:

- Operationalise SADC Brigade and Reaction Force;
- Optimise South African contribution.

We are expected to be the 800 lb Gorilla; it is time to live up to those expectations.