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Lack of Security for Gen Brar in London: Shocking Ineptitude

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Lt. Gen. (retd) K. S. Brar, who played a prominent and courageous role in the military action code-named OP Blue Star in the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June 1984, was the target of a pre-planned and determined attack by unidentified elements in London on the night of September 30, 2012. He escaped death.

2. In an interview to Sonia Singh of NDTV on the night of October 2, 2012, his wife said that before they left India for London, the Army unit responsible for their physical security in India was informed of their travel plans and their planned stay at London.

3. Despite this, the British security agencies do not appear to have been informed of their visit to London either by the Indian High Commission in London or by the Indian intelligence agencies in order to ensure their protection till they returned to India.

4. Their physical security in India is taken care of by the Army. Their security during their foreign travels is the responsibility of our intelligence agencies and diplomatic missions.

5. For reasons that are not clear, neither our intelligence agencies nor our mission in London appear to have taken any action to ensure his protection. He escaped largely due to his bravery, alertness and military reflexes.

6. Many senior officers of the security forces---military and civilian--- have over the years played leadership roles in counter-terrorism and

counter-insurgency operations. Some of them like those who played a role in Ops Blue Star in 1984 and Black Thunder in 1988 against Khalistani terrorists are vulnerable to retaliatory attacks by the terrorists.

7. Their security is taken care of by their units while they are still in service. After they retire, they are dependent on their units and the concerned civilian departments for their continued protection.

8. In retirement, military officers are more vulnerable than civilian officers. Retired civilian officers have a web of contacts in the civilian departments concerned and in the Ministry of External Affairs. They use these contacts to ensure security for them when they go abroad.

9. Military officers spend their career mostly in barracks or cantonments. They do not have that kind of contacts in the civilian security bureaucracy. They intimate their travel plans to the Army unit responsible for their security in India and presume that necessary follow-up action will be taken. That is what Gen. Brar seems to have done.

10. Shockingly, there does not appear to have been any follow-up action on his intimation. He and his wife found themselves without protection in London.

11. Nothing can be more embarrassing or distasteful for a military officer than to go around asking for physical security in retirement. They expect and presume that the Government in recognition of their brave role would do whatever needs to be done on its own to ensure their protection.

12. This was apparently not done in the case of Gen. Brar, one of the most vulnerable officers. The Government should immediately hold a detailed enquiry into this and see that such instances of ineptitude are not repeated.

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