

INDO-BRITISH EXPEDITION TO THE RIMO GROUP

A REPORT

In 1986 I made preliminary enquiries at the I.M.F. HQ in Delhi to visit the Rimo Group. Three years later our joint expedition arrived at the road head half a mile beyond the Indian Army Base Camp and at the very snout of the mighty Siachen Glacier. There had been many difficulties in reaching this stage. Firstly we had been re-routed to Apsarasas II as the I.M.F. had double booked Rimo III to an American group. Then they were not able to raise a team and the fighting had escalated between Indian and Pakistan border troops. We were returned to Rimo III prior to our departure from Delhi. Final written permission for Rimo III was slow in coming, as was army transport which meant a three week delay in Leh. This event was to cause serious problems later, cutting into our time to acclimatize and to climb. One of our members, Robert Schauer from Austria, had already returned home. The shortage of time was to put considerable strain on the morale of the members.

We are very grateful for all the help we have received in India. We are especially grateful to Mr. Sarin, the President of the I.M.F. who, despite being unwell, did all that was possible to speed up our permit. We are also grateful to Narinda Kumar, Hukam Singh and Heera Lohia for valuable advice and Harsh Vardhan of World Expeditions for acting as expedition agent in Delhi. We would also like to express our gratitude for all the support given in the U.K. and Canada by many firms and individuals.

The foreign contingent consisted of Stephen Sustad (USA), Nick Kekus (UK), Rob and Laurie Wood (CAN), Sharu Prabhu (BOMBAY) and myself (UK). *Done Scott* The Indian members consisted of Tsewang Smanla (31), Kannaiya Lal (K L) (44), Mohan Singh (38), a radio operator and a doctor as well as our leader Sonam Palzor). They were all very experienced Himalayan climbers. Sonam had reached the summit of Mount Everest in 1984; Smanla had climbed 7 peaks in the previous few years including Sasar Kangri I, II & III on separate expeditions; Mana Peak and Rimo I last year.

The problem of porters in the Nubra Valley declining invitations to carry for expeditions is well known. We had hoped to overcome this problem by hiring Nepalese residents in Leh but this was not possible since the deterioration of relations between India and Nepal. Sonam hoped to counter this setback by employing 8 young Chandigarh students from his home town Leh for the duration of the expedition to supplement the few local porters available.

We set off from our road head dump on 19th June up the lower Siachen to reach Dust Camp in the Terong Topko Valley 3½ hours later.

On the 22nd June the Leh boys and ourselves carried up to B.C. (4300m ca). The Leh boys returned to Dust Camp whilst most of the climbers occupied B.C. The Leh boys left the expedition two days later finding the going too difficult. We had about 20 porters from Panamic who continued to carry well, albeit with reduced loads of between 15-20kg. All the climbers were engaged in heavy load carrying throughout the expedition. Smanla, KL and Mohan often carried huge loads, sometimes 35kg.

On 26th June we carried to A.B.C. (4800ca) and occupied it two days later. We were now in sight of the Rimo Group seen fleetingly through a sea of cloud. Bad weather persisted during our acclimatisation and reconnaissance walks up the North Terong Glacier and a side trip up to the Ibex Col (6200m). Rob Wood sadly departed for home leaving his wife Laurie to continue with the expedition. Rob had worrying chest pains and so returned to Canada on the advice of the expedition Doctor.

On 7th July, having decided that only Rimo II was in condition at the time for a joint ascent, we established a C.I. (5400ca) near the base of the West Buttress of Rimo II. Sonam had agreed to this additional peak and also to an extension of our permit until the end of the month. This climb would fulfil one important goal of the expedition - to make a joint ascent. It would also enable us to fully acclimatize and give all the fresh snow on Rimo III a chance to consolidate. Nick, Stephen and myself would tackle the South Buttress, whilst our Indian companions would climb the West Ridge. This basic plan had been worked out between Sonam and myself back in Delhi. Unfortunately the three Indian climbers later decided that they preferred to climb up the Couloir between Rimo III and Rimo II. We arranged to meet at the 'Notch' some 400 metres along the North Ridge running from the Couloir Col to the Summit of Rimo II. From the Notch we would all climb together, fixing all our 6 climbing ropes if the Indian members required them.

I was disappointed at this diversion and not now having the chance to share our concept of alpine-style climbing with our Indian friends. I tried to persuade them into breaking new ground but without results. Subsequently Sonam indicated that the Indian team thought the route we had suggested was technically too difficult. Rajeev, the L.O., offered an explanation to the effect that the military climber is at risk throughout the year during the course of his job and will usually seek out a safe route to an unclimbed summit rather than plump for a more interesting and technically difficult route. We foreigners live in relative comfort and security for most of the year and wish to contrast that with a few days risk taking. This is fair comment except that we considered the couloir more risky than from rock fall and avalanche than the ridge. Smanla was struck on the head and back by falling rock during a day of rope fixing in the couloir.

On 10th July, Laurie, Sharu and myself set off in perfect weather up the West Ridge. Nick and Stephen followed and soon overtook our rope of three. The snow conditions were good and short rock (IV) and mixed sections interesting. We set up Biv. I at 6300m ca. The next day after climbing steep ice (III) and a near vertical mixed gully (IV), Stephen and Nick reached the North Ridge where they set up their bivouac. Earlier that day the Indian lads had fixed ropes up to this camp from the Couloir Col. They had left Tibetan prayer flags around the camp site. Sharu, Laurie and myself camped 3 rope lengths below as Nick and Stephen had indicated that their site would be very cramped for seven climbers.

We arranged to meet up with the others as originally planned at the Notch further along the North Ridge. With this in mind, Laurie and I fixed our two ropes across and towards the Notch that evening. We could see the Indian team over on the Col packing their camp.

On 12th July we set off up our two ropes. Nick yelled down that the Indians had not arrived at his camp with Stephen. A few minutes later he yelled down again with the surprising news that the three Indians were half way up Rimo IV! They had abandoned Rimo II. Our route directly across to the 'Notch' proved too difficult for Sharu who had not before experienced such steep ice covered in powder snow when carrying a heavy sack. We then climbed steeply (IV) straight up to the camp now empty of Nick and Stephen who were already 500m higher on the final rocky summit ridge of Rimo II. Seen head-on, this final section looked very steep. I was not sure that Sharu could cope with the difficulties. Laurie had a severe headache so we stayed in camp. We could see the Indian lads camped down on the South Rimo Glacier below their new route up the moderately angled Western slope of Rimo IV. Sharu commented that it was typical of most Indian ascents in the Himalaya. There are of course the exceptions.

The North Ridge camp afforded fantastic views of superb mountain scenery. In the far distance we could see the low hills surrounding the purple-coloured Dapsang Plains in the East. There was K2 far away to the North West, and in the South West I could make out the even more distant Nanga Parbat where my son Michael was leading his first high mountain expedition with Swedish friends.

These East Karakoram mountains receive so much more precipitation than the Baltoro region only 70 miles away in Pakistan. From our vantage point we looked out over the Teram Shehr ice plateau, a vast snow field all above 6000m ten miles away. Beyond the magnificent Saltoro Kangri and further west, K12 with their hanging glacier and ice fields shone bright in the late morning sun.

I was grateful to be there - to have that opportunity to fill in one more piece of the puzzle in my personal blank on the map. This, plus several brews of tea, helped me accept the fact that my climbing up had suddenly come to an abrupt halt.

I was envious of Nick and Stephen. How good it must have felt cutting loose from the burdens of tent, food and fuel; going for it, climbing for the top, light and free, up crisp snow and brown granite rock. I was still naturally a little depressed not to have gone for Rimo II, especially as I had conceived the route and had worked up a committing enthusiasm for it. Maybe there would be time to climb a series of snow ramps on the north face direct to the summit that Victor Saunders had spotted in 1985. Then there was our main objective, Rimo III's South Buttress, coming into condition. Both routes were visible from our camp - projects for the future. Yet already we had achieved a hard climb up the West Rib to 6660m on Rimo II with Laurie and Sharu climbing well enough considering the difficulties and the heavy sacks inevitable with alpine style climbing.

Nick and Stephen climbed over the fore summit disappearing from view. Five hours later they were back in sight with the sun low on the horizon and the snow now wet and unstable. They had only one climbing rope for abseiling. It was for them a race against time before the dark made it a nightmare descent of shimmering moon shadows and cold. In these more northerly latitudes the twilight lasts longer than in other parts of the Himalaya. Nick and Stephen arrived back at 9.30pm, just in time but exhausted from a great climb.

During the next two days we descended to A.B.C. where we met the Indian team. They had covered nearly 20 miles, crossing the Col between Rimo III and Rimo II, climbing Rimo IV, then walking all the way round over Ibex Col back to A.B.C.; all in all a fine piece of mountaineering.

On 14th July we discussed the Indian team changing course in mid-stream. Their reasons fluctuated between them not having enough food and fuel, the fact that they preferred snow to rock and that they had thought we were against fixing rope. Further discussion was now pointless so we turned to the future. Stephen, Nick and myself had left our gear, food and fuel at CI ready for Rimo III. That evening we radioed our list of food requirements for the rest of the expedition down to Sonam at B.C. The Indian lads. As far as we knew, were preparing for the West Ridge. Sharu and Laurie had decided to await our return at CI.

Early next morning Rajeev arrived with a letter from Sonam terminating the expedition. Sonam could not be contacted as the radio was turned off and he had gone down towards the Indian Army Base Camp. During the next three days we sent various messages back and forth by runner but to no avail. There was no option in the circumstances and in view of all that happened on Peter Hillary's expedition we had no choice but to comply with orders and bring down our gear. The porters were already busy in that direction. In fact we awoke on the 15th to find the kitchen at A.B.C. had been dismantled and taken away to B.C. I went down to the Indian Army B.C. to the accompaniment of shell-fire more intense than usual. At about this time the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India were discussing a cessation of hostilities in Islamabad.

Sonam at first appeared pleased to have led a 'successful' expedition. This is how it would appear having made the first ascent of Rimo II and the second ascent of Rimo IV. Already the outside world acknowledged this by sending five congratulatory telegrams: one from Mr Sarin, the President of I.M.F., ended his communique with "good luck on Rimo III"! Sonam agreed that his decision had been impulsive. He indicated later that he had been under pressure from the L.O. to end the expedition. It is important that some climbers such as doctors, radio operators and liaison officers enter into the spirit of the expedition and do not put pressure on the team to finish early through their own boredom and homesickness.

This expedition had not been a complete waste of time for me despite three years planning and organising the trip at a personal cost of about £1,500 for each foreign member. Stephen and Nick were well pleased with their ascent of Rimo II, as were Smanla, KL and Mohan with their climb of Rimo IV. We were privileged to have been allowed into the East Karakoram; to have seen so many fine peaks, most of them still unclimbed, and to have visited the Nubra Valley. There are for me unforgettable memories of the Buddhist people, their villages and the huge granite buttresses of the Upper Nubra Valley shining in the light of the full moon on our arrival, and in bright sun light on the way out. It is the most impressive valley I have ever seen.

One day, when the politicians no longer use this area to find external solutions for their internal problems, we may return to the East Karakoram, wiser men from this expedition and more able to cope with the vagaries of these joint expeditions.

Access to the Siachen Glacier is now possible by road throughout the year. The army has plans to drive that road another 20 kilometres above the Glacier along the granite mountain sides. Work has already started on this scheme although they had only progressed about 100 metres in the two months we were there. Future generations will look back at the stupidity of this decision made for short term military gain at the expense of preserving this great wilderness area for all time. The wind of change is blowing strong every year throughout the world, in the direction of conservation. The Indian and Pakistan Governments should consider carefully what they now

do. There is a road already being built towards the snout of the Baltoro Glacier. Pakistan soldiers shoot ibex from their helicopters and piles of discarded fuel cans litter the Siachen and Baltoro Glaciers.

On the walk up the Siachen we had followed a telephone wire strung up on crossed poles. This wire connects the forward fighting troops with the commanders at Army Base Camp and the politicians back in Delhi. On the way up to K2 I had followed a similar wire strung up above the Baltoro Glacier in Pakistan. In the not-too-distant future, the politician may on both sides of the border use these same lines of communication to order back the troops and then pull out of the mountains back down to the plains. What of the future for the Karakoram Mountains? They have been closed to all but a few expeditions for so long now that there will inevitably be a flood of visitors should restrictions be removed. If that happens, the real challenge has to be met. One by-product of the army presence in the East Karakoram has been to preserve the wildlife and scant vegetation of the region. How those juniper trees enhance the arid Karakoram valleys and what a pleasure to see herds of Ibex roaming near to camp and birds of prey flying high above the unspoilt valley.

Climbers should consider their impact on the mountains and the effect upon the local people and the environment of organising massive siege-style expeditions. On such outdated dodo-like operations, hoards of porters comb the hillside every night for fire wood. Some of the expeditions to K2 have employed 1500 porters which is the main reason juniper trees have all but gone from the region.

The East Karakoram will naturally attract dominantly Indian expeditions. The Indian authorities should lead the way, putting pressure upon the climber to travel light, sewing the seeds at their mountain schools. They should consider putting pressure upon foreigners by a charge in the way royalty payments are made - charge per person for a start rather than per expedition and put an upper limit upon the number of climbers in any one team.

Fixing ropes up the climb is, in any case, a negation of climbing as it has always been and is in the rest of the world beyond the Himalaya. It is also very demanding upon human and environmental resources. When this is fully realised then we can look forward to a brighter future for mountaineering and for the Karakoram mountains. We must protect this primeval wilderness for the future generation to extend and find themselves away from habitual routines and trappings of civilisation. This will not be possible if we bring the city values and trappings into the mountains.

DOUG SCOTT
September 1989

A JOINT EXPEDITION TO THE EAST KARAKORAM (RIMO GROUP)

A COMMENTARY

Joint expeditions to India are not always as enjoyable as may appear from reading subsequent reports. Only later, through personal contact with some of the participants, do the problems that beset the expedition come to light. Fist fights between Indian and foreigner; high handed commands to abandon summit attempts because the team was not to the leaders liking; leaders on the verge of a nervous breakdown trying to cope with the disparate demands of the team, and more, a lot more, negative observations in Peter Hillary's book "Rimo" - the Liaison Officer threatening the young Hillary with a loaded sten gun just before the end of the expedition enlivened an otherwise pedestrian account. The author has come in for a good deal of criticism in India and rumours abound that his book has been banned and that he has been banned from further climbing in India. The main criticisms of "Rimo" are of "misrepresentation" and that the account is "one-sided literature". My first reading of this book left me with a bad impression of it. After our expedition to the same area we became more sympathetic to some of the statements made.

Clearly there are problems for all participants of these joint expeditions although in 1974 on Changabang and again in 1981 in Gangotri our joint expeditions under the overall leadership of Col. Balwant Sandhu were very enjoyable occasions without controversy. No doubt other mountaineers - particularly Indo-Japanese - have similar good experiences of joint expeditions.

Our recent Indo - British expedition (also Canadian, U.S.A. and Austrian) to Rimo III in the East Karakoram was beset with problems from the start to its untimely end. The expedition took place in the war zone where army requirements naturally had priority and where the local Nubra porters are notoriously "difficult", i.e. do not take to outsiders demanding that they become beasts of burden. Expeditions here will always prove more complex than in the Garwhal for example.

Individual relations, man to man, were generally good on our expedition and the financial aspects were satisfactorily concluded. Difficulties arose through lack of communication and facing up honestly and realistically to the difference of experience, and therefore mountaineering expectations, of the Indian and the foreigner.

I propose to make what follows as constructive as possible without delving too much into who did and said what. Indian army personnel do not have the same opportunity to put their point of view. Suggestions offered here for consideration by the I.M.F. and others are however highlighted as objectively as possible by situations which arose on our expedition and after consultation with the other foreign members and the I.M.F.

We are very grateful for all the help we received in India. We are especially grateful to Mr. Sarin, the President of the I.M.F. who, despite being unwell, did all that was possible to speed up our permit. We are also grateful to Narinda Kumar, Hukam Singh and Heera Lohia for valuable advice, and Harsh Vardhan of World Expeditions for acting as the expedition agent in Delhi. We would also like to express our gratitude for all the support given by many individuals in the U.K. and Canada.

AVOID LONG DELAYS - Most foreigners will have fixed holidays with air tickets booked and jobs and families awaiting their return. Any delays will mean less time available for acclimatisation and climbing. It will also mean less chance of climbing in good weather.

With the delay of 3 weeks in Leh such as we experienced, the team is bound to become impatient and less tolerant of each other, of the Indian contingent and Indian officials. With such a bad start the expedition may never regain atmosphere conducive to good climbing.

The I.M.F. should check with Government and with the army that foreign climbers are really wanted in restricted areas. If not, then they should not be invited to climb there; it is taking the \$2000 royalty payment on false pretences if foreigners are kept waiting because of intransigent politicians and army commander. One of our members, Robert Schauer, had to return home to Austria before even reaching the road head.

If, in fact, the Government and army do wholeheartedly approve of foreign climbers visiting restricted zones, then the following points would help them:

Alternative peaks should be automatically available if military activity prevents the main objectives being reached. In a large, and therefore bureaucratic country like India, a change of peak inevitably means weeks of delay unless permission can be arranged at the time of the original permit.

If onward transport into restricted zones has to be with army convoy, then the army commanders should automatically give this some priority. As far as we could see, at the moment, vehicles are made available at the discretion of the local commanders as a favour to the Indian leader.

Where porters are difficult to hire because of army presence, the army should offer the expedition the opportunity of paying for helicopter drops of equipment.

Foreigners would do well to ensure that they allow at least 3 weeks to cope with unexpected delays.

THE INDIVIDUAL TEAMS MUST BE COMPATIBLE - The foreign team and the Indian team must want to be there. The foreign contingent usually consists of friends who are from the same Club or who have climbed together before. The Indian team might not be so cohesive, e.g, individuals invited from all over India or individual army personnel invited or co-opted from various army units. Where joint expeditions are concerned, the Indian group should have all climbed with each other previously and compatibly. They should be in sympathy with their leaders.

Two Indian members let it be known to our team that they would not have accepted a place on the expedition had they known that Hukam Singh was not to be the overall leader. He was the first choice of the I.M.F.

THE EXPEDITION MUST ACHIEVE COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN THE INDIAN GROUP AND THE FOREIGNERS.

Feelings of inferiority and worries about subsequent 'loss of face' can best be avoided by facing up to each member's previous experience and present expertise in the mountains. It is important that all members know in detail what mountains each has climbed, how technically severe the routes taken were and also in what style they were climbed. There is a vast difference for example between a siege ascent of an easy angled snow

peak than, say, the technically difficult East Pillar of Shivaling climbed in Alpine Style.

It should be recognised that the Indian members from army units operating in the Himalaya will generally be much stronger and better acclimatised than the foreigners.

The co-leaders should be briefed by the I.M.F. and made aware, if it is the case, that the foreigners have greater technical climbing experience - most of them having served their apprenticeship in the Alps when they were teenagers. The foreigners will not be as strong and acclimatised - at least during the first few weeks - as army personnel from border regiments. If these are the facts then they should be acknowledged and made useful. The Indians should be tolerant of the grumpy westerners unable to carry the same loads and move as fast as the stronger Indians. So often one reads that the Indians complain that they do most of the donkey work. As long as the foreigners are working to their limit, criticism is unjustified and would not occur if the team fully recognised this fact.

The foreigners should reciprocate with a conscious effort of co-operation by passing their technical expertise (if they have it) on to the Indian group. Our leader, Sonam Palzor, subsequently recognized our expertise by inviting members of the team back to India to instruct I.T.B.P. aspirant climbers. Explanations as to precisely how this can be achieved on the mountains should be worked out by the whole group. It is essential that the Indian overall leader is in on the discussions as to how and where this might happen. In our case the Indian leader was often in the rear pushing up supplies as quickly as possible. With very few porters at his disposal he had to maximise on every carry. The shortage of time was again taking its toll on the course of the expedition. The whole team was usually strung out over the 20 miles from Indian Army B.C. to CI. We were never altogether in one place.

At the critical time the Indian leader was unable to steer his men into a joint ascent of the safe, but technically more difficult, West rib of Rimo II. They followed their inclinations to ascend a rather suspect but less difficult snow couloir at the side of our rib. Subsequently the Indian climbers abandoned the plan to meet up with our team at the end of the rib for a joint summit push, and instead left the mountain to climb the long easy angled snow slopes leading up Rimo IV.

AGREEMENT ON WHAT ROUTES ARE CLIMBED AND IN WHAT STYLE THEY ARE CLIMBED

The broad aims of the expedition can be discussed in Delhi but the specifics can only be decided in sight of the mountain. If members wish to achieve the limit of their potential, and that potential varies, then there will be problems unless more than one route can be climbed. One solution is for all members to join together for an acclimatisation climb(s) and, if possible, to climb the main peak together using whatever style the least experienced members wish to adopt. This would allow all members to achieve the summit - often felt to be very important on first ascents. Those then wishing to climb a route of greater technicality and in alpine style (i.e. without fixed ropes, fixed camps, porter support), should have permission to seek out and climb it. The other members should be allowed to climb elsewhere. The Indian overall leader must know and remember the aspirations of the foreign contingent. He should realise the extent of their financial and domestic commitment and of the great effort over a long period of time that goes into them getting to the climb.

Stephen Sustad and Nick Kekus reached the summit of Rimo II. Laurie Wood, Sharu Prabhu and myself remained at the last camp. We then all descended; Nick, Stephen and myself prepared to ascend Rimo III South West Buttress and the Indian climbers prepared for the West Ridge of Rimo III.

The following letter arrived from the leader Sonam Palzor;

15/7/89 Base Camp

My Dear Doug

INDO-BRITISH EXPEDITION, RIMO-III

The Rimo-III Expedition is called off with immediate effect. Lt Rajeev Kakkar LO to expedition is being sent to convey this message.

During our final attempt for Rimo-III from R-III and R-II Col, Indian climbers climbed Rimo IV and British climbers climbed Rimo-II instead of climbing Rimo-III which was expected. Besides we have to leave the mountain by 20/7.

The tentative programme for move from Base to Leh as under - etc. etc.

Kindly convey it to all concerned at A.B.C. for necessary action.

With best of luck.

Yours sincerely, Sonam Palzor, Leader

I sent a reply but to no avail. My letter;

15 July 1989, A.B.C.

Dear Sonam

Thanks for your letter of today. We are totally surprised by the contents and very much put out by your calling the expedition off just as we are all nicely acclimatised and raring to go for Rimo III.

Let me remind you again that I have been trying to obtain permission for Rimo III for three years. It now seems to me and the rest of our team that you as overall leader have your "success" and I stress the quotes, and what we actually do in terms of quality of climbing does not matter to you. You will go back seeming to have been a success - we will go back home wondering what might have been, forever disappointed at the outcome of this expedition.

Now as to the ascent of Rimo II being unexpected by you -

1. I came down to B.C. from here (A,B,C.) especially to seek your permission to attempt Rimo II as at the time it was the one Pk. in condition for a joint expedition. You agreed to this.

2. You came up to CI and we pointed out to you in presence of L.D. and K.L. the route. KL and the Indian lads said they preferred to go to the Col and from there they would go up the ridge and meet us at the "Notch". KL asked me if I thought there would be camping there. I said I did not see why not. From the Notch KL and I discussed jointly fixing our climbing

ropes up the rock above - about 1000' then taking off for the summit of Rimo II.

3. I even asked KL if he thought we would go to Rimo I from 'II - not a great distance - if we were all fit. He replied in presence of Mohan and Smanlar "Yes, if leader agrees - we can ask him by Walkie Talkie;"

So in all our minds Rimo II was definitely on.

Why the Indian members abandoned this plan and climbed the snow slope of Rimo IV is another question.

So far in trying to carry out my part of these arrangements I have not achieved anything other than reaching Pt 6,500 ca after a lot of hard work helping Laurie and Sharu up the mountain.

Please reverse your decision and let's all get up Rimo III.

I.M.F. will, I am sure, approve of this. No problems came from the Indo-Brit. Rimo Expedition with Harish Kapadia's Exp. when they swapped and changed.

Stay loose but hang in there especially after all the hard work you did with Rajeev down below.

Best, Doug

The next communication from Sonam, now down at the Indian Army Base Camp, was an envelope sent up containing 5 congratulatory telegrams. The telegrams seemed to imply that we should not worry about climbing Rimo III as the outside world was pleased with the ascents of Rimo II and IV.

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT FROM NON CLIMBERS ATTACHED TO THE EXPEDITION IS ESSENTIAL UNTIL THE END.....

The Liaison Officer, the Doctor, Radio Operators etc should be briefed that it is hard enough climbing in the Himalaya away from home for such long periods so that the climbers need all the encouragement they can get to continue with the climb. The non-climbers should not put undue pressure on the leader or the team to give up because they themselves are bored or home sick. The leader let it be known that he was under pressure from the L.O. to end the expedition when he did.

RECOGNITION THAT ARMY MOUNTAINEERS MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TO EXPEDITIONS AND MOUNTAINEERING

Co-opted military personnel usually have no particular time limit. They also are being paid whilst they are on the expedition so that it becomes part of their job. They may not have the same urgency to reach the mountain and fail to understand the impatience of the foreigners whose situation is opposite. Some of our members resented the resigned manner of the Indian team to the constant delay in Leh. This was most probably simply a difference of attitude; the one typically eastern and the other typically western impatience.

The soldier is most probably at risk throughout the year carrying out his military duties. On the mountain his attitude may be to avoiding any more undue risk and go for the easier and safest route to reach the summit. The foreigner will live most of his life in relative comfort and safety. He will, just for a few days, look forward to the exhilaration of risk taking.

Obviously military personnel must have intense pride in their country if they are to defend it. Foreign civilians may not understand this and be taken aback by the soldier's strong reactions should any derogatory statements be made about his nation. Obviously the foreigner should at all times respect this, not lose his cool to bad manners and put himself in the other's position.

Sonam had the last word "We will never know why things turned out as they have - maybe it is for the best." There was no arguing with that.

DOUG SCOTT
September 1989