

## **REMINISCENCES: MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **LT GEN CL MAKAKALA (RETIRED)**

I am obliged to begin my recollections by extending my profound gratitude to Providence for bestowing upon me the honor and privilege of being the first Commandant of our esteemed National Defence College (NDC). In the same breath, I would like to show my sincere appreciation to General Davis Adolf Mwamunyange (retired) the former Chief of Defence Forces for entrusting me with the task of establishing the NDC. NDC has completed its First Decade. On this veritable occasion, the ‘tenth’ anniversary, I sincerely congratulate the Commandant, the Course Members as well as the entire College community. As we exchange well deserved felicitations, however, we need to recollect whence we are from. There could be a lesson or two; that we can learn from the College’s history.

On 11 March 2011 the Chief of Defence Forces summoned me to his office and directed that an NDC be temporarily established on the premises of the New High Commanders’ Defence Studies Campus at Kunduchi. He appointed a nucleus faculty with myself as the Commandant and four other officers to be members of the Faculty. They were Brigadier General IH Ipanda, Colonel JM Mwaseba and Colonel RS Laswai who were to be Senior Directing Staff (SDS) Air, Army and Navy respectively. Colonel SM Minja was to be the College Secretary. Our noble task was ‘to make preparations for NDC Course 01 ‘soonest’.

We immediately embarked on the task. It was an enormous task indeed. Firstly, we had to formulate a plan for the preparation period. Quite a number of preliminary issues had to be decided on. Secondly, we had to decide on the intended curriculum. The Curriculum would then give the direction and nature of studies, the prerequisites for the Course Participants, the direction of the Course, the pedagogical methodology and the awards to the graduands. We decided to hold a workshop of generals (both serving and retired) who had attended NDCs or similar courses abroad and subsequently we conducted a stakeholders’ forum which included a wide spectrum of stakeholders from the nation’s instruments of defence and security. The Consultative Workshop, held for two days 3 – 4 August 2011, brought together the very best on the Workshop’s subject matter: Genesis of NDC: A Focus on Its Perspective Plans.

On the first day the discussions covered The Role and Place of the NDC in the Contemporary and Future Defence and Security Environment. The second day the theme for discussion was The Perspective Plan of the NDC: College Charter. The compulsions that led the Faculty to that debate were that there was need to articulate the Tanzanian strategic culture and delineate the various aspects of the contemporary national security whose purview traverses beyond the military. We, at the NDC are spelled out. Further a skeleton College Charter was necessary for the NDC to be recognized but the Government through the Government Gazette as a legitimate learning institution of higher learning in Tanzania.

On 21 May 2012 we invited representatives of the stakeholders from the TPDF, the Police Force, the TISSS, the Prisons Service, the PCCB, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and Finance, Communications and Infrastructure and others. The theme of the Forum was Genesis of NDC: The Role and Place of the NDC in the Contemporary Security Environment – the Tanzanian Perspective. The inauguration and keynote address was delivered by Hon. Dr. Mohammed Gharib Bilal the Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania. The College also assembled a faculty of eminent academics and practitioners of national and international repute. Among those was Lieutenant General Mollah Fazle Akbar, the Commandant of NDC Kenya. The TPDF had been sending course participants to the two NDCs, amongst others, so we deemed it a great honor to have the two generals share the experience of their respective NDCs with us. The five days of the Stake Holders’ Forum were very fruitful. Finally, the outcome of the proceedings of the Forum

validated the role of the NDC, the justification and rationale of running the Security and strategic Studies Course at NDC was articulated, the major questions of the Curriculum found answers.

In the Faculty's endeavor to reckon with the challenges of preparation of the NDC Curriculum, we embarked on a study of similar institutions. At various time we held consultations with eminent professors from the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Dar es Salaam as well as visited a number of colleges abroad including NDC Kenya, NDC India NDC Bangladesh, the Royal College of Defence Studies – UK, The National Defence University – China and the Army War College – US. Thus was the evolution of the NDC Curriculum.

There were a number of issues which remained controversial even after a long in-house debates and external consultations. The first point was award of academic degrees to course members. Apparently this issue continued to raise questions which caused controversy even to long established NDCs. In NDCs the aim has never been the award of academic degrees, which can be done conveniently at other institutions of higher learning. Course Participants of the NDC are senior officers both from the military and civil services with a service bracket of 20 or more years. Their knowledge and experience does not need to be reinforced by an award of an academic degree. Some are holders of PhDs in their respective fields.

In some countries the NDCs themselves have acquired their own reputations and prestige that they do not need the additional award of a degree. But, obviously there are some Course Members who would require a formal degree to enhance their stature either for personal growth or for post-retirement benefits. In such cases some NDCs run a parallel M.A. program through understanding reached with some university. That is understood. But, care should be taken to avoid cases where certain unscrupulous individuals who would use the NDC as a cheap way of academic advancement. In my view, the NDC should remain a forum where senior officers of the military and the others public and civil services 'assemble' to interact on issues of national security and strategy, as well as enable a holistic appreciation of each other's problems in peace and in war.

There are some other notable achievements that we attained in my tenure as Commandant. The College and the First Course was inaugurated by H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Commander in Chief of the armed Forces on 10 September 2012. The maiden course had 20 Course Members who were all Tanzania. On graduation the graduates were awarded the prestigious symbol 'ndc'. The Second Course had 30 Course Members including 10 Members from allied countries. College had then been accreditation was possible in such a short time because the College had then been accredited to NACTE for the award of Masters' degrees on Security and strategic Studies. Accreditation was possible in such a short time because the College had met most of the essential requirements for the same. Even before the pilot course was launched a specialized library was established. It had in stock more than 3,000 monographs, journals and periodicals. There was a resident professor, Professor Mihanjo, who became the dean of studies. The College was also able to attract distinguished academics and practitioners as guest lectures.

When I went on retirement in September 2014 there were two unaccomplished dreams: the first was witnessing a new NDC building. This has already been manifested. The second dream was having apartments for the Course Participants where the member and his or her family could be accommodated for the duration of the course. As we celebrate a ten-year anniversary, I am positively looking forward to seeing the College excelling to greater heights from now onwards. Once again, I sincerely congratulate the NDC-TZ and its entire Staff for the many accomplishments in a span of just ten years; despite the barriers it has encountered.

I thank you all.