

Terrorism : A View From The Prism Of International Experience*
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Introduction

Nation state has been the basis of the world order in the history of modern world. The cold war and super power rivalry kept the balance of world order for nearly half of the 20th Century. Post Cold War, the USA has emerged as the undisputed superpower who has taken upon itself the role of global policeman. *Hegemony of the developed nations has seen the emergence of organisations and non-state actors who wish to get even using asymmetric means.*

Nations have adopted varied approaches in combating the violent terrorist activities. The military actions initiated by all nations were with the basic aim to bring down level of suffering/injustice/violence so that composite dialogue and reforms could commence to alleviate the concerns of the subject party or the group. The socio-political military compulsions invariably shaped the decisions at different stages in directing the state policy. Hence, it is imperative to study and analyse these aspects in detail and draw relevant lessons for India.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to study the approach adopted by a group of select nations affected by terrorism in combating the menace, lessons and its relevance to the Indian context.

Scope

The Scope of the paper is as follows :-

- (a) Sri Lankan and Israel Experience.
- (b) American and Pakistani Experience.
- (c) Summary of lessons learnt.
- (d) Conclusion.

Sri Lankan and Israel Experience

Sri Lankan Experience. It can be categorised in four timelines:-

- (a) Initial commencement of hostilities in Jul 1983 till IPKF withdrawal in 1990.
- (b) Next phase commenced in July 1990 and culminated in a ceasefire in January 1995.
- (c) Subsequent fighting began in April 1995 and culminated in the February 2002 ceasefire.
- (d) The decisive phase started in July 2006 and ended with defeat of LTTE in May 2009 post killing of Prabhakaran.

Sri Lanka's military strategy evolved over years of confrontation with Tamil militants whose goal was to wage a secessionist civil war to establish an ethnic Tamil state. The initial three phases were mired with intermittent peace and war. The centre piece of previous government strategies was to bring the LTTE to the negotiating table. Ceasefires were accompanied by direct and back-channel negotiations with the LTTE. The proposals of power sharing, federal solutions and a negotiated settlement were never acceptable to LTTE. The assistance by Norwegians for brokering peace also met with little success. LTTE supremo wanted to win Eelam through military means. This period also saw military balance of power shifting between rival parties with LTTE challenging the Sri Lankan Army in the field. The broad military lessons that can be summarised are as follows:-

(a) **Grand Strategy - Defining Role and Scope by Politico-Military Leadership.** The main factors leading to defining the grand strategy were based on two premises:-

- (i) LTTE's past record brought out its unwillingness to seek peaceful settlements by talks with the Government of Sri Lanka.
- (ii) LTTE's invincibility was a myth and the military was tasked to eliminate the LTTE, not merely fight or weaken them.

(b) **Diplomatic and Military Isolation of LTTE.** Apart from Tamil diaspora cultivated by the LTTE, no foreign government including that of India supported the Eelam. By securing widespread regional support, Sri Lanka isolated the LTTE politically and diplomatically, crippled its logistics chain by active maritime and air operations, and followed by security crackdown on LTTE cells involved in smuggling and procurement actions. The intervention by the UN and the West at crucial stages of battle was defiantly resisted by Sri Lankan political leadership. The critical intelligence sharing by Sri Lankan government with India and as also follow up actions of Sri Lankan Army, Navy and Air Force militarily isolated the LTTE.

(c) **Revamping of the Armed Forces.** Fonseka overhauled the SLA's battle-fighting techniques, tactics and strategy, which was enabled by a freehand in resources and command. Military equipment was acquired on fast track, frequently involving presidential intervention. The desertion rate, uniformly high at 10 to 15 per cent, was brought down by half. High-performing officers were brought in to the mainstream and were moved up to command important formations as

also to occupy pivotal positions at Army Headquarters.

(d) **Provoke the Enemy to Err.**

(i) **Strategic Level.** Prabhakaran misread Rajapaksa, assuming that like other Sri Lankan leaders, he would try to weaken, not vanquish, the Tigers, to bring them to the negotiating table. He underestimated the new Army, mistaking it for the spent force of the past.

(ii) **Operational Level.** On the battlefield, Prabhakaran repeatedly made the error of fighting a conventional battle instead of employing guerrilla tactics. The LTTE waged fixed defensive battles without any recourse to offensive action. It initiated the 'lose no territory' ditch-cum-bund strategy to their peril as the Army turned the tables by adopting unconventional tactics.

(e) **Innovations.**

(i) **Direct Command.** A direct chain of command was established, which went down to the grassroots. Importantly, this 'hands on' approach by the Commanders helped in adopting emergent strategies when pre-planned deliberate strategies did not seem prudent, given the unexpected changes in ground situation.

(ii) **Special Infantry Operations Team (SIOT) Concept.** Infantry training doctrine was revamped to emphasise section level infantry operations and the traditional platoon concept was dropped. SIOT operated in teams of eight soldiers. SIOTs were then deployed with offensive formations, with each rifle company being allocated six reconnaissance teams that also acted as field instructors to improve infantry standards and impart SIOT skills.

Israeli Experience. Israel's Arab policy is based on self-survival and defence. Its response to terrorism has been founded on the principles of deterrence, pre-emption, prevention and reprisals.

Aim. Israel's aim during the campaign of 2006 was destruction of Hezbollah and to drive them from southern Lebanon. However, Hezbollah only had to frustrate the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and survive.

Strategy. Israeli over reliance on air force and hesitancy to commit ground forces seemed to affect their thinking. *Instead, Hezbollah assigned its front-line forces the achievable mission of holding out in towns, villages and small cities that had been turned into virtual fortresses. Hezbollah structured weblike defences that could absorb penetrations to make it forbiddingly expensive for the Army to seize, sanitize and hold urbanized terrain.*

Asymmetric Operations.

(a) **Organisation.** Hezbollah's combat cells were a hybrid of guerrillas and regular troops. Modular units and mission-type orders provided Hezbollah more developed, robust chain of command than the Army expected.

(b) **Effective Intelligence.** This was the truly unexpected asymmetry. With a long-standing reputation for effective work, Israel's intelligence services failed terribly. Israeli intelligence proved poor at finding operational command sites; underestimated the amount of weaponry available to Hezbollah; missed some later generation weapons entirely; had no idea how deep, complex and well-constructed Hezbollah's front-line bunker system had become; and failed to predict Hezbollah's tactical tenacity.

(c) **Centre of Gravity.** Lacking high-value assets, the centres of gravity for asymmetric adversaries may become their citizens' political will. Israel's main targets became Hezbollah leadership, fielded forces and weapons hidden among the civilians which were difficult to target.

(d) **Media.** By showcasing the damage in Lebanon and portraying the Israeli attacks against civilians as inhumane, Hezbollah was able to generate sympathy for its actions among the international and Lebanese domestic population. International reactions to the attack caused Israel to suspend airstrikes for 48 hours.

Gaza Offensive Against the Hamas in 2007- 08. Israeli offensive commenced with air-strikes, naval operations and land offensive by army units with the aims to stop rocket attacks and arms imports into the territory. Infantry commanders were given an unprecedented level of access to coordinate with air, naval, artillery, intelligence and combat engineers units. Israel first declared a unilateral ceasefire, followed by Hamas' announcing a one-week ceasefire twelve hours later.

Lessons Learnt - Gaza Offensive.

(a) **Collateral Damage.** Extensive use of leaflets and phone messages were adopted to warn Palestinians, to leave the area or to avoid potential targets.

(b) **Technology Modernisations.** Army used bulldozers to ensure that paths were cleared of IEDs and to destroy tunnels. Viper miniature robots were deployed to disable the IEDs and blocking mobile phone communication. Bull Island camera (akin to a tennis ball) was used which when thrown into a building would transfer 360 degree imagery to the troops outside the structure.

American and Pakistani Experience.

American Experience. As a precursor to 9/11 attacks, embassy bombings and USS Cole episode did not serve as a warning to the USA. The rise of Taliban and Osama bin Laden under the patronage of ISI was emerging as a new threat in being to the world stability. The war against Soviets brought out a lesson that a superpower with infinite resources can be defeated with low level human intensive warfare, technology available off the shelf and support from proxy state or non-state actors. Thus, in pre 9/11 era, the US state conundrum can be described as follows:-

- (a) Myopic and short sighted foreign policy when dealing with states affected and states sponsoring terrorism particularly, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- (b) Armed Forces though superior in conventional warfare capabilities need an orientation, perspective and training for fight against terrorists.
- (c) *Lack of understanding that terrorism revolves around population and not about state or politics.*
- (d) Past strategic failures and decisions boomerang, haunting the present, to see lessons of history repeating themselves.
- (e) Lack of focus, gross ignorance and coherent policy to deal with terrorism harbouring agencies like Taliban, Al Qaeda and Pakistan's (ISI).
- (f) Failure to understand that world seeks balances through symmetric and asymmetric means. The religious and ethnic fundamentalism serves as a rallying point for asymmetric warfare.

Post 9/11, America launched its global war on terrorism with its invasion of Afghanistan. With a possible link of weapons of mass destruction and its link to Al Qaeda, the US whipped up world wide hysteria for military invasion of Iraq. *It seemed like a preconceived idea to oust Saddam, gain foothold in the oil rich Middle East and expand the American hegemony in the region.* The US undermining an international organisation like the UN, unilaterally sought to achieve its political goals using its military might. Bush administration broadly defined its objectives while embarking on the Global War on Terrorism which were as follows:-

- (a) Defeat terrorists such as Osama Bin Laden, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and destroy their organisations.
- (b) Identify, locate and destroy terrorists along with their organisations.
- (c) Deny all sorts of sponsorship, support and sanctuary to terrorists.
- (d) Defend US citizens and interests at home and abroad.
- (e) Diminish the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit.

The period from the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq to the present state can be divided into yearly timelines as under :-

YEAR	AFGHANISTAN	IRAQ
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial attack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iraq disarmament crisis and pre-war intelligence
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation Anaconda & Post-Anaconda operations 	
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewed Taliban insurgency & Coalition response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasion
2004		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurgency expands
2005		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elections and transitional government, violence not reduced
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NATO in southern Afghanistan, resurgence of Taliban 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil war and permanent Iraqi government, violence simmering
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition offensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US troop surge
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassessment and renewed commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iraqi Armed Forces active
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. in southern Afghanistan Increase commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalition redeployment and decrease in violence
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US offensive and Afghan peace initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US drawdown

Critical Analysis. Keeping in view the objectives set, conduct and net outcome of operations, a similar pattern emerges, i.e. of quick initial victories, followed by violence/insurgency, troop surge and reduction of violence. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have brought about regime changes with establishment of local governments, execution of Saddam Hussein/Zarqawi, Al Qaeda secure bases have been scuttled and Osama Bin Laden has been elusive to Special Forces operations. The innovations which served for initial successes were shock and awe tactics, use of special forces, defections by buying out enemy cadres on dollar power, deployment of fewer ground forces, overwhelming air power and the arming of militias for local battles. *However, critical analysis brings out that overall American performance has been dismal.* The reasons for abysmal performance by the USA and its allies are enumerated below :-

- (a) **Flawed Strategy.** Donald Rumsfeld's theory of military campaigns was defined by discrete, lethal and quick

successes. The prolonged and violent war was a refutation of his theory with the US forces tied down in insurgency, stabilisation operations and civil affairs. The strategy was a short war and exit after a quick victory.

(b) **No Follow-Up Plan for Stabilisation and Reconstruction Missions.** It would be surprising to understand that there was no overall campaign plan to incorporate security, economic recovery, infrastructure, building of bureaucracy and allied aspects which constitute elements of a state. The military hierarchy couldn't ascertain the requirements of troops for such campaigns.

(c) **Leadership.** Bush as the President led the nation, based on instincts and guts rather than on analyses and realities. The advisory team comprising Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz was rigid with strong views on the conduct of war.

(d) **Repetition of Mistakes and Failure Appraisal.** The analysis of timelines clearly brings out an established pattern of happening both in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is difficult to fathom the insensitiveness and rigidity of leadership, military, bureaucracy and people of the USA and international community in understanding the lessons and adopt corrective actions in the subsequent campaigns. *The poor predictive capabilities of contemplated operations left vacuum for the military and civil leadership to capitalise on quick victories.* It took formation of Iraq study group, council of colonels and independent studies to understand the failures. The resultant 'surge strategy' in Iraq was implemented from January 2007 after nearly three years of violence. Bush and his team lacked the vision and the courage to admit the failure of their initial strategy and take remedial measures.

(e) **Axing of Military Dissent.** General Eric K Shinseki was vilified and then marginalised by the Bush administration and his team after he called for a greater troop presence early in the war. The dissent was not permitted and the generals took the cue from the event, of acquiescing to the administration. Senior military commanders went along with the Bush administration's rhetoric of 'Off Ramping', i.e. scaling down of troops from the war zone, ignoring the ground realities riddled with violence and blood.

(f) **Flawed Diplomacy and Foreign Policy.** The USA unilaterally conducted war without taking the international community on-board for its foreign policy and conduct of war. It should have mended its relations with Iran and Syria; thereby denying the tacit support from those countries and contain the Afghanistan and Iraqi insurgency. The orchestration of global support would have avoided the negative fallout on the international image of the USA.

(g) **Cultural Intelligence.** The importance of seeking cultural knowledge in understanding people, tribes, warlords, political system, customs and traditions in a multi ethnic sectarian society as in Iraq and Afghanistan was not done by the American and coalition forces.

(h) **Abu Gharib and Human Rights Excesses.** The lack of human concern and human rights abuses by the US further aggravated the situation for the ground forces. The US troops kicking the doors, pushing the people and denigrating human sensibilities did not go well with the people.

(j) **Operational / Tactical Flaws.** Bush administration enunciated the policy of *clear, hold and build*, which entailed clearing of terrorist enclaves and holding them by joint forces and building of Iraqi institutions to run the organisation. The US military repeatedly failed to understand the issue of security for the population and its relation to violent strikes by insurgents. In counter- insurgency operations isolation of terrorists from local population was not understood at all, which had seen the rise of Taliban and insurgency in Iraq to the peril of American and coalition forces.

(k) **Security.** America after forming governments in respective countries wanted to hand over the responsibility of maintaining law and order to Iraq / Afghan National Army / Police. Despite training the Army and the Police, the sectarian and tribal affinities were far too predominant amongst the local populace for the forces to become an effective agency for restoring order. The USA just couldn't understand the dynamics of situation and devise a correct response. *The USA military didn't have adequate troops on ground to protect the people.* The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan were largely dependent on warlords and militias for security. In Iraq, the US patrols operated from large bases, vehicle based patrols called 'presence patrols' had little value as they only invited IED attacks. Instead, small teams should have established several detachments in neighbourhood, carried out foot patrols, increasing contact with local population, building trust and gaining intelligence. In Afghanistan, the UN and coalition forces just ignored the drug and narco trade as they didn't have adequate forces to deal with the menace.

(I) **WikiLeaks Disclosure.** The overt and covert support by the ISI and Pakistan to Afghan Taliban comes to fore with impunity and brashness of Pakistan polity. The US enlisting Pakistan as frontline state for Global War on Terror (GWOT) was a cardinal flawed decision. Instead, the USA should have initiated a joint front against both Pakistan and Afghanistan which was the hub of global terrorism.

Pakistani Experience. Pakistan is riddled with handling four different types of terror groups: Taliban, Al Qaeda, Kashmiri militants and local religious extremists. Terrorism started affecting the fabric of the society with tensions rooted in the Pakistani Army's search for al-Qaeda members in Pakistan's mountainous Waziristan area in 2004. There were series of ceasefires and three peace accords signed between Pakistan Government and the Taliban, especially after military operations in Wana. These accords broke down after the Lal Masjid episode. Thereafter, military actions in Waziristan and Swat Valley in NWFP ensued. They were later followed by suicide attacks in Rawalpindi against the GHQ, the Marriott hotel bombing, Bajaur offensive and tribesmen attacks on the Taliban. Thereafter, the US drone attacks, counter offensives in Swat Valley, South Waziristan, Orakzai and Kurram were launched to clear the militants.

The major lessons learnt from the Pakistani experience are as follows:-

(a) **Making of Frankenstein.** Pakistan adopted terrorism as its state policy to offset asymmetry with India. The

ISI, based on the lessons learnt spread the venom of terrorism in Punjab and J & K, Central Asian Republics (CARs), China, Bangladesh and Nepal. The 9/11 terrorist attacks against the USA were the culmination of unhindered terrorist activity in Afghanistan. *Pakistan's counter terrorist strategy saw itself at loggerheads with the terrorist organisations that now had become self-sufficient to take its creators head on and violently.*

(b) **Focus.** The USA focussed more on Al Qaeda cadres and didn't concentrate on other factions promoting terrorism. Hence, Pakistan's counterterrorism actions were selective and self-serving.

(c) **Inaction against Taliban.** Pakistan's inaction against Taliban can be viewed with the prism of contingency. The US initial inhibition to engage troops on ground was misread by Pakistan as short term commitment by the USA. Hence, for a future contingency of having a hold on an organisation Pakistan was reluctant to take action against Taliban to the extent desired by the Coalition Forces. The other contributory factors were: contemplated failure of Karzai regime and possible withdrawal of the Coalition Forces which shaped the Pakistan's counterterrorism strategy.

Summary of Lessons Learnt.

Asymmetric capabilities are developed by a beleaguered state or party to challenge the hegemony of the powerful nations with superior conventional war fighting capability. *The asymmetric capabilities developed mutate faster than the conventional capabilities.* Hence, military is psychologically hemmed with 'last experience syndrome' and is reluctant to devise new methods to combat the new mutant. The major precincts of the military in combating the terrorist organisations is not the deficiency of weapons, organisation or will to fight but the right attitude, focus, self-appraisal and ability to face realities. The 'military limitations' found in the varied experiences can be summarised as follows:-

(a) Lack of synchronisation between grand politico-military strategy and operational / tactical level execution. The higher direction of war / campaign and ground execution need to be harmonised within the realm of the objectives to be achieved.

(b) Deficiency in concurrent reappraisal of circumstances, based on rational analysis, predictive examination and evolution of real time decision support matrix. *The military is slow to respond, inadaptably to change and repetitive in committing same mistakes.*

(c) Conventional approach to sub conventional nature of operations resulting in use of excessive force levels and collateral damage.

(d) Lack of synergy between the military and the civil authorities which is exploited by the terrorists.

(e) Personalisation of conflict, emotiveness of issues and intransigence to repeat the wrong decision which can largely be attributed as human error. There was lack of understanding of human sensitivities and providing of quick fix solutions to seek instant gratification of political or military leaders.

(f) Adoption of incongruous policies by military and professing them as flexible approach only to achieve short term successes which resulted in long term failures. Military aim should be to address the issue of terrorism holistically and not only focus on apprehending/killing of terrorists.

(g) Demonising of the terrorist organisations and lack of empathy to understand the reverse perspective. The human rights abuses committed by the military serves only as a breeding ground for terrorism.

(h) *Military mind which to an extent tends to be rigid and not amenable to lateral thinking resorts to falling back repeatedly to safety of structured thinking.* Hierarchical organisational structure is not responsive and directive style of command though talked about but is not often practised. *Neither, do junior ranks fight for their space, nor for freedom of action with a conviction for accomplishment of the mission or furtherance of the higher commander's intent.*

(j) Lack of moral conviction and courage to stake career at all levels for larger benefit or collective good of the organisation in attainment of higher goals.

(k) Prejudiced attitude of the military to blame politicians for all its ills. Insurgency in Malaya was addressed primarily by the military and successfully resolved.

Impact of Socio-Political Considerations.

(a) **Social and Political Pressure.** America post 9/11, was under tremendous pressure to deliver and act against the perpetrators of bombings which forced Bush administration to resort to military action even without taking international community on-board. A similar example was seen when the Indian Army was mobilised, post the attack on Indian Parliament in Dec 2001 as a knee-jerk reaction for social and political survival.

(b) **Elections.** The declarations of several successes and victories in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the USA were so timed to gain political mileage out of military actions. Any radical changes or decisions were avoided for any negative fallout or aftermath. The 'Loya Jirgah' held in Afghanistan and elections in Iraq were, however, the US success stories despite boycotting of the same by the Taliban and Sunni communities respectively.

(c) **Human Rights Issues.** The excesses of the US troops as seen at Abu Gharib prison, treatment of Taliban prisoners by Northern Alliance, the state of detention centres and the issue of contractors running private jails are just a few examples to illustrate the human rights abuses by all players of war. The radical laws enacted by the Taliban and fundamentalist clerics against women and schools are denigrating to humanity. Wherever and

whenever human virtues were upheld, the public opinion has swayed favourably to that party or agency.

(d) **Stabilisation and Reconstruction Programmes.** The reluctance of the Bush administration and neoconservatives to shoulder the responsibility of stabilisation and nation building activities cost the USA and the coalition forces an extended insurgency. Neither politicians, nor military top brass could convert military victory to a lasting political settlement, without transiting through the phase of violence and instability. *No Marshall Plan, as executed for Germany and Japan after World War II, were even thought of by the USA for Afghanistan and Iraq.* It shows the short sightedness of the US policy makers.

(e) **Media.** The embedded media subverted the truthfulness of reporting to international community. It was systemic sabotage planned by the Bush administration to further its imperialist goals. *An active media would have forced the planners for reconstruction programmes, moulded the opinion of international players, thereby; pressurising the US through mass awareness.* Body bags coming home and pressure of soldiers' parents were the main considerations for the US administration for conduct of the campaign. The reporting of Abu Gharib abuses can only be attributed to the media in exposing the ills of the conduct of operations.

(f) **Fear Factor.** The US administration's constant rhetoric developed hype and fear among its masses of another impending terrorist attack. This facilitated the planners to have unprecedented power, circumventing the State and other institutions of the Country.

Lessons for India.

(a) Sri Lankan experience has shown that terrorism can be defeated militarily, provided all the agencies of the state concertedly strive towards a common goal. Indian experience in Punjab also corroborates that terrorism can be defeated with the preconditions of local support, isolation of terrorists from masses and cutting off their logistic bases.

(b) Civil military synergy is also a pre requisite as seen in all the counter terrorist operations. *The higher direction of war, clear focus, tangible objectives and unambiguous mandate for military is of paramount importance in conduct of counter terrorist operations.* Short term policies do not bring lasting peace but the history is bound to repeat itself and ghosts of the previous failures revisit the administration in future.

(c) *Military leadership at all levels has to be upright and forthcoming to render correct advice to political masters and not merely acquiesce to the political rhetoric.*

(d) Israeli experience of violent and punitive reprisals may not be the correct approach; moderate elements in terrorist groups should also be cajoled and persuaded to shun violence.

(e) Indian media and its military's record of human rights observance stands testimony to the Country's transparency as also the true pillars of democracy. However, with good media interaction negative publicity given to the Armed Forces can be mitigated to a large extent.

(f) *Indian Armed Forces conduct of counter-terrorist operations is broadly correct in scope, perspective and manner. However, for gaining moral ascendancy it is imperative for the Army to encourage lateral thinking, unconventional tactics, directive style of command and innovative out of the box thinking to win battles as also the battle for hearts and minds of the people.*

(g) Indian counter-terrorist operations in J & K must strongly focus on counter infiltration operations and denial of logistic support to the terrorists from within and from proxy states for at least a two year cycle, thereby; making them inherently weak to sustain their activities. *There is a requirement of raising tri service special forces under Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff.*

(h) The threat from left wing extremism, demand for Gorkha land and maritime terrorism are the new challenges which need to be urgently addressed by politico-military leadership.

(j) The proposed establishment of counterterrorism centre, strengthening of Police / CPO's and building-up of responsive intelligence set-up is the right way to counter the threat of bomb blasts in the cities.

(k) India is not a major producer of drugs and narcotics; however, it is a major transit route for its handlers. The underworld network and links to the terrorist organisations also need to be severed which have been a threat to the Country.

(l) Indian activism in Afghanistan through assistance in reconstruction activities has seen the foreign policy come in full circle, post the isolation during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A friendly government in the neighbourhood will not only give stability to the region but also thwart the endeavours of extremist groups to make it a breeding ground for terrorism. *Thus, Afghanistan has to move ahead together, inclusive of all segments of its society.*

(n) Pakistan is mired in combating terrorism post 2004 in its FATA, NWFP and other regions. It is imperative for India to have a stable neighbour; hence, it must assist Pakistan in getting over the peril of terrorism.

Conclusion

Sri Lanka, Israel, the USA, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and India all have had unique experiences of terrorism and counter-terrorism activities. Terrorism in all forms mutates to bring out new ways of violence and instability in the society. Religious and ethnic rivalries serve as rallying points for dissension and rise of fissiparous tendencies. New phenomenon of mushrooming of non state actors supported by proxy states has made the issue more complex.

The USA has emerged as an undisputed superpower who is pursuing its unilateral foreign policies to administer the world as a global policeman. The UN has been sidelined and there is no governing body to rein in the US ambitions. This is a dangerous trend and international community should unite to curb the unhindered power exerted by the USA. *The new world order post, Cold War is evolving and Cold War's short sighted policies are still haunting the world.* The sprouting of evil of terrorism in Middle East is a direct outfall of Soviet - US rivalry in Afghanistan.

Sri Lanka has tackled its three decade long terrorism and successfully defeated the LTTE through military might. Israel also has been proponent of punitive actions against Hamas and Hezbollah. It has only been partially successful in its method of fighting. The USA and Pakistan policies are flawed in their basic strategy and approach in combating terrorism. Indian counter-terrorism strategies are apt and yielding results. However, there is a need for more proactive synergetic politico-diplomatic-economic-military approach for eliminating the menace of terrorism.

At operational level, isolation of the terrorist from local population / proxies, and protection of people from terrorist actions is of utmost importance to defeat the terrorist. The troops deployed in a grid fashion and small team concept would be suitable to make their presence felt in the given area of responsibility. In counter-terrorist operations, technology cannot replace the manpower; it can only augment its efficacy. In conduct of operations, human rights, customs and traditions have to be respected. In this form of warfare, cultural intelligence assumes greater significance as compared to conventional warfare. The security forces need to be equipped and trained correctly to adapt to the dynamics of fourth generation warfare.

In order to combat broader issues of terrorism the root causes have to be directly addressed by various agencies of the State. *The military and civil administrations have to function in synchronisation with and preferably under the unified command for optimal results.* The organisational structures and technology applications have to be progressive to respond to the flexible terrorist organisations.

The Indian political masters and military brass have numerous lessons to learn from the experiences of different nations and armies. There is a need to be alive to the happenings within and outside the Country, and to be fiercely responsive to the arising aspirations and sensitivities of the people for nipping the problem in the bud. *We as a Nation have all the capability to stand out as an example in the comity of nations in dealing with issues related to terrorism.*

*This is a slightly edited version of the Essay which won the First Prize in USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2010 in Group A.

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