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Editorial

Greetings! I am MAJ Low Wee Poh, the new Editor, POINTER.

After a fruitful two years and ten months as Editor, MAJ Lucy Chua has been posted to the Joint Intelligence Directorate. We wish her all the best in her new appointment.

We also bid farewell to COL Lim Kok Pheng, Chairman of our Editorial Board, who is retiring from the SAF in January 2004. The POINTER team would like to thank COL Lim for his guidance and efforts in laying the foundation for POINTER's transformation.

As the new Editor POINTER, I look forward to bringing more quality articles to you, our readers, as well as to hearing from you about the journal and the articles in it.

In this issue, we have an interesting range of articles. For the current red-hot topic of transformation, we are very privileged to have Mr Larry Lynn, former Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (US) to write about "The Ingredients of Military Innovation and Trans-formation" in which he identifies eight conditions that have been found to enable or encourage innovation. He stresses that since the military is a life-and-death affair, the edge gained by true innovation can and will save lives.

The two selected articles from the Army are also centred on transformation. LTC Dan Yock Hau looks at the continued relevance of National Service in the context of hi-tech and highly specialised transformed armed forces.

MAJ Shue Pei Soon, CPT Khoo Teng Lip and CPT Ong Hon Yuh examine the main impetus driving the need for change and transformation in the Army's training system and how the system can be enhanced to impart the necessary hard and soft skill sets for our brave new world.

Our other major topic for this issue is terrorism. We are very pleased to present articles by two renowned experts, Dr Rohan Gunaratna and Prof Carlyle Thayer.

Dr Gunaratna warns of the transformational effect of Al-Qaeda on Islamic terror groups and how the war on terror has caused them to evolve. He calls on states and agencies to network more effectively to fight networked international and local terrorism.

Prof Thayer reviews three approaches to the study of new terrorism: international, regional and country-specific. He argues for more emphasis on a country-specific approach towards analysing new terrorism so as to be better able to understand the nuances and agendas of terrorists on the ground.

MINDEF/SAF authors like MAJ Irvin Lim and Mr Daniel Tan also have contributed to this issue's terrorism theme. The former examines maritime terrorism and security from a holistic perspective, highlights the multitude of threats and how navies, police coast guards, customs and port authorities can work together to roll back the terror threat at ports and on the sea.

Mr Daniel Tan investigates the attraction of suicide terrorism to terrorist groups. He also gives an overview of the terror suicide squads in our region and briefly suggests two possible counter-strategies.

We also have a strategic studies article contributed by LTC (RET) Sng Seow Lian which examines the seeming contradictions and animosities in the relationship between the military and the media. It points to some lessons for the military in managing the media by tracing the history of military-media relations, in such conflicts as the American Civil War, Vietnam War, the invasion of Grenada and the Falklands War.

On a final note, we would like to take this opportunity to urge readers to be forthcoming with their feedback about the

journal and the articles published. We can achieve the aim of making POINTER relevant and useful to our readers only if it reflects and incorporates your opinions, suggestions and ideas. We hope that LTA (NS) Li Lip Khoo's letter in this issue will be just the beginning of more debates and exchanges in the pages of POINTER.

Editor, POINTER

The Ingredients of Military Innovation and Transformation

by Mr Larry Lynn

Military transformation is popular among modern militaries around the world today although there are vastly differing views of what “trans-formation” means. Generally it is thought of as finding better ways of performing military functions or achieving new or radically improved military capabilities. A common thread is, of course, gaining some significant military advantage over potential adversaries. In at least one view, transformation is a form or a result of innovation and, for the purposes of this article, the terms are used inter-changeably.

The technologists, and I confess to being one, often think of innovation as new and better technology. However, military innovation is not technology although it is often driven by or at least enabled by technology. Concepts of operation in the art of war fighting are all important. Great technology without corresponding changes in fighting concept generally cannot reach the level of “transformational”. To illustrate this point, consider the use of Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs) by the US in Afghanistan and Iraq. PGMs were the darlings of the media but most analysts would concede that the real gain was effective use of joint assets and minimization of collateral damage, both enabled by the advances in PGMs.

On the other hand, new fighting concepts can make a real difference even in cases where new technology is not required to make them possible. US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, one of the most ardent leaders of transformation, cites the well publicized picture of the Special Forces soldier wearing native garb and on horseback in Afghanistan, directing precision bombing by 50 year old long-range bombers. There is no doubt that this was transformational but the only modern technology involved was the weapon guidance and that goes back more than two decades. It was the integration of these older capabilities and systems that equated to a powerful new capability.

Most of today’s opportunity for innovation derives from the broad areas of information technology such as networking, collaboration, decision aids and knowledge-based techniques. For the most part, platforms and weapons have been effectively exploited more than information technologies. For example, the US Future Combat System (FCS) approach is to gain mobility and agility by decreases in armor and armament of ground force units and then to buy back the lethality and survivability capabilities of these units with information technology. A first look at the demonstration of these tradeoffs was apparent in the recent conflict in Iraq.

Muscle and mass are the hallmarks of conventional war as we have practiced it in the past but modern war clearly depends much more on training, tactics, technology and information with general trends towards more special operations or unconventional approaches. “Distributed” as in distributed sensors or distributed command and control will continue to be a key concept. As nations with relatively strong conventional forces go into the future, they will more and more face adaptive enemies who will avoid the head-on clashes and who will adopt tactics of asymmetric conflict. Transformation and innovation to meet these new and very different challenges is essential. Radical changes in the threats and environments require revolutionary changes but militaries are generally better at evolutionary improvements. The current emphasis on innovation is to try to achieve the necessary revolutions in a timely manner.

Innovation is not usually a brilliant flash of light and the dawning of a new idea. It’s hard work but you seldom hear that since it is generally the province of zealots who thrive on that hard work. Innovation can come about in numerous ways ranging from that birth of an idea in the middle of the night to changes derived from months or years of hard work by a dedicated team. However, there are common properties of paths that tend to lead to innovation and the purpose of this article is to try to identify that “increased likelihood path”. Towards that end, the following eight conditions have been found to enable or encourage innovation.

Identify a Champion

Either an individual or probably a small team. The people must be visionary, imaginative, capable and have an idea or ideas. On top of that, they must be aggressive in pursuing and articulating their goals and ruthless in dealing with obstacles. The necessary characteristics will usually be found in non-conformists or those perceived by the mainstream as renegades or revolutionaries. These zealots must have a driving desire to find new and better ways of doing things or solving problems or be dedicated to developing new capabilities not previously possible.

Keep the Team Small and Lean

Any given team for innovation must be small to overcome the herd instinct to conform. Larger groups tend to either become overly structured (management by “dictatorship”) or overly consensual (management by committee). Six to ten individuals is typically the maximum that will provide productive innovation. If the effort grows beyond that size, management must spin off the major elements that are required but which demand the least innovation, and manage these separately to whatever goals are needed. One of the natural benefits of a small group is the heightened inclination to debate the issues facing the group. When members feel free to vehemently argue without embarrassment to either themselves or the other members, they are much more likely to reach the soundest conclusions. Knock-down, drag-out debate, albeit civilized, is and should be a property of an innovative team.

Assure Wholehearted Management Support

Any innovative cell is both vulnerable and an inviting target for attack by the mainstream. By definition, preserving the mainstream capabilities is the highest priority in the eyes of the majority of participants. If senior management merely tolerates the innovation organization, it will fail. The management must protect it and assure that innovation and the cells established for that purpose, retain a high priority in the overall scheme of things. Without that active and forceful support, it will end up denied the resources necessary to succeed. The better the performance of the overall organization, the more likely it is to strangle innovative elements. See Clayton Christensen’s, *The Innovator’s Dilemma* for a discussion and illustration of this phenomenon.

Isolate the Innovators from the Bureaucracy

In addition to enthusiastic support, the innovative cell must be given substantial autonomy within a very flat organizational structure. Only in this way can it remain free of bureaucratic encroachment and impediments. Innovative elements are usually messy and likely to offend the sense of order that dominates the mainstream; there will inevitably be continual pressure to provide rules and guidance. However, messiness should be recognized as an inherent characteristic of most innovation. Though it is critically important to isolate and insulate the innovative elements, it is equally important to provide the means for transferring innovative results back into the primary organization.

Challenge Conventional Thinking at Every Stage

Challenge should be almost a theology and practiced regularly. If one completely accepts all conventional thinking, there is unlikely to be any space left for innovation. The fact that we failed in making something work 10 years ago is often a good sign that it was not only worthwhile but might be possible today as the general world of technology marches forward and the military environment changes.

There are no bad questions or dumb ideas. Answers may be other than what we hoped and many ideas are proven unworkable or even ill-founded but there should be nothing humiliating about that. If you reach far enough, you will fail some or even a lot of the time, but not reaching far enough should be the embarrassment.

If we know something can be done (existence proof), it is usually a fairly straightforward matter to do it. Stealth is a good example; once shown to work, it quickly spread to numerous places. However, prior to that, we certainly understood backscatter from Maxwell’s equations and aerodynamics was widely practiced. The conventional thinking was that it was not possible to deal with electromagnetics (EM) and, at the same time, make the plane fly. It took a small team of innovative people who refused to accept this conventional wisdom to demonstrate the integration of EM and aerodynamics.

One of my favorite examples of the perils of conventional thinking is the demise of Moore’s Law. Dr Lance Glasser, then at DARPA (US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), collected information on the learned view of the day from the experts in the field. As a function of the date of the predictions, this analysis looked at three aspects: the predicted theoretical limits of “fundamental” device physics, the predicted “fundamental” limit of optical lithography, and the actual devices then in early production. The resulting plot (Figure 1) implies that the demise expected from optical lithography was about eight years into the future and always was! That is to say, in the year 1980, the demise of Moore’s Law was predicted to be in 1988 and in 1990, the end was seen in 1998. Likewise, the end as a result of basic device physics was 19 years in the future. Careful inspection shows not that the analyses behind the predictions were wrong, but that researchers found different ways of doing things that changed the entire nature of the game. That is another way of both defining innovation and identifying a common path to achieve it – changing the rules.

Accept or Even Seek Risk if the Payoff is High

Risks in innovative developments should be perfectly acceptable. In fact, lack of technical or operational risk should not be tolerated in a team aimed at innovation. If a team is always non-controversial and succeeding, it probably is not reaching far enough and is pursuing evolution rather than revolution. There is nothing wrong with either but real gains generally come from the latter.

There should be no fear of failure as a result of reaching too far. Failure for bad practices or bad management must obviously be avoided but failure for too much ambition in goals is laudable. True advantages in military capability are usually those that require significant risk to develop. Henry Ford once said "failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently" and this tenet really applies.

Choose the Paths for Innovation Carefully

The military is famous for tying all developments to "requirements", a way of disciplining the system. However, it has frequently been observed that no truly revolutionary military capability has ever been the result of a formal requirement. The examples are legion and include the atomic bomb, stealth, networking, aircraft carriers and, on the other end of the spectrum, the rifle and machine gun. Do not wait for a requirement if you are into the innovation game!

That is not to say that people should charge off without serious consideration of all the factors including the potential military value. Obviously there should be some probability of success based on technical and operational judgments. One often used criterion is the question used at DARPA: "If you succeed in all your goals, will it make a real difference?"

Occasionally, the technologists get carried away with cleverness and lose sight of the value and we should be sensitive to this. Air Marshall Tedder once said "the absolute ingenuity of this idea almost blinds one to its utter worthlessness!" Clearly we do not want our work to fall in this bin.

A valuable technique for providing some discipline while preserving the innovative environment is to pursue competing ideas. If there are multiple possible ways of creating a capability or solving a problem, and if the resource cost for pursuing both is tolerable, then having two or more competing approaches is almost always beneficial.

Experiment at Each Step along the Way

Practical laboratory or field experiments are essential in any development and provide a degree of reality that keeps the developer internally honest and confident. This was perhaps expressed best by the philosopher William James in 1899 with the following quotation:

"Laboratory work and shop work give honesty for when you express yourself by making things and not by using words, it becomes impossible to dissimulate your vagueness or ignorance by ambiguity."

In conclusion, it is easier to articulate the way to innovation than it is to implement it, especially in overcoming natural cultural barriers. Those involved must be aggressive, confident, and persistent and above all, dedicated. However, if we can make all of these ingredients come together, have far-reaching goals, and have reasonable luck, good things will happen. If we have chosen paths well with extremely high payoff in the case of winners, then even 10% success will be well worth the investment. Since the military is a life and death affair, the edge gained by true innovation can and will save lives.



Mr Larry Lynn retired from the US government as Director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), a position he held since March 1995, in April 1998.

DARPA is the principal Agency within the Department of Defense (DoD) for research, development, and demonstration of concepts, devices and systems that provide highly advanced military capabilities. As the Director, Mr Lynn was responsible for management of the Agency's projects for high payoff, innovative research and development and the investment decisions for approximately \$2 billion.

Since leaving the government, Mr Lynn has served as an independent consultant to elements of the Department of Defense and to a number of industries.

Mr Lynn has received a number of awards including the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service at a Pentagon ceremony in 1995 and both Bronze and Silver Palms in subsequent awards. This medal is DoD's highest award for a non-career civilian.

Mr Lynn was a Visiting Scientist to MINDEF in 1998. He was appointed as Scientific Adviser to MINDEF in 1990 and the Scientific Adviser to Chairman of DSTA between March 2000 and June 2003. He was conferred with the Singapore Defence Technology Distinguished Fellowship in 2002 for his outstanding contributions to the development of defence technology in Singapore. He is currently a Member of the Defense Science Board, US Department of Defense, serves on several boards and committees and is a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers.

Conscription And Force Transformation

by LTC Dan Yock Hau

“Conscription involves the degradation of human personality and the destruction of liberty. Barrack life, military drills, blind obedience to commands, however unjust and foolish they may be, and deliberate training for slaughter, undermine respect for the individual, for democracy and human life.”

Manifesto for the Universal

Abolition of Conscription, 19261

The debate of national service as a national policy has always been a controversial issue. The controversy is usually intense because it brings into conflict two fundamental principles of modern liberal democracies, that of individual liberty and duty to society. In a free society where individual liberty is accorded the highest priority, compulsion to serve runs against the notion of individual freedom. Yet, it is also argued that while democracy promised freedom, freedom does not come free and a price has to be paid to maintain it. There therefore lies a moral obligation in every citizen to contribute his part when called upon to protect this freedom. As George Washington declared: “it must be laid down as a primary position and the basis of our (democratic) system, that every citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government owes not only a proportion of his property, but even his personal service to the defence of it.”² Under such compelling but contradictory arguments, it is not surprising that societies and academics have been split over the national service debate.

Although conscription has existed since early history, it is generally acknowledged that modern conscription started in 1793 with levée en masse, the duty of all citizens to perform military service. To meet its defence needs, the Convention of the French Republic raised an army of 300,000 men through national service. This was soon followed by other nations such as Sweden in 1812, Prussia and Norway in 1814, Spain in 1831 and Denmark in 1849. Conscription enabled the raising of mass armies at little cost and completely changed the scale of warfare. It enabled Napoleon to raise the first great conscription army of 0.6 million French soldiers which he led against Russia in the late 1790s. It also allowed the Northern German Alliance to raise 1.2 million soldiers against France in the 1870s. By the 20th century, most major powers were relying on conscription for their military. In World War I, the German Emperor Wilhelm II drafted 3.4 million conscripts while Russia drafted 15 million soldiers for its army. Conscription sustained the armies of both Allied and Axis powers during World War II as well NATO and Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. In addition, it was also widely adopted in many other countries, especially newly independent countries who had to build up their defence capability quickly. By the second half of the 20th century, conscription was firmly entrenched as a prominent feature in modern societies.

However events since the end of the Cold War appear to suggest that the global trend is shifting. A consensus among some military academics has been there is “a trend away from semi-trained, primitively equipped mass conscript armies towards more streamlined, highly professional forces”.³ Increasingly countries are foregoing universal conscription in favour of smaller, all-professional military forces where only a selected number of volunteers serve as their primary occupation. Countries such as Canada, Britain, Australia and the US abolished conscription in the 1960s. As the Cold War ended in the 1990s, countries such as Belgium, Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy (by 2006)⁴ have also scrapped national service in favour of smaller all-professional forces. Even former eastern bloc nations such as Russia, Poland and Hungary are reviewing their defence policies and scaling back conscription.

While the end of the Cold War had been instrumental in removing the need for mass armies, conscription critics have pointed to the current trend of modernisation and military transformation as the main reason that is rendering it obsolete in the 21st century. Military academics have for years been expounding the theory of the decline of the mass army in military sociology.⁵ The theory basically states that support for mass conscription army will decrease in societies that are modernising. Three supporting reasons were given for this. Firstly with military transformation, the military division of labour has grown more complex and this has demanded increasing professional expertise from military personnel. Secondly, rapid technological advancements have led to dramatic impacts on military capabilities. Sophisticated technology has proven to be an effective force multiplier that can substitute physical soldiers in the battlefield, thus negating the need for huge armies. Thirdly opposition to compulsory military service will grow as societies mature, become more affluent and obsessed with individual liberty.

Criticisms of Conscription

There have been numerous criticisms levelled against conscription. One major comment has been that it provided an ineffective force given the short duration of national service. It is often thought that conscript forces cannot match up to professional soldiers in the battlefield. The demand on soldiers has increased over the years, besides basic combat skills they now need to operate in a wider spectrum of missions from low to high intensity conflict. They need to be experienced, mature and politically sensitive to handle operations in complex multinational coalition environments. They also need to be technically skilled and proficient in handling sophisticated equipment. The available training time for conscripts is simply too short to justify the returns of investment. Critics were quick to point to history where dependence on conscript forces led to the Americans and Argentinians losing the Vietnam and Falklands War respectively.

In today's modern societies, citizens have become more assertive of their individual rights and this has led many people to reject the call for compulsory national service. Globalisation has induced a more critical outlook towards authority and the declining appeal of nationalism has served to undermine the motives for public service. Increasing anti-establishment sentiments, mixed with a growing awareness and willingness to exert their individual freedom have led people to openly debate and denounce compulsory national service in democratic societies.

Countries that adopted conscription have also found it highly restrictive in today's strategic context, where rapid reaction and overseas peacekeeping missions have become norms. There are huge moral and political sensitivities tied to the employment of non-volunteers in overseas missions, and it does not help that such missions have seen increased risks over the years. The risk of conscript casualties and the potential political fallout of non-volunteers sacrificing for "other people's war and homeland" have been amply demonstrated in anti-draft riots and demonstrations in the US during the Vietnam war period. Not surprisingly, most countries with conscripts have adopted a policy of not employing conscripts in overseas missions. This has however affected their ability to respond promptly in crisis situations. France for example learnt this the hard way during the 1991 Gulf War when they encountered great difficulties disentangling conscripts from regulars in their combined army to participate in the Allied campaign.

Motivation of conscripts has also been a major problem. Volunteer soldiers have strong natural motivation to perform since they serve by choice but conscripts found it hard to motivate themselves especially when they saw no prospect of reward or promotion for their contributions. Poorly motivated conscripts may even produce a negative impact on the overall morale and capability of the force.

National service has also led to wide variation in the quality of recruits enlisted, thus stressing the training system. In professional forces such as UK, the army has found it possible to filter off 30% of the best applicants who signed up at Army recruitment offices to ensure that only suitably qualified recruits are selected. On the other hand a national service force is compelled to accept all enlistees. As increased affluence and urban upbringing have led to a general drop in the physical standards of youths in many societies, they have found their training systems under increasing stress, as they struggle to cope with the wide gaps in recruit qualities to produce an effective force.

Finally national service also diverts potential economic manpower from a country's economy. In today's economically competitive environment, the opportunity cost of this diversion is significant contribution to the country's GDP. Critics have therefore charged that national service is unjustifiable from an economic standpoint and should be scrapped, especially in times of peace.

Is Conscription becoming Obsolete?

However, despite the current trend of military transformation and the apparent move towards professional armies, there are many reasons why countries would want to retain national service as the basis to support their defence needs.

Critics have commented that conscription provided an ineffective force. However during both World Wars, conscripts' services have been indispensable. They were the major contributor to the outcome of the wars. Israel's conscript-based army has also fought three major wars against its numerically superior Arab neighbours with stunning success. The strong will of survival of the Israelis and their well-tuned strategy of integrating conscripts, regulars and reservists to "fight as a system" have enhanced their effectiveness as a military force. In countries such as Germany and Sweden, the military capabilities have not been significantly degraded as a result of their conscript composition. In fact, there is widespread consensus among European counterparts that their military are as effective as any professional forces. While a conscript force holds certain limitations in terms of training and experiences, its overall effectiveness as a defence force would not be affected if certain conditions are met, such as effective training, strong professionalism, good officers as well as NCO leadership, high motivation and possessing a strong will to fight. As Cappuzzo said, "Even a conscript army can be efficient. All that is needed is the will to make it

efficient."⁶

The criticism that young inexperienced conscripts barely 18 to 19 years old cannot deliver in war is disputable. While the Argentinian conscripts were widely blamed for the Argentinian defeat in the Falklands, it should be noted that in relative terms, young fresh soldiers formed the bulk of any armies around the world. The British Marines in Falklands, despite being regular soldiers had an average age of only 19 and most were deployed in operations for the first time. In terms of age and experience, there were no significant differences between the forces. What was significant however was the training, leadership and motivation level of the soldiers thrust into battle. The British in the Falklands had received superior training and were led by capable officers and NCOs. The motivation and will to fight was fuelled by strong personal belief and public support for their causes. On the other hand, the Argentinians' cause was dubious, having been misled by their desperate politicians. Led by poor leadership, the Argentinians lost simply because they lacked the will to fight. Similarly in Vietnam, although drafted American GIs were young, the majority of the Vietcong were equally inexperienced revolutionaries. However, their motivation and will to fight were driven by a fierce sense of nationalism unmatched by the Americans', who often could not even identify with the cause of their involvement. In Vietnam's case, politics also had a large part to play in affecting the outcome and it would be over-simplistic to blame the drafted GIs.

It is also debatable whether technology transformation and Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) have made conscription irrelevant in the modern age. Studies by academics such as Philippe Manigart's (1988) have shown that no matter how specialised military tasks are transformed, there will always remain some military occupations that could use short-term conscript soldiers.⁷ In fact, technology could be the saviour rather than the devil. While technical complexity demanded operator expertise, it could also serve as a force multiplier to cover up for conscripts' weaknesses in the battlefield. What is important is wise technology employment. High-tech weapons can be beneficial when designed specially with conscripts in mind. This means that they must come with simple and user-friendly features that operators can master easily. Countries such as Sweden and Israel have done this successfully by exploiting their high-tech industries to deliver sophisticated systems tailored for conscripts. Equipment such as the S-tank and Merkava tanks are examples of weapons designed with conscript operators in mind and yet acknowledged for their excellent capabilities.

As the field of IT and Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) gained more prominence in military applications, they also offer opportunities that could be exploited advantageously for conscript forces. Today's generation of Internet babies and Nintendo kids have demonstrated extremely high aptitude for IT systems and this is a bonus for modern Information Warfare (IW). Youths enlisted have been found to be equipped with advanced IT knowledge which facilitated their employment in IW operations. Conscripts can therefore complement a modern force which embraces C4 capabilities.

The problem of employing con-script-based forces in overseas missions could be overcome. The problem faced by France during the 1991 Gulf War was a transitory problem of a legacy Cold War army structure encountering a new threat scenario it was not designed to do. As rapid force projection and peacekeeping missions become increasingly important for military forces, countries are refining their military structures to overcome such limitations. Countries such as Germany have formed special regular units dedicated for overseas missions. Others have found willing conscripts who volunteer for such operations as part of their national service. Germany, Sweden and Denmark have all deployed conscripts on overseas missions with encouraging results and have made plans for similar deployment under certain conditions. Conscripts can also contribute in a variety of roles other than serving in the frontline. They can also contribute as home-base support, thus freeing up regulars for overseas missions. What is important is for countries to develop an appropriate system where dedicated units can be established and volunteer conscripts can be grouped and trained accordingly to perform such roles. This will ensure that a ready and properly trained force is available for such missions. Conscription need not be an obstacle to overseas missions, and their utilities can be tapped advantageously.

Contrary to popular belief, although technological advancement has raised hope for force downsizing, it has not been adopted widely. Not only has the end of the Cold War not brought about a more peaceful world, the unstable global environment has seen a steady rise in conflicts which demanded military interventions. Far from playing reduced roles, countries have found strong military forces even more important than before. The aftermath of September 11 has further increased awareness on the vulnerabilities of homeland defence and driven up the demand for security forces. Despite technological advances, many operations such as peacekeeping and Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) missions also require soldiers to be deployed in conflict zones.

Cost is a major factor for the continued popularity of national service. Most technological advances today are prohibitively expensive and beyond the affordability of many countries. Conscription remains a cheap alternative for countries.

The need for mass armies is also dependent on a nation's threat environment. For example, tensions in the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Straits have forced countries including North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan and China to maintain large conscript-based armies. The need for conscription and security is critical in view of the growing economies in the region which demand a stable and secure environment. Even though technological transformation offers substitute for their fighting capability, conscription is likely to be retained to secure their defences. Countries such as Israel have also made national service a cornerstone of their defence strategy. There is widespread acceptance and support among Israelis that conscription is the only feasible way to ensure the security of their country. Due to their small population, a volunteer army is simply not feasible to meet their needs. Over the years, Israel has successfully integrated conscripts, reservists and regulars together as effective fighting units and this has been amply proven during the Arab-Israeli War in 1968 and 1973. As the Middle East conflict continues to worsen, national service is likely to remain an important part of the Israeli military.

In addition, there are social benefits tied to national service. National service promotes universal values, inculcates discipline and patriotism in citizens. It is especially beneficial for youth in character building and social moulding since it occurs at a time when they are more susceptible to outside influence. As Sherraden and Eberly explained, national service is "an institution of social participation for the formative years of young adulthood, a unique form of social participation that cultivates aspects of human behaviour not adequately enhanced by schooling or a conventional job."⁸ The advantage was so strong that President Eisenhower supported national service "not only from the standpoint of military preparedness, but also for reasons of fitness and discipline among youths". He felt that "if universal military training accomplished nothing more than produce cleanliness and decent grooming in our youths, it might be well worth the price tag."⁹

National service helps in social bonding and national education. It helps to promote important citizen values and expose youths to different segments of society. In segmented and divided societies, this is especially important as grouping youths together for national service serves to forge closer understanding and cohesiveness among different classes of society. It also aids the process of nation building as military service can have a profound effect on instilling patriotism and inculcating a sense of nationhood in its people. Youths generally leave national service not just physically stronger and mature, but also more aware about social cohesion and patriotism. Nations that have newly gained independence found this especially useful, as was experienced by Israel in 1948, when universal conscription served as a useful tool in fostering nationhood spirit among its migrant citizens.

National service helps to bring the military closer to the people. In modern democratic societies where a civilian-controlled military model is generally accepted as the ideal model, an improved civil-military relationship is especially beneficial. As Johnson explains, national service "helped the Army with its public relations. Without it, relations tended to be miles apart, isolated and somewhat derided. Now everyone knows someone who had been in the Army, and had a clear idea of what it was like and what it was doing."¹⁰

An analysis of countries that have abolished conscription recently showed that the reasons for their abolition are quite unique. In the post-Cold War transformation, most of the European countries have found that the threat of a mass conventional army confrontation has greatly diminished. They do not face any immediate territorial threats and their defences could be met by the NATO co-operative defence arrangement where a joint coalition force would be available to meet any threat to a member country. This made it unnecessary for them to maintain large individual military forces.

Even though most Western military academics are predicting the "death of conscription"¹¹, statistics indicate that realities are far from it. There still exist at least 80 countries around the world that continue to rely on conscription for their defence needs.¹² This included even European countries such as Switzerland, Austria, Finland and the Scandinavian countries outside of the NATO framework. Conscription features strongly in these countries to meet their independent defence needs. In countries such as Switzerland, the military tradition has remained unchanged for the past 200 years and the ideal of the militia remained unbroken. As its neutral course of politics prevents it from entering into any military alliance, conscription, as a policy, is well entrenched in the country's future.

The Scandinavian states were noted to have embraced conscription strongly. Support for national service remained strong even though force downsizing is underway. Abolition of conscription was suggested in public but there was no evidence that it was in any danger of being dropped. These states have found that there are benefits in a mass citizen army model and they have managed to make it an integral part of their societal obligations. The acceptance rates for conscription have generally been good in these states. For example Norway enjoys high conscription support with only 2 - 3% opting for the alternative civilian service on medical or ideological grounds.¹³ Conscription is thought to be the only feasible means to man its Home Guard which demands deployment around the vast country. In Sweden, the adoption of the Total Defence concept comprising military and civilian defence meant that

conscription continues to play a key role in its defence strategy. In fact, there were even suggestions by the government to extend conscription to females in 2000.¹⁴ Interestingly, these states have not found conscription an obstacle for their increased involvement in peacekeeping missions. Denmark and Sweden have started deploying conscripts alongside regulars for overseas missions while Norway has depended on signing on ex-conscripts for such operations.

Among NATO countries, Turkey, Greece and Germany stood out as they continue to maintain large conscript forces. Due to the residual potential for conflict between them, Turkey and Greece are unlikely to abolish their mass armies. Turkey's shared border with the volatile Middle East region also meant it needed the support of a large standing army for added security. In Germany, conscription has been on the upswing in public opinion polls. The authority has found no shortage of willing conscripts. In fact, conscription was favoured as it helped not only to promote better military-civilian relationship, but also provided a steady and assured source of manpower to the Bundeswehr. From a peacetime size of 480,000, it can easily boost up to 1.6 million in times of crisis. In contrast, Australia had to grapple with recruitment problems for a professional force of only 50,000,¹⁵ while Spain had to resort to enticing Spanish immigrants in South America to fill their shortfalls.¹⁶ As a major world power, Germany needs a credible military capability but due to its militaristic past, it is unlikely to move towards a nuclear deterrence strategy. The ideal of the "citizen in uniform" remains widely supported as it offers a safeguard against the old Prussian officer caste system that promoted the rise of Adolf Hitler.¹⁷ Already, there are plans to restructure the Bundeswehr to meet new challenges in the modern age, including more voluntary personnel to meet overseas deployment demands.¹⁸

Conclusion

Conscription as a national policy has benefited many societies. While it is observed that some countries are abolishing conscription, it would be wrong to assume that this is representative of a universal trend. Military organisations are national institutions established in their unique environment and they bear distinctive marks of their individual history and character. Conscription has enjoyed widespread acceptance in the past 50 years and many countries rely on it to sustain effective defence forces. Besides, it has also been instrumental in shaping the social characters and behaviours of millions of youths who had gone through the rigours and discipline of military regimental training, especially in instilling patriotism and enhancing total defence. Military affairs are evolving, technological advancement and the end of the Cold War may have reduced the need for traditional mass armies, but it is argued that far from popular perception, it would be wrong to conclude that conscription has reached obsolescence. Far from it, it is likely to remain a highly attractive option for many countries who cannot afford a sufficiently large all-professional military force or who simply wish to enjoy the benefits that conscription offers. Western academics may argue that the "death of conscription" is approaching, but as long as military transformation remains an expensive undertaking, conscription with its many inherent advantages is likely to remain a major factor in many other countries around the world. It is likely to stay relevant and viable, and there is little doubt that it will continue to remain widely adopted by countries around the world in the 21st century.

Endnotes

1 O'Sullivan & Meckler (1974), p 154. Among the signers for the Manifesto were Albert Einstein, M K Gandhi, H G Wells & Bertrand Russell.

2 *ibid*, p 27

3 Bond (1986), p 214

4 "The death of Conscription", BBC News.

5 Burk (1992), p 45

6 Cappuzzo (1984), p 13

7 Burk (1992), p 47. Manigart's studies concluded the wide variety of supporting role in the army meant that they will always be low-level and simple jobs that could be performed by conscripts.

8 Sherraden & Eberly (1982), p 27.

9 O'Sullivan & Meckler (1974), p 219.

10 Johnson (1973), p 9.

11 "The death of Conscription", BBC News. Most western observers have aligned themselves to the "death of conscription" as they observed increasing trends of conscription abolition.

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Challenges of Training The Army Today For Tomorrow's Transformed Army

by MAJ Shue Pei Soon, CPT Khoo Teng Lip & CPT Ong Hon Yuh

"The best form of welfare for the troops is first-class training..."

- *Erwin Rommel*

War fighting is continuously enhanced by superior strategies, coupled with ingenious tactics and state-of-the-art technologies. While these advancements help to enlarge the envelope of combat effectiveness, the success in a military campaign still often hinges upon the proficiency of the fighting force, or how well the soldiers are trained. Training serves as a fundamental building block in transforming potential into capability. In the context of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), the Army is undergoing a transformation where research and development is proceeding at breakneck speed with emphasis on technology and organisation. The trends indicate flatter organisations, joint integration at low levels, automated traditional human functions, and increased task loads. Such changes would certainly pose significant training challenges for the Army.

This article shall address these challenges by first identifying the changes in today's context that led to the impetus for change and transformation in the Army's training system. The change has been brought about by the gradual shift in the Army's mission profile, the increasingly sophisticated and legalistic operating environment for the Army, as well as the changing profile of soldiers, both in educational levels and demography. The article shall then examine the skill sets that Army soldiers for tomorrow should possess. These skill sets, comprising both hard and soft skills, include technological conversance, a higher level of Operational Military Knowledge (OMK) across all levels, as well as emotional quotient, values, leadership, and learning capability. Finally, the article shall conclude by putting forth ideas to improve present training system through a three-tier framework of structures, systems and individuals.

What has Changed?

Only in growth, reform, and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found.

- *Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

Before we can examine how the training system should be transformed, we must first understand the need to do so. We have identified three broad long-term trends whose cumulative effects would possibly render our current training system inadequate in the near future. However, if we are able to make the necessary but sometimes painful decisions to revamp our training system in anticipation of these trends, the Army will be able to remain one step ahead of the curve. It will emerge to be a stronger force with well-trained soldiers and avoid the "Boiled Frog" paradigm. The broad trends identified are changes in tasks of the Army, changes in the external environment the Army is operating in, and changes in the composition of the force.

Changes in Mission

The Blurred Frontline

Prior to the events of September 11, the primary mission of the Army has been very clear in that the Army is "to deter aggression, and should aggression fail, to secure a swift and decisive victory". However, after September 11, this security paradigm has changed. Terrorists, who had lived in Western countries for years, received indoctrination and military training in Afghanistan, funded by radical organisations and networked to terrorist cells in dozens of countries, were able to crash civilian airliners deliberately into the landmarks of the most powerful nation in the world to destroy the symbols of its dominance. Hence, in addition to conventional threats, the enemy today includes non-state organisations with covert militants living overseas or even living among us.

To cope with this new trans-national asymmetric terrorist threat, the Army promptly expanded its mission to include, "In peace-time, our Army is to be ready and capable of conducting a spectrum of operations to protect our national interests and the well-being of our citizens."¹ This new addition to the mission profile of the Army has profound implications for the force. How can soldiers who have always been trained to fight conventionally using fire and movement, taking proper cover and doing a right or left flank on the enemy, be ready to fight an enemy who does not wear a military uniform, adopts asymmetric strategies and avoids open battle? The current training system simply does not train them adequately for this non-conventional role.

Peace-Making / Keeping Operations – From Force to Persuasion

The soldier in the Army today is also expected to undertake peacekeeping operations. Our peacekeeping involvement started as early as 1989, when a 14-member SAF team was sent to supervise elections in Namibia.² Since then, the Army's peacekeeping role as military observers has rapidly expanded to include logistics and medical support, and even combat roles, following the participation of a platoon task force in East Timor from 4 June 2001.³ The current training system prepares our soldiers to take up the role of a mean war machine whose primary role is to decisively defeat the enemy and destroy their will to fight. However, when it comes to peacekeeping missions, he has now to protect the civilians under his charge, be sensitive to their feelings and take up community projects, such as building schools, teaching and assisting in building essential infrastructure. There is clearly a disjoint between what the soldier today is trained to do and what he does on the ground.

Changes in the Environment

Advances in Technology – Enabling the Enabler

In a mere 46 years since 12 March 1957, the Army has transformed from a small and rudimentary infantry unit - 1st Singapore Infantry Regiment - to a large, modern and effective fighting force, well-respected by the regional and global military community. This rapid advancement is largely attributed to technology. As the Army moves into the 21st century, military technology would continue to play the integral role in enabling the Army to overcome its security challenges ahead. In addition, new developments would be influenced by the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)⁴, which introduces a framework to integrate war capabilities through Information Technology, and construct a system of systems⁵ from the technological perspective. Furthermore, the integration will not only be confined to the single dimension of the Land battlefield, as it would only attain its highest pay-off through the seamless connectivity between all three battlefields: the Land, Sea and Air.

As we face the potential of what tomorrow's technology can offer, we must not neglect the subtleties that threaten to neutralise its benefits. Would technology and information prove too overwhelming for our soldiers to handle? Would it divert our soldiers from essential fundamentals, thereby spawning over-dependence and rendering soldiers as slaves to technology? How could the level of proficiency in handling the high-tech gadgets be sustained for National Servicemen? While human factor engineering may help to address these concerns through system designs and doctrine development, the efforts require continual support from training systems and culture that would generate and sustain smart users of technologies. At the individual level, combatants should possess a higher level of technical understanding and involvement in the handling of the sophisticated weaponry. At the systemic level, the technical logisticians should be more effectively assimilated with the combatants in technology management and development as well as operations. In addition, it is essential to ensure the future battlefield connectivity within the Army and between the three Services, so as to harness the full combat multiplier effect. In short, training transformation is crucial in bringing all parties together; and to jointly embrace the new war-fighting concepts brought about by the technological advances.

Uncertainty in Economy – Creating the Capacity for Change

Since the Asian Economic Crisis in the late 1990's, the recovery of Singapore's economy has been further plagued by global events, such as September 11, war in the Middle East, as well as unexpected outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The increased competition from the emerging global and regional markets in China, India and the ASEAN countries has also clouded the economic picture.

For a major consumer of the nation's resources like the SAF, such times call for more effective measures on resource management. This gave rise to initiatives such as Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB), which allocates budgets based on the planned activities and their associated costs. These developments would now require commanders to be more cost-conscious when conducting training. In addition, with the urgency to enhance economic development, the prioritisation for urban land space will increase, leading to tighter supply of limited land

resources in Singapore. This will reduce land use for Army training grounds, and one can easily deduce that the Army would some day be faced with the threshold for optimising the utilisation of training grounds. In addition, the Army is unlikely to see much expansion in overseas training grounds due to the tight defence budgets ahead. These challenges demand Army commanders to be innovative in the conduct of training, so that the Army can maintain or even improve training effectiveness with reduced resources.

The recent revision in the NS Training System⁶ has reduced the NS-training commitment by decreasing the number of high-key years (i.e. years with call-ups exceeding seven days) from nine to seven within the 13-year NS training duration. The NS call-up duration in the last three NS-training years for Basic Individual Training (BIT) has also been reduced to two days. In addition, the need to sharpen Singapore's economic competitiveness may pose further pressures for the SAF to streamline national service training commitments.

Media Explosion – The New Frontier

The information age has created an enormously active and influential entrant to the modern battlefield - the media. Technologies such as satellite communications and the internet have now enabled international news agencies such as CNN to broadcast a wide-spectrum and near-live coverage of war events to the masses, together with their perspectives. Such media today have the means to promote local and international political support for military operations, or destabilise public support through unfavourable re-reporting of military events. The media could also spur hostile perfidious acts (such as civilian disguises, operating within protected or populated sites, human shields, or forging events for negative media coverage) that serve to confuse, delay and render military forces ineffective. From a positive perspective, the media presents a new channel for military intelligence, as seen in the first Gulf War in 1991 - when combatants monitored independent media's live broadcasts for intelligence. However, this also has the capacity to undermine operations security, or worsen the "fog of war" through information overload or disinformation. From all perspectives, the Army can no longer ignore the full impact of media on military operations.

The US Armed Forces has a long history of learning and adapting to engage the media so as to facilitate success in its military objectives. The Army must similarly build up this capability, not only in the management of military-media relations at the political level, but also the training of all ground troops in effective handling of the media. Soldiers should be trained to avoid controversial military actions, and be proficient and confident when handling the media in their operations, to avoid instigating wrongful coverage and leakage of sensitive information. Commanders must learn to engage media as a source of information and incorporate them into military planning and operations. They also need to possess a deeper understanding of the media, and both its benefits and dangers, so that they can operate in concert with the media effectively.

Changes in Force Composition

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF SINGAPOREANS

(Resident non-students aged 15yrs & over)

Statistics from Singapore Department of Statistics, at <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/keystats/annual/indicators.html>

Education Profile

The educational profile of Singaporeans is showing a steady rise in academic achievement, as seen in the graph. This profile applies to future Army servicemen, including Fulltime National Servicemen (NSFs), NSmen and Regular Servicemen, and signifies that the soldiers tomorrow would be better equipped to handle new technologies, and to undertake more varied and complex job scopes. In addition, on 28 April 1997, the then Minister for Education and 2nd Minister for Defence, RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean (the current Minister for Defence) launched the masterplan for Information Technology (IT) in Education, which outlined a comprehensive strategy for creating an IT-based teaching and learning environment in every school.⁷ This IT Masterplan, which is part of the grand educational thrust to equip the young with creative thinking, learning and effective communication skills, would provide a better platform for the Army to advance in its application of IT.

To harness the full benefits, the Army has to progressively adjust its training system and working environment, bringing forth more widespread and advanced IT applications. Developing a challenging job scope is also needed to maximise the potential of a more educated and capable future generation. In addition, it is necessary to upgrade the level of computer literacy for Regular servicemen, so that they would be adequately placed to lead the change.

Changes in Demography

Statistics have shown that there would be an increase of about 20% in the number of Singaporean male residents, aged 15 to 19, for about 10 years beginning in 2007.⁸ This would mean a significant increase in NSF resources for the Army. While this increase in manpower resource promises the capacity to achieve more for the Army, there would also be strains on the current training system, which may not be ready to handle such increases in manpower. Concurrently there are new challenges to lead and motivate the better-educated NSFs in performing beyond current requirements, and to harness their full potential.

Present Shortcomings in Training

In the face of such fundamental changes, the shortcomings identified are non-congruency with needs, under utilising potential, and lack of attention to unit cohesion.

Non-Congruency

with

Needs

The current digitisation effort in the Army is only the first wave. In line with the move towards Integrated Knowledge-based Command and Control (IKC2), the Army has applied communication and computer technology to automate its command and control processes. Though technology has not changed the fundamentals of war-fighting, it has nevertheless enabled us to shorten the decision cycles and facilitate knowledge sharing in the organisation.

The second wave of digitisation will be quite different. This wave will change the way we fight at the most basic level, and will require us to take a fundamental look at how we train. Digital networking will provide direct links from a variety of sensors to the shooter, placing new skill and task requirements on soldiers. In the future, our commanders will have to have as much skill at reading digital displays as they do reading a topographic map.⁹ There is therefore an urgent need to incorporate the fundamentals of digital war-fighting into our training.

The US military proved in its 21-day march to Baghdad that its infantry-men, tankers and artillery-men could be brilliantly efficient when called upon to conquer a country. But America lacks the “clean-up crew”, in the form of military police, civil affairs experts, engineering units and street-by-street peacekeepers, needed to occupy whole countries for months if not years.¹⁰ Peacekeeping is not what the US troops were trained to do. Furthermore, the longer soldiers spend as occupiers, the less ready they feel for pure combat and the more ineffective they become.

Under-Utilising Potential Our commanders and soldiers are increasingly more educated. As the education system continues to evolve to answer the dynamic challenges of the 21st century, the skills of our soldiers would change accordingly. These supposedly more creative, more thinking soldiers would demand that the organisation trains and deploys them differently and in a way that is commensurate with their skills and knowledge levels.

Besides, those soldiers who would have work and other experiences before enlistment would also have their social and emotional quotient enriched by what they see, hear, and practised in the private sector. Proper recognition may have to be given to the good practices which these soldiers have gained and where possible, tapped to better our organisation.

The Unit Suggestion Management Scheme (USMS) and Work Improvement Team Scheme (WITS) are schemes that have allowed the organisation to tap ideas from our soldiers. And our commanders have been educated to manage these “thinking soldiers” differently from years ago. However, the success of these initiatives depends on the individual commanders’ and soldiers’ motivation and initiative. The question is whether our training system can be adjusted in a holistic way to exploit the potential that lies within the people that comes through the organisation every year?

Lack of Attention, Funding and Commitment to Unit Cohesion

Unit cohesion is not a quantifiable element that any evaluation process can account for. But its impact on the particular unit’s training and performance, and hence measurable proficiency, cannot be undermined. Cohesion would also imply how much soldiers would watch each others’ back in times of strife. However, the present cohesion activities depend very much on individual commanders to gel his men together. Our present training system is geared more towards unit and soldier proficiency. Units learn to fight and achieve the standards required of them as they are put through their paces and follow the necessary lesson plans.

However, the lesson plans do not take into consideration how each training method and activity would contribute to

cohesion. The system leans heavily on commanders to be able to be creative in conducting training to achieve his cohesion objectives. Yet, directives and inspectoral checklists seldom allow the space for commanders to diverge from the approved lesson plans. So in no time, commanders just execute the prescribed training programme according to the system requirements, and hope for cohesion to take place beyond the training grounds.

Our current practice of changing commanders after major exercises or evaluation and attainment of high readiness, whereby trained individuals are rotated out and newcomers join the team is also detrimental to unit cohesion.¹¹

WHAT ARE THE SKILL SETS NEEDED?

Great things are not something accidental, but must certainly be willed.

- Vincent Van Gogh

In May 2001, the results of a study chartered by US Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, were released. The Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) identified characteristics and skills required by leaders of the transforming force.¹² Technology was recognised as a factor in the changing operational environment, but the centrepiece of the formations in the Army remains the leaders and soldiers. As for the leaders, they will be forced to operate in a more complex battlefield where “tactical actions by lieutenants, sergeants, and corporals can have strategic consequences.” In an environment that is generally recognised as more complex than previous battlefields, it logically follows that successful leaders must be better educated in tactical problem-solving, more effective in using the rapidly changing technological aspect of war-fighting, and better versed in managing the multiple facets of support operations. In addition, the staff officers that support the commanders must likewise have a thorough understanding of these issues when the first warning order for deployment is written.¹³ To a lesser extent, the above will apply to soldiers as well. In this article, we will adopt the approach of the May 2001 study and identify the skill sets that are needed for our citizen soldiers. Once the hard and soft skill sets are identified, this will form the basis for our recommendations as to how training in the Army should be transformed.

Hard Skills

Technology Conversance/ Computer Literacy

“The electronic domain has created a class of problems that are not only complicated, detailed and have no intuitive connection without non-digital senses, but the domain itself changes so rapidly that we need to learn whole new generations of software commands on an almost yearly basis.”¹⁴ There is no denying and escaping from the changes that occur dynamically and constantly in technology. Nano-technology has already been identified as the next frontier to conquer and exploit. At the moment, the vast applications that nano-technology brings seem to suggest that human imagination is the only limitation to its application.

In any case, technological changes are expected and the military has to embrace such changes to keep itself relevant and at the forefront, so as to maintain its technological edge over our potential adversaries. Our soldiers would do well, therefore, if they would be able to handle more complex systems and advanced machines. Being conversant and literate in computers would enable our soldiers to be able to have a shorter learning curve, thus saving time in learning.

Operational Military Knowledge (OMK) Having said that war-fighting fundamentals have remained un-changed despite the technological advancement, equipping of our commanders and officers with OMK cannot be ignored. Even if our fire-power is far superior and we can achieve superior situation awareness, our commanders have to be able to plan and execute any operations to come out on top of our adversaries.

Soft Skills

Emotional Quotient

Interpersonal and communication skills form the bedrock of emotional quotient. Commanders at all levels must exhibit positive leadership in understanding, empathising and listening to their soldiers’ concerns and problems. In this current context of the Learning Organisation, listening and communication skills are vital to how relationships can be created and maintained, and ultimately bring about desired results.

Values

The SAF has a set of Core Values on which the organisation is built upon and is guided by. Plain preaching of the values and their meaning could only inculcate knowledge of the values in the soldiers' heads and remain there, recited when the need arises. We need to go beyond training for knowledge of values, and be able to train our soldiers' to put these values into practice, until these values are their very own and applying them becomes second nature.

Leadership

Leadership refers to the soft skills, which enable even the most junior commanders, to develop the capability to exert a command and control relationship over a group of people. This relationship is usually built on trust and respect, which can be achieved through having good inter-personal skills and steadfast trust from their higher command. It is also crucial to develop the professionalism and sense of judgement within the leaders to balance the conduct of realistic training vis-à-vis safe training. In view of the recent tragic incidents involving the deaths of three servicemen during training, commanders must be more mindful of their huge responsibility to take care of the men and women entrusted to the Army to perform a national duty in the defence of Singapore.¹⁵

Learning Capability

In the current environment of dynamic changes, the organisation has to be able to learn quickly and adapt itself to capitalise on the changes. Building a capacity to change most often includes increasing the learning capability of individuals and the organisation as a whole. The thrust of the Learning Organisation should not only be practised by a few faithful ones, hence limiting its effectiveness.

How to develop these skill sets?

Let him that would move the world, first move himself.

- Socrates

Training Structures

In the near future, the current training system is likely to be inadequate to meet the needs of the changing environment. Training must be vertically integrated to ensure that the training a soldier receives is consistent with his appointment and built on his previous training; and is horizontally integrated, ensuring soldiers are trained to a more common standard between different units.

Education Our educational system has traditionally concentrated on teaching hard skills such as technical ability in solving technical problems, but short on developing soft skills in our students - and soldiers-to-be - to deal with people. The Army is made up of people; individuals from different races and backgrounds, who come together for a few years for the common purpose of fulfilling their national duty. Has our educational system prepared our soldiers with the necessary skills to live in close proximity with people? Admittedly, the soft skills imparted have dealt mainly with the strategic issues of nation building, racial harmony and the like. However, if the education system could introduce people skills at large, then we may well see a different sort of soldier coming to the Army.

On the other hand, we have to ask ourselves, has the Army in any way provided training or education on such skills? We preach unit integrity, unity and implement the buddy system from day one of soldiering. Yet, we have often left to chance the degree of civility in the interactions among our soldiers, and hope they would be level-headed enough to solve problems between themselves amicably. There could be some form of education that we can introduce into our training syllabi to foster cohesion through imparting interpersonal skills.

Ethical education to help our soldiers differentiate right from wrong, cross-cultural education to increase awareness and appreciation for each other's cultures, and anger management classes are further examples of how we can supplement tough military training with soft skills coaching.

Peace-keeping Unit

There may be a need to create a new unit from the ground up that is specifically designed for peacekeeping. There will be a corresponding need to spend more time in studying how to go about peacekeeping by setting up a specialised peacekeeping research institution, like the US Army Peacekeeping Institute in Carlisle.¹⁶

Joint Training

To effectively develop professionalism and professional networks across forces and cultures, there could be more joint training conducted across Services and across Armed Forces. The Iraqi War demonstrated clearly that two decades of effort to foster joint war fighting among the US Services and billions of dollars investment in command, control and surveillance have paid off. The speed with which US forces captured Baghdad is less a testament to the Bush administration's drive to transform the US military than a payoff from years of emphasising "jointness".¹⁷ Battles did not showcase the big-ticket transformation items - the Air Force's F/A-22, the multi-service Joint Strike Fighter or the Army's Stryker armoured vehicles, for example. Instead, they demonstrated the ability of US commanders to integrate disparate forces. The Services appear to have reached a point where there is trust and confidence between the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the Marines and the Coast Guard. In the SAF, we are also looking for ways to increase the synergy that exist among the Services. However, issues like close-coordination, assets sharing may still need smoothening out before true integration can take place. More joint training may help improve the levels of synergy within the SAF.

Training System

As the Army expands its repertoire of missions and technological inventory, current training methods need to be reviewed to keep in pace with the changes and stay relevant with the new training demands. The new operating environment demands the modern training to deliver more training value in scope and depth, more realism and safety at less cost, space and time. This requires the Army to further explore new training methodologies that are more efficient and encompassing for our needs and limitations, and supplement them with processes to cater for more customised training and more conducive learning environments.

Quality Training

Realistic training is imperative to operational readiness. The Army does not have many practical opportunities for military operations to hone our military skills. This barrier to realistic training can be overcome with the help of advanced digital technologies in simulation. Virtual reality can create the variety of battle spaces and conditions for ground troops, especially Special Forces, to gain experience that may not be achievable through traditional training methods. Training simulators may also enrich the scope of system training for the increasingly sophisticated weaponry in the Army, hence boosting the proficiency and confidence of their operators. As the Army moves towards a fighting system of systems, the training simulators should incorporate the aspect of integrated operations. An interesting example is the recently introduced US Army's Aviation Combined Arms Tactical Trainer-Aviation Reconfigurable Manned Simulator (AVCATT-A)¹⁸, which allows for various configurations of helicopter cockpits in the computer-assisted environment. One simulation suite can also train up to 12 aviators simultaneously depending on the training requirement, and it has the flexibility to network with the Army's other combined arms tactical trainer programs.

The Army could also invest more in field simulation systems that can simulate the intended weapon effects, interact realistically with other weapons and combat forces within the total system, and even incorporate logistics operations through means of net-working. This would bring about more realism, training value and cost-efficiency. In addition, such systems would greatly enhance the quality of training evaluation, and the overall learning experience. Post-training review of strengths and weaknesses could be more objective and customised. Hence, future enhancement training can be more focused, and overall training duration may be shortened.

Learning Culture The Learning Army initiative is slowly taking its hold on the commanders who are introduced to it in training schools. If we strongly believe that the Learning Army will change for the better, train, think and even play together, the time may have come to determine how we can institutionalise the Learning Army initiative and introduce it even during BMT. With higher education profile, soldiers are expected to have more initiative and motivation to be entrusted with the process of a Learning Organisation and run with it. Empowering the soldiers would make them feel that they belong to a dynamic organisation and with an increased sense of belonging, they would hopefully want to leave it a better organisation than that which they started out with.

Training Individuals

Training structures and systems deliver effective fighting units. However, it is important to recognise the significance of the fundamental building blocks: the individuals. In particular, there are certain aspects of training that could be

individualised, so as to create that overall synergy that binds the entire force together. These include leadership and owner-ship.

Quality Leaders The Iraqi War showed that while the hardware of transformation was impressive, it was not as impressive as the shift in thinking exhibited by the commanders. The material is essentially the same as what was used in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, except for the precision munitions. The big difference was the mindset, attitude and intellectual agility. Command and control was much more flexible. commanders were able to plan and execute tasks concurrently and were able to quickly change plans based on what was occurring on the ground. Planning for the war included the expectation that circumstances would force the plan to be changed. It requires a new dimension of thinking in addition to developing a war plan. The military planners must also engage in endless contingency planning.

There is definitely more scope in training our commanders to be equipped with the necessary hard and soft skills to better lead our soldiers in the 21st century battlefield. The Centre of Leadership Development has been set up to tackle that issue and we hope that this initiative would churn out even more capable leaders.

More Independence / Autonomy There could be more empowerment to our junior commanders and soldiers in carrying out their routine duties. The challenge will be to allow our senior leaders to place more trust in them and to empower them with the authority to demonstrate positive leadership in their work. To our subordinates, this may be the best way to get them committed to a task, and exercise flexibility in decision making, as well as to offer them a sense of ownership and worth in the organisation.

Of course, this means that we must be prepared to have failures. In the push towards a learning environment, there is a dire need to create a "safe to fail" environment that would encourage the will to try constructive new things and processes, and thereby generating inherent ownership in soldiers.

CONCLUSION

We must become the change we want to see.

- *Mahatma Gandhi*

A multitude of imperatives, stemming from the political, economical, security, technological and social perspectives, has set the stage for the imminent transformation of the Army. A crucial success factor lies in the foundations of preparing our soldiers to meet the challenges ahead. These challenges are not limited to hard skills, but increasingly so in the areas of soft skills that will equip the Army with the capability to adapt and learn faster than its adversaries. The 2 May US Congressional Report "Military Readiness: Lingering Training and Equipment Issues Hamper Air Support of Ground Forces" chides the Pentagon for moving too slowly to modernise the training and technology used in 21st century air support missions. Does this warning apply to our own Army today? Changes are now taking place in the Army, and it is paramount for us to review the way the Army trains today for tomorrow's needs.

Endnotes

1 http://www.mindef.gov.sg/army/gen_index.htm

2 Participation of military observers in the UN Transitional Authority Group (UNTAG), featured in the Singapore Armed Forces Peacekeepers Website at <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/peacekeepers>

3 Participation of platoon task force in UN Transitional Administration in East Timor International Force (UNTAET), featured in the Singapore Armed Forces Peacekeepers Website at <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/peacekeepers>

4 RMA is essentially the integration of battlefield operatives and the rapidity in decision-taking and conduct of operations, as well as the full spectrum integration of weapon systems, agencies, "civilianisation" (ie. Generally referring to the Revolution in Business Affairs – the business-style reform of management, drawing on private entities and models, and civilian-military integration to avoid duplicating infrastructure systems and networks) and industrial-military synergies.

5 System of systems refers to the integration of C4ISR (command, control, communications, computer and

intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) systems and sub-systems, affecting their operation (R&D, production and procurement of weapons) and also force structures, logistics, infrastructure and human factors, i.e. doctrine, strategic culture, political and legal systems.

6 MINDEF New Release "Revised National Service Training System (With Effect From Apr 03)" on 25 April 2003, at <http://www.mindef.gov.sg>

7 IT in Education at <http://www1.moe.edu.sg/iteducation/welcome.htm>

8 Deduced from report from Singapore Department of Statistics, "Singapore Residents by Age Group and Sex, End June 2002", at <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/keystats/mqstats/mds/mds21b.pdf>

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The New Face of Al-Qaeda: Understanding the Generational Gradient in Local and Global Jihad Campaigns

by Dr Rohan Gunaratna

After September 11, the terrorist threat has clearly moved beyond Al-Qaeda. In the last two years, Al-Qaeda, the proclaimed vanguard of the Islamic movements, has suffered gravely. Who will continue the fight? History suggests that the generational gradation within violent Islamist groups will ensure the continuity of the global and local jihad campaigns. If so, what are the principal differences in outlooks among the different jihad generations? To examine the evolution of the threat, this article examines the shifting priorities and changing strategies in the global and local jihad campaigns.

Since Al-Qaeda attacked America's most outstanding landmarks, the overwhelming majority of the terrorist attacks are not being conducted by Al-Qaeda but by Islamist groups. The bulk of these Islamist groups have been ideologised, financed, and trained by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and other conflict zones throughout the 1990s. Al-Qaeda conducted as well as coordinated two waves of attacks in May 2003 and October 2002. Of the five attacks staged in May 2003, only the May 12 attack – a coordinated simultaneous attack on Western residence complexes in Saudi Arabia – was by Al-Qaeda. The associated groups in Chechnya, Pakistan and Morocco were responsible for the other attacks. Of the attacks staged in Yemen, Kuwait and Indonesia in October 2002, the worst attack where 202 people were killed was in Bali by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and not Al-Qaeda. Furthermore, Al Ansar, Al Islami, an Al-Qaeda-associated group, has become the most active group in Iraq. These associated groups located in Asia, Middle East, Africa, and in the Caucasus, are targeting the interests of the US, its allies and friends.

To compensate for the lack of its own operational capability, Al-Qaeda is working together with these associated groups. Al-Qaeda ideologues are transforming the thinking of their associated members both to fight the near enemy (Muslim governments) and the distant enemy (the US and its allies) as well as providing them specialist technologies and trainers to increase their capabilities. Furthermore, an operationally weakened Al-Qaeda is investing in propaganda and concentrating on ideological indoctrination to inspire and instigate the wider Muslim community to sustain the fight. In addition to Al-Qaeda's main website, alqaeda.com, numerous pro-Al-Qaeda websites¹ urging Muslims to strike the West, especially US interests. Although the Internet is the mainstay of post September 11 Al-Qaeda propaganda, some influential imams continue to support Al-Qaeda "causes" openly. Some imams have declared the confrontation in Iraq as a jihad and are openly urging Muslim youth to go to Iraq.

Traditionally, the associated Islamist groups fought secular Muslim governments either to replace them or to form a separate state. By infusing its ideology of a global jihad, Al-Qaeda has successfully transformed the parochial thinking of these groups. Today, these associated groups, the newest generation, have gone beyond narrow territorial confines to pursue a more pan-Islamic agenda. They target both opposing local governments as well as the interests of the US and its allies. For instance, the world's worst terrorist atrocity after September 11 was conducted not by Al-Qaeda but by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in Bali on 12 October 2002. Nonetheless, Al-Qaeda financed the operation. Similarly, the Salafi Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), fighting the Algerian regime, produced ricin in the UK in January 2003. Al-Qaeda specialists also trained GSPC members to manufacture ricin in the Pankisi Valley in Georgia to target "infidels."

Two years after September 11, Al-Qaeda's strength has diminished from about 4,000 to under 1,000 members. As such Al-Qaeda's capacity to replenish its human losses and material wastage has been reduced. Although Al-Qaeda will become operationally ineffective with time, the associated groups "infected" by Al-Qaeda will ensure the continuity of the fight. Al-Qaeda's most enduring contribution towards sustaining the global jihad has been to create a new generation of mujahidin. Despite a shift in the threat from Al-Qaeda to its associated groups, however, the US counter-terrorism community is allocating overwhelming human and material resources to target Al-Qaeda.

The Context

There has been an overall failure by the counter-terrorism community to recognise that the fight against the US, its

allies and its friends is a multi-generational campaign by the Islamist organisations. Therefore, the government and societal responses to the Islamist groups and their support bases have been partially effective in the short-term and ineffective in the mid- and long-term. Generation-after-generation, the mujahidin reinvent themselves by adapting to the changing political, geographic and strategic realities. With the failure of every generation to achieve its political aim, a new generation emerges. Each time, the ideology has become potent, the organisation more secretive, and tactics increasingly lethal.

The secret of survival is the adherence to the strictest Islamist principles of patience, perseverance, and persistence. Dependent on the political and security environment facing them, the mujahidin invest in operational and ideological elements. When the environment is safe, they plan, prepare and execute attacks, and when hostile, they lie low but recruit and build their strength through propaganda and ideological indoctrination. The death or incarceration of their leadership and severe losses to their membership on earth is not terminal to their struggle. As their allegiance is to God, the essence of the struggle is passed down to the next generation to fulfill their objectives.

The success of every campaign depends on support. The support bases of the mujahidin generations do not emerge, grow, and fade away in a vacuum. They emerge in a historical context or as a result of historical events. These events could be triggered either by external (Soviet and US occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq respectively) or internal factors (Al-Qaeda attacks on America's iconic targets on September 11). These events provide the ideological fuel and the material resources essential to spawn and sustain their campaigns.

The leadership requires either public or state support to sustain a violent campaign. Although a nucleus group of leaders is pivotal to provide ideological and strategic direction to the broad struggle, the sustainability and effectiveness of the campaign is determined by the strength of their support bases. To succeed in any campaign, it requires semi-open and open political work, to generate an organised mass movement at some stage. Most Islamist movements that have found political accommodation in the Middle East and in Asia engage in open politics. Although they campaign for the imposition of Islamic law, most of them are sensitive to the reality that they live amidst non-Muslims. Muslims unhappy with the Islamist movements that co-exist with secular political parties are vulnerable to terrorist recruitment.

Generational Typology

The world has witnessed multiple generations of mujahidin. In the generational spectrum, the newer generations become more violent, and with experience, develop a tendency to escalate. Each time, they bring new energy, tactics, and passion into the struggle. To ensure the continuity of the fight, the Islamists have not been event-but opportunity-driven. To survive and fight, they retreat, recruit, resupply, revamp, and, restructure. The world has witnessed four mujahidin generations:

The first generation are the members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The bulk of active members today have embraced open politics.

The second generation are the veterans of the anti-Soviet multi-national Afghan campaign. Except for a few hundred members that form the core of Islamist groups worldwide, the bulk of the veterans have returned to civilian life.

The third generation are members of Al-Qaeda and three-dozen Asian, Middle Eastern, African and Caucasian Islamist groups trained in Afghanistan. Compared to Al-Qaeda, the associated groups are operationally inactive transnationally as they were interested only in their local conflicts.

The fourth generation are post-Afghanistan surviving Al-Qaeda members working with its associated groups. In the post September 11 environment, the threat has clearly moved beyond Al-Qaeda where its associated groups conduct the overwhelming number of terrorist attacks.

The generational approach of these groups is evident in the September 2003 arrest of 13 members of the Karachi cell of JI. They are the sons and relatives of existing JI and Al-Qaeda members.

These very young Muslims had become true believers. They desperately needed to belong to a group to express themselves especially after what happened to their fathers, brothers and uncles. The global events have provided the context for the next generation to become exposed to significant ideological indoctrination and training. Immediately before the US intervention in Iraq, officials in the US, Europe and Africa said, "They had seen evidence

that militants within Muslim communities are seeking to identify and groom a new generation of terrorist operatives.” An invasion of Iraq, the officials worry, is almost certain to produce a groundswell of recruitment for groups committed to attacks in the US, Europe and Israel. “An American invasion of Iraq is already being used as a recruitment tool by Al-Qaeda and other groups,” a senior American counter-intelligence official said. “And it is a very effective tool.”² In contrast, a Kashmiri Muslim told Jessica Stern, a terrorism analyst: “When I see young Kashmiris donating their lives to what they think of as a jihad, I feel a deep sense of regret. I feel that we initiated this violence. We initiated this destruction. I regret my decision to put people onto that course. With each generation, Islamic fundamentalism becomes uglier and uglier. When I look at fundamentalists today, I see a bleak future for them. The first generation of fundamentalists – Qutb and Maududi – was focused on Dawa – education. We focused on freedom. This generation is much more rigid, stricter, than my generation. They are focused on hate. It is a painful journey. Bitter and sour, like eating a lemon. To hate is venom. When you hate, you poison yourself. This is the typical mentality of the fundamentalist movement today. Hate begets hate. You cannot create freedom out of hatred. Today’s jihadis are confused – they are trying to revive old structures. We shouldn’t be seeking structures, but something more spiritual.”³

Unlike the previous generations, age appears to be of little relevance in Sunni transnational terrorism. In the non-Islamist categories, when terrorists age - if they are not captured or killed - they get married, settle down, become irrelevant, get passed over, and hang up their weapons. As “Islam” is the guiding light, and religion stays relevant to all ages, the generational ex-change is inevitable.

First Generation

In the backdrop of the failure of the secular Muslim states, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged. Throughout the 20th century, the Muslim Brotherhood struggled to create Islamic States. Its ideology was fashioned by Hasan Al Banna (1906-49) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-56) in the Middle East and shaped by Abdul Ala Maududi (1903-79) in Asia. Most states unleashed their intelligence, police and military to suppress and repress the Brotherhood. The failure of the Brotherhood to politically succeed led to the creation of Islamist groups willing to use violence. As the mainstream Brotherhood found political accommodation within the secular regimes, the hardline Islamists and their supporters regarded the Brotherhood as compromised.

Similar to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, created the opportunities and conditions for disparate Islamist groups to grow in strength, size and influence. Furthermore, they mastered the art of warfare during the Afghan campaign. Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian-Jordanian, who rejected the Brotherhood, politically articulated and operationalised the concept of jihad. In addition to Western assistance to the mujahidin groups fighting in Afghanistan, the fallout from the revolution in Iran (1979) and the Iran-Iraq War led Western governments, especially the US to assist Iraq and the Sunni groups worldwide. Furthermore, the Saudi campaign against the Shias, empowered the Sunni groups throughout the 1980s leading to the emergence of Sunni fundamentalism. It was an unintended consequence with severe implications for international security.⁴

Second Generation

The need to build a coalition to fight the Soviet invader created a platform to unify these disparate groups in Pakistan. As the launching pad to fight the Afghan jihad, Pakistan hosted Islamist groups from around the world. In 1984, Azzam founded Maktab-lil-Khidamat (MAK), the principal trans-national organisation that disseminated propaganda, recruited, raised funds, trained, and armed the mujahidin as well as provided welfare to the mujahidin families. After the victory over the Soviet army, the largest land army in the world, MAK evolved into Al-Qaeda al Sulbah (1988).

Those who fought Soviets did not employ martyrdom operations or suicide terrorism. They did not believe in killing civilians but only combatants. When the Soviet military withdrew and the jihad against the Soviets ended, several tens of thousands of foreign mujahidin returned to their home countries. Although the bulk of the Arab and Asian mujahidin returned to civilian life, a few mujahidin either founded or joined Islamist groups in their home countries for the purpose of creating Islamic states. A few thousand mujahidin who had come to the adverse attention of the security services of their home countries remained in Pakistan. They were members of Islamist groups such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group of Egypt that had employed violence against their home governments. With time, the Pakistan and Afghanistan-based mujahidin travelled to other lands of jihad. In Tajikistan, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Somalia, Algeria, Mindanao, and Afghanistan they worked with the local Muslim groups, enhancing their capabilities.

Third Generation

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the decline of communism, and the ending of the Cold War, the international community neglected Afghanistan and Pakistan, a frontline state in the fight against communism. Al-Qaeda recruited from the abandoned mujahidin pool free floating between the conflict zones of the world. Al-Qaeda provided them a home and more importantly a purpose in life – a mission.

Al-Qaeda was specifically created to support the Muslim struggles worldwide. As the vanguard of the Islamic movements, wherever Muslims were suffering Al-Qaeda was duty bound to play a pivotal role by providing arms, weapons, finance, trainers, and fighters. Al-Qaeda was able to achieve this pre-eminent status because it inherited the Western and Middle Eastern sponsored state-of-the-art guerrilla training and operational infrastructure. Furthermore, Al-Qaeda merged with the Egyptian Islamic Jihad led by Dr Ayman Al Zawahiri, the most ruthless Sunni terrorist group in the 1990s. This merger gave Al-Qaeda, a group that hitherto fought a guerrilla campaign against a standing army, terrorist capabilities, especially to attack civilians in an urban environment. Not only did Al-Qaeda develop global jihadist orientation and truly lethal and sophisticated capabilities, but imparted them to Islamist groups worldwide. At least 70,000 Muslims from Islamist groups around the world were trained in various camps in Afghanistan from February 1989 to October 2001.⁵ Although Al-Qaeda trained between 15,000 to 20,000 mujahidin, Al-Qaeda recruited only 4,000 members.⁶

Upon Azzam's death in 1989, when his protégé and successor Osama bin Laden took over Al-Qaeda, the group began to target not only military but civilian targets. From February 1993, beginning with the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York and Oplan Bojinka in the Philippines, Al-Qaeda extended its operations to include American civilians and civilian infrastructure. In the aftermath of September 11, US intervention in Afghanistan and the US-led global coalition against terrorism led to the arrest or capture of at least 75% of Al-Qaeda's numerical strength. Considering the past progress, if the US, its allies and friends can maintain the same level of pressure on Al-Qaeda, the group will be destroyed within the next 48 months. Although US intervention in Iraq has increased the staying power of the group, the loss of high quality operatives and sustained global targeting has weakened Al-Qaeda gravely.

As the group's key members arrested or killed in the last two years will be hard to replace, some generational exchange has been inevitable. Although new capable members are filling their positions, especially from people close to Osama bin Laden – such as his bodyguards - it will take some time before they can fully establish themselves. As their knowledge of the West is limited, and considering the tough security measures enforced in the West, they will pose a different nature and scale of threat. As long as the pressure is maintained, they are unlikely to go down the road of spectacular operations in Western countries in the immediate term.

Fourth Generation

The second half of the 1990s created the conditions for the emergence of a fourth generation. These include the US pressure on Pakistan to expel the Arab mujahidin after the first World Trade Centre bombing (1993), relocation of Al-Qaeda from Sudan to Afghanistan in May 1996, the emergence of the Islamic Movement of Taliban (1995), the establishment of an Al-Qaeda-Taliban state-of-the-art terrorist training infrastructure in Afghanistan, co-option of local and regional groups, and the creation of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders. For the purpose of establishing a common front, Osama bin Laden created the World Islamic Front, a coalition of terrorist groups in February 1998.

Within the coalition, Al-Qaeda retained its status as the pioneering vanguard of the Islamic movements. Unlike the other guerrilla and terrorist groups trained to take tactical targets, Al-Qaeda members were trained to take strategic targets. As they had to take on much more difficult targets, Al-Qaeda members were trained, ideologically and operationally, to sacrifice their lives. With the dispersal of Al-Qaeda organisers of attacks, financiers, operatives and other experts from the core of Afghanistan-Pakistan into the periphery of lawless zones in the global south, the threshold for terrorism increased in Asia, Middle East, Horn of Africa and in the Caucasus. With Al-Qaeda members working closely with its associated members, the associated groups have become stronger and are able to mount attacks as lethal as Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda's most enduring success was its ability to influence these associated groups within their local and regional jihad agendas. As a result, to different degrees, the associated groups share the burden of waging a global jihad. As the groups are scattered throughout the global south, some with support networks in the west, the threat is more diffused. The inevitable generational exchange has created initially less capable and subsequently more sophisticated, more disparate, younger, but angrier groups thirsting for revenge at whatever level they can get at.

Changing Priorities and Strategies

Contrary to public and specialist thinking, most terrorist groups survive and attack on opportunity and not choice. Terrorist groups are opportunity-driven, especially when they operate under constraint. Most often the terrorist groups themselves have not consciously changed their priorities, but the changing security environment has forced them to re-prioritise and re-strategise their campaigns. To survive and succeed in the post-September 11 environment, terrorist groups have changed terrorist priorities and strategies. Ten of the most significant changes are:

Identification of the US as their Enemy

Due to the Arab-Israeli conflict over the Palestinian issue, Israel was always perceived as the principal enemy of Muslim religious and secular groups. As the US was perceived as the principal supporter of Israel, the US was perceived as an enemy but not the principal enemy until Al-Qaeda shifted its strategy from near targets to distant targets beginning with the attack on the US embassies in East Africa in August 1998. Al-Qaeda shifted its strategy because of high cost of targeting the “false Muslim rulers” and “corrupt Muslim regimes” of the Middle East and the difficulty of attacking Israeli targets at home or overseas. After September 11, especially after the US intervention in Iraq, hating and resenting the United States itself has become an ideology that has significant appeal throughout the Muslim world. After September 11, the latest generation of the jihadis has identified the US as their enemy, especially with the US providing and increasing anti- and counter-terrorism assistance to governments worldwide.

Shift in Ideology

Al-Qaeda’s ideology was distinct from the ideology of its associated groups. While Al-Qaeda, a global network, called and waged a universal jihad, its associated groups, the territorial Islamist groups, waged local jihads. By closer association, post September 11 Al-Qaeda was able to “infect” the minds of the leaders of associated groups to fight at two different levels. First, at a local level against their domestic enemies - opposing governments – and, second, at an international level, against the US and its allies.

Shift in Target Location

With US-led coalition intervention in October 2001, the geographic centre of terrorist training and operations has shifted from the core of Afghanistan into lawless zones in the global south. Due to increased human vigilance; unprecedented security, intelligence, and law enforcement cooperation; and the aggressive hunt against Al-Qaeda inside the US, targeting the US mainland has become difficult. Therefore, the bulk of the targets attacked after September 11 has been the interests of the US, its allies and friends in the global south.

Shift in Target Selection

The US remains the primary enemy of Al-Qaeda and some of its associated groups. As it became difficult for terrorists to attack hardened Israeli targets after Munich (1972), it has also become increasingly difficult for Islamist terrorists to attack hardened US targets after September 11. The threat from Al-Qaeda and its associated groups have shifted from attacking US targets to attacking the targets of its allies and friends. The bulk of the targets attacked by Islamist groups after September 11 was not the interests of the US but those of its allies and friends.

Shift in Target Classes

With the terrorist threat shifting from the US to its allies and friends after September 11, the targeting shifted from hard to soft targets. The bulk of the targets attacked were not military, diplomatic and other protected targets but civilians, residences, hotels, places of religious worship and other soft targets. The shift reflected a weakening of Al-Qaeda’s capabilities as well as the difficulties of its associated groups from striking hardened targets.

Shift in Terrorist Weapons

With enhanced government security measures and counter measures, especially at land, sea and air border crossings, terrorists are increasingly developing, acquiring and using dual-user technologies – civilian technologies

with military application. They include fuel-laden commercial aircraft and explosive-laden land vehicles, boats and ships as missiles; chemicals and commercial fertilisers purchased from chemist stores, pharmacies and agricultural farms as explosive material; liquid nitrogen and petroleum gas land-and-sea vehicles; open, closed and semi-closed scuba gear to access mobile and stationary maritime assets to plant underwater explosive devices; and radiological material from hospitals and industrial complexes.

Shift in Terrorist Tactics

Al-Qaeda has repeatedly demonstrated and urged its associated groups on the value of employing suicide tactics.⁷ Increasingly, more groups, particularly of the Islamist variety, have begun to use suicide to strike more difficult targets. As it is a proven cost effective tactic, suicide terrorism will grow in popularity both among groups and their support bases.

Higher Threshold for Terrorism

After September 11, an attack that produced over three thousand fatalities, the propensity for groups to engage in mass casualty violence has increased. The third and the fourth generations of terrorists will creatively strive to develop, use, and acquire conventional and unconventional weapon systems to produce mass casualties and fatalities. Ideologically and operationally, September 11 has "raised their potential" and "widened their horizons of what is possible!"⁸

Greater Cooperation and Coordination between Terrorist Groups

With the dispersal of Al-Qaeda members and the diffusion of the threat, there will be greater interaction between different terrorist groups. As technology is usually exchanged at a low level, with the movement of trainers and fighters, there will be new technologies, tactics and techniques emerging in conflict zones

Greater Propensity to Use Unconventional Agents

Al-Qaeda and its associated groups have invested in significant chemical, biological and radiological research including anthrax and ricin.⁹ It is a question of time that terrorists will use these lethal agents.

The Future

After September 11, an era of perpetual conflict has emerged. Like fighting crime (economically-motivated violence), governments will have to develop the organisations to fight terrorism (politically-motivated violence) every day.

For a protracted campaign of violence, the support required by the mujahidin need not be overwhelming. A low level of support, even from a geographic location far away from the target zone, is sufficient to maintain periodic attacks. Nonetheless, the degree of support determines both the sustainability and the scale of violence. As it is a global struggle, Muslim diaspora and migrants are equally vulnerable to terrorist ideological penetration. Although the primary enemy of the Algerians, the Egyptians, the Moros, and the Chechen groups were their opposing governments, as they developed transnational networks into Europe, North America and to Australia, they developed a capability to operate overseas. As pockets of support exist even in the West, the threat to Western targets will not diminish. Unless all states deny active and passive sanctuary to mujahidin, their groups will identify weak states and relocate their cells for rest, recuperation, and regrouping. Only by formulating and implementing robust counter-terrorism policies and practices, governments will be able to deny the mujahidin the time, space and resources to plan, prepare and execute operations. Failure by states to develop zero-tolerance policies against terrorism, failure to harmonise counter-terrorism legislation and uneven counter- terrorism responses will help terrorist- groups to recuperate, regenerate, and recreate structures to fight back.

Implications for the Counter-Terrorism Community

After September 11, Al-Qaeda has transformed itself into a vanguard movement with many new smaller organisations in its service. While the differences between the groups will always remain, there will be greater cooperation and coordination among the groups. Some of these groups operate under the radar screen of many security services. History suggests that newer generations have a tendency to escalate the level of violence. The

new generation is likely to bring new energy and passion into the struggle. They will also build on Al-Qaeda's successes and learn from its mistakes. They are learning how to operate efficiently in a globalised world. With time, the new generation is likely to pose even bigger challenges to the security, intelligence and law enforcement communities.

After September 11, an operationally-weakened Al-Qaeda continues to bring significant pressure on the associated groups to target not only their local governments but also the US and its allies.

In some cases, due to target hardening, it has become difficult to attack the interests of the US. Therefore, Al-Qaeda's associated groups continue to attack the interests of America's allies and friends. To protect its allies and friends, the US intelligence community in the global south will have to share more intelligence and provide greater assistance to the affected countries or risk the spillover of conflict to the West, including to the US. With the dawn of the age of networked terrorism, regional governments will have to develop common databases, engage in exchange of personnel, joint training and operations, sharing of resources and expertise and more importantly, the sharing of experience. Governments have no option but to invest in greater human source penetration by implanting or recruiting from within terrorist groups.

After September 11, the US and other Western governments are developing zero-tolerance policies against terrorism. As long as the terrorist ideology that "it is the duty of every good Muslim to wage jihad" has validity, terrorist groups will appear and disappear. Although the military response is effective in the short term, it will not stop the terrorist production line. Western governments working together with the Muslim countries to break the ideology of Al-Qaeda and its associated groups by sending the message that violent Islamist groups are not Koranic but heretical. To succeed, the strategy to fight terrorism must become truly multi-pronged, multi-dimensional, multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional and multi-national.

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Political Terrorism in Southeast Asia

by Prof Carlyle Thayer

New terrorism,¹ that is, inter-nationally networked high impact mass casualty violence, first emerged in the 1990s with the attempted bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993; "Operation Bojinka", a plot to blow up eleven US airliners over the Pacific in 1995; the bombings of two US embassies in East Africa in 1998 and the suicide attack on the USS Cole in 2000. But it took the events of September 11, the suicide attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center and The Pentagon, to fully alert the international community to the emergence of new terrorism as a global phenomenon.

Southeast Asia has long experienced domestic political violence in the form of communist insurgencies, regional separatism, and ethno-religious strife. Generally the threat that each of these groups posed to the state was easily contained. Each group operated in isolation from the other. It was not until late 2001 when Singaporean and Malaysian security officials arrested a number of individuals engaged in planning for terrorist acts that it was clear internationally networked terrorism had arrived in the region. The Bali bombings in October 2002 drove home the point that Southeast Asia was not immune to new terrorism.

In order to understand this emerging phenomenon, the public and media turned to international terrorism experts for an explanation. These experts quickly identified al Qa'ida as the prime suspect. Regional security specialists, who had heretofore focused on traditional forms of political violence, were caught off guard by the emergence of internationally networked terrorism in Southeast Asia. Regional security specialists quickly adopted the al Qa'ida-centric paradigm as their framework for analysis. Country specialists were initially skeptical that there were any linkages between al Qa'ida and local groups.² These views mirrored that of senior politicians in Indonesia and Thailand who denied that internationally-linked terrorist groups existed in their countries. Indeed, even the Singapore government was reportedly reluctant at first to identify Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) by name in its White Paper. Another key factor contributing to initial skepticism by country specialists was the suggested linkage between international terrorism and militant Islam.

This article reviews three approaches to the study of new terrorism: international, regional and country-specific. But first this article considers the vexed question of defining terrorism.

Defining Terrorism

Quite simply there is no inter-nationally agreed definition of terrorism. In 1937 the League of Nations considered and then rejected a draft convention that defined terrorism as "all criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public". The UN General Assembly has had a resolution defining terrorism on its books since 1999 but has not yet reached consensus.

Surprisingly, the US government, the leader in the global war on terrorism, does not have a single comprehensive definition of what constitutes terrorism. While a legal definition of terrorism may be found in the US Code of Federal Regulations, it is also true that the State Department, Defense Department and FBI all use their own separate definitions. President George Bush added yet another definition when he issued an Executive Order on terrorist financing in the wake of September 11. Finally, to round off this point, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has been unable to reach agreement on a definition of terrorism as well.

At the OIC summit held in Kuala Lumpur in April 2002, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir proposed that any deliberate attack on civilians, including those by Palestinian suicide bombers, should be classified as acts of terror. Delegates disagreed and in the final OIC Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Terrorism, they stated inter alia:

We reiterate the principled position under international law and the Charter of the United Nations of the legitimacy of resistance to foreign aggression and the struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation for national liberation and self-determination. In this context, we underline the urgency for an inter-nationally agreed definition of terrorism, which differentiates such legitimate struggles from acts of terrorism [emphasis added].

The OIC conundrum may be summed up with the cliché that "one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter". The OIC threw the hot potato of defining terrorism to the United Nations for consideration. At present the

General Assembly's Sixth Committee is considering a draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that would include a definition of terrorism if adopted. The failure of the international community to define terrorism poses a methodological problem for scholars, a point that will be discussed below.

For purposes of this analysis, a terrorist group (including its individual members) is any group that has been proscribed by the United Nations. Under the terms of a resolution passed by the General Assembly, the UN, through the 1267 Committee, maintains a consolidated list of individuals and entities belonging to or associated with the Taliban and al Qa'ida organization. This list presently includes some 98 entities and several hundred individuals. Three organizations operating in Southeast Asia are considered terrorist groups by the UN: al Qa'ida, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and JI. It should be noted that the UN list is not a comprehensive one of terrorists or terrorist organizations found across the globe.³

Under US law, the Secretary of State has the authority to designate a terrorist group into one of three categories: Foreign Terrorist Organization, Other Terrorist Organization and organizations included on the Terrorist Exclusion List. These categories are not mutually exclusive. With reference to this system of classification, the US has identified a total of seven terrorist organizations in Southeast Asia. In addition to al Qa'ida, ASG and JI, the State Department also includes the Alex Boncayo Brigade, Communist Party of the Philippines / New People's Army; Cambodian Freedom Fighters; and Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM).

A number of Southeast Asia's most prominent politically active groups that have been associated with armed violence are not included on either the UN or US terrorist lists. These include: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO); Aceh Freedom Movement (GAM); and the Mujahidin Council of Indonesia and its affiliates, Laskar Jihad and Laskar Jundullah. Nor are a number of regional armed insurgent and separatist groups, active in Myanmar and Laos, listed as terrorist organizations.

Approaches to the Study of Terrorism

There are three distinct approaches to the study of terrorism: international, regional and country-specific. At the outset it must be acknowledged the three approaches do not constitute formal schools as such. Further there is some overlap between the approaches, particularly between the international and regional levels. Individual experts differ in their assessments of the roles of particular groups and individuals in sponsoring new terrorism.

International terrorism experts, most prominently Rohan Gunaratna, argue that al Qa'ida (and its leader, Osama bin Laden) is the key factor to our understanding of the emergence of new terrorism in Southeast Asia.⁴ According to Gunaratna, Osama bin Laden was able to convert Islamic resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan into a global jihad against the United States and its allies and supporters. With respect to Southeast Asia, Osama bin Laden was able to forge personal ties with the top leaders of the ASG and JI and create a regionally-linked network of terrorists comprising Southeast Asian graduates of training camps in Afghanistan. Key al Qa'ida operatives were sent to Southeast Asia to provide finance and training in terrorist tradecraft. After the fall of the Taliban regime according to some international terrorism experts, Southeast Asia became the "second front" in the global war on terrorism.

In summary, international terrorism experts generally argue that al Qa'ida has deliberately targeted political organizations in Southeast Asia to win them over to the global jihadist cause. At the same time, Southeast Asian regional leaders have willingly permitted their organizations to become co-opted by al Qa'ida. Several have even reportedly sworn an oath of loyalty to Osama bin Laden. Based on these personal links, al Qa'ida operatives have been able to penetrate Southeast Asia to stoke the fires of international jihad by building up the capacity of local groups by offering financial support and training in terrorist operations.

Hundreds of Southeast Asians were recruited from Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore to attend terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and Mindanao. After completion of their training, they formed the hard core of local militant groups. In short, the framework adopted by international terrorism experts portrays Osama bin Laden as a chief executive officer presiding over a global terrorist organization composed of al Qa'ida franchises and associates. International terrorism experts have produced elaborate organizational charts or wiring diagrams to illustrate the pattern of subordination to al Qa'ida's leadership and command. In one case a terrorist expert's wiring diagram was described as being like a "plate of spaghetti".⁵

Regional security specialists have uncritically adopted this al Qa'ida-centric framework in their assessments of Southeast Asia's militant organizations. In their analysis, key al Qa'ida figures are the central actors fostering regional linkages between the ASG, JI, KMM, and the MILF. Regional security specialists have focused in particular

on the organizational structure of JI that divided Southeast Asia into a number of administrative areas for the conduct of terrorist support operations. JI's ultimate objective was to create an Archipelagic Islamic State by uniting the Muslim peoples of Southeast Asia.

Regional security specialists have extended their analysis to embrace virtually every militant Islamic group operating in the region, and in Indonesia in particular. Regional security specialists routinely include such groups as the Mujahidin Council of Indonesia, Laskar Jihad, Laskar Jundullah, Aceh Freedom Movement, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Pattani United Liberation Organization (both PULO and New Pulo) and a host of other organizations, in their lists of regional terrorist groups. So dense and intricately connected is this network of terrorist groups that Southeast Asia reportedly has now become the epicentre of terrorism globally.

Country Studies Perspective

Country studies experts are able to bring different skills to their analysis of terrorism in Southeast Asia. Through their knowledge of regional languages they are able to acquire a far deeper insight into the history, politics, culture and religious values of the societies they are studying than most regional and international terrorism experts. Country studies experts do not deny that local militant groups and their leaders have linkages to al Qa'ida. Neither do they deny the existence of a trans-regional network of terrorists. Finally, country studies experts too recognize the importance of the Afghan alumni connection.

Where country specialists part company with their regional and international counterparts is over the question of agency. Agency refers to the ability of local groups and their leaders to act independently of al Qa'ida in pursuing their own agendas and goals. The case of the ASG is instructive.

International terrorism experts argue that al Qa'ida first penetrated Southeast Asia when Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, first visited the Philippines in 1988. Khalifa was ostensibly under orders to make contact with and provide funds to local Islamic militant groups through the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), a Muslim charity. Much is made of the dispatch of al Qa'ida official, Ramzi Yousef in 1993. Finally, international terrorism experts highlight the personal connections between Osama bin Laden and Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, a Filipino Islamic cleric.

Country specialists point out that the ASG emerged in the mid-1980 as a breakaway militant group from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and first called itself the Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters. Filipinos who were recruited for training in Pakistan and who later fought in southern Afghanistan, came under the influence of Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, the leader of the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, not Osama bin Laden. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Janjalani sought funding for his group. Jason Burke argues that Osama bin Laden did not provide direct funding to Ramzi Yousef or Janjalani at this time. According to Burke, "there is nothing to indicate that those monies [provided by the IIRO] included funds from Osama bin Laden himself. There would have been no need for Khalifa to be in touch with Osama bin Laden. His own connections were broad-ranging".⁶ Khalifa's family link with bin Laden was less close than assumed. Osama bin Laden had at least 50 siblings and according to a senior Saudi diplomat, "a brother in law... in Saudia Arabia [is] not even considered part of the family".⁷

In 1992 Janjalani renamed his organization the ASG in recognition of his benefactor. The ASG only gave occasional lip service to its pretension of establishing an independent Islamic state in western Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. Between 1991 and 1997 the ASG conducted 67 terrorist attacks across the Philippines. The ASG targeted foreign missionaries and a Catholic bishop; at least half of all its attacks were viewed as indiscriminate. The character of the ASG changed with the death of Janjalani in December 1998. It degenerated into a number of semi-autonomous factions whose stock in trade consisted of bombings, assassinations, extortion and kidnapping. As a result of ASG's growing notoriety, it attracted the support of a number of criminal gangs active in the Sulu archipelago. Kidnapping for ransom became the ASG's main source of income.

What of the connections between al Qa'ida and the ASG? According to a recent assessment, the ASG's early ties to al Qa'ida "hinged largely around Ramzi Yousef... and Jamal Khalifa. By the mid-late 1990s, these had atrophied as the ASG veered into criminality and MILF training facilities in south-central Mindanao proved far more attractive for Al-Qaeda and its regional allies".⁸ A country specialist perspective on the ASG indicates that far from being an al Qa'ida affiliate or extremist Islamic organization, the ASG is a homegrown criminal gang that employs terror tactics as its modus operandi. The ASG has been able to persist mainly due to clan loyalties in its area of operations and because the local Muslim population does not trust the Armed Forces of the Philippines, an organization that is viewed as Christian oppressors.

Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group has emerged as the pre-eminent expert on JI. She is the author of three seminal reports on JI. These reports set the emergence of JI within the larger context of domestic developments in Indonesia. According to Jones, JI is in part the modern day successor to the Darul Islam movement of the 1940s and 1950s. Members of Darul Islam sought to create an Islamic state based on syari'ah law in Indonesia. They fought first against the Dutch and then the Republic of Indonesia.

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), meaning a broad based Islamic community, grew up in Darul Islam's wake. In its early years JI was more of a state of mind than an actual organization. Two Islamic religious clerics, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, were caught up in a ploy by Indonesian military intelligence designed to flush out Islamic extremists during the Suharto era. Both Sungkar and Ba'asyir fled to Malaysia in the mid-1980s to escape imprisonment.

It was during this period in exile that a hard core emerged within the Islamic community fostered by Sungkar and Ba'asyir. It is this group which has become popularly identified as Jemaah Islamiyah. JI consists of a close-knit group of individuals bound together by religious indoctrination, experience in Afghan training camps and marriage. Both Sungkar and Ba'asyir returned to Indonesia in 1998 after the fall of Suharto.

Whatever personal bonds linked Sungkar to Osama bin Laden, they were broken with the former's death in 1999. Ba'asyir reportedly replaced Sungkar as emir or spiritual leader of JI. Ba'asyir has no reported direct links with al Qa'ida or its leader. He played a signal role in encouraging the growth of Islamic militancy if not Islamic extremism in Indonesia. However, Ba'asyir was instrumental in forming the Indonesian Mujihadin Council which brought together a wide number of groups concerned with the creation of an international caliphate. When sectarian strife broke out in the Mulukus and on Sulawesi, extremist groups such as Laskar Jihad and Laskar Jundullah joined the fray supported by their brethren in Malaysia and the Philippines.

Individuals closely associated with Ba'asyir in Malaysia set up an administrative structure that covered the Malay archipelago. Under the guidance of Hambali, reputedly al Qa'ida's top official in the region, a militant core undertook planning for a series of terrorist attacks against western embassies in Singapore and other targets. When Malaysian and Singaporean security authorities broke up the JI-KMM network in late 2001, Hambali turned his attention to softer targets. This led to the tragic terrorist bombings at Kuta Beach in Bali in October 2002 and to dissension in JI's ranks including the opposition to such tactics by Ba'asyir himself.

In her third report on JI, Sidney Jones thoroughly examined the network of linkages between Indonesian jihadists who trained in Afghanistan and al Qa'ida. The historical record does not establish that JI is an affiliate or franchise of al Qa'ida. Rather, Jones concluded:

The information emerging from the interrogation of JI suspects indicates that this is a bigger organization than previously thought, with a depth of leadership that gives it a regenerative capacity. It has communication with and has received funding from al-Qaeda, but it is very much in-dependent and takes most, if not all operational decisions locally.⁹

The country studies approach contributes in three major ways to our understanding of the nature of new terrorism in Southeast Asia. First, the country studies approach enables us to appreciate the historical, political and cultural context in which militant organizations and terrorist groups emerge and how we may distinguish between them. This is terribly important if we are to avoid lumping Islamic groups and terrorism together in the same analytical basket.

For example, the MILF, far from being an al Qa'ida affiliate, has agreed to a ceasefire and negotiations with the Philippine government. The MILF has refrained from criticising US-Filipino military cooperation aimed against the ASG. This entire approach is anathema to all that Osama bin Laden and al Qa'ida stand for. This is the main reason why the MILF is not considered a terrorist group by either the Philippine government or the international community. Yet international and regional terrorism experts consistently list the MILF among regional terrorist groups.

Secondly, the country studies approach enables us to move beyond flat organizational charts that imply the subordination of regional groups to al Qa'ida to a more fully rounded analysis in which local groups are given agency. In other words, we can more fully appreciate the motivations and agendas of local leaders and their groups especially those that attempt to leverage their relations with al Qa'ida for their own ends. Country specialists have found support by a remarkable study by an international terrorism expert which concludes:

But the temptation to see these groups, 'the network of networks', as 'bin Laden-linked' or part of al-Qaeda must be resisted. 'Al-Qaeda', or even Osama bin Laden, may perform a specific function for many of them at specific times but Algerian, Chechen and Indonesian groups are rooted in specific local contingencies and causes. Islamic

militancy is a broad-based, multivalent, diverse movement. It goes far beyond the deeds or words of one man or one small organization.¹⁰

Thirdly, country specialists are able to bring a deeper understanding of the role of Islam in state-society relations into their analysis of militant organizations and terrorist groups. International terrorism and regional experts are prone to present a less nuanced view. They usually refer to the impact of what they term Salafi and Wahabi "puritanical" teaching on society at large without exploring what this means in the local context. Country studies specialists are able to place national religious trends within the larger context of intellectual currents in the Muslim world thus adding texture to their analysis of Islam in a particular country.¹¹

Conclusion

Al Qa'ida regional network has been broken up and disrupted as a consequence of the global war on terrorism. JI cells have been eliminated in Singapore and Malaysia. Several long planned operations have been disrupted as a result of police action. The round-up of terrorist suspects in Indonesia after Bali has also degraded JI's operational capabilities in that country. Approximately 180 suspected JI members across Southeast Asia have been arrested or detained. Despite this generally upbeat assessment, the threat of political terrorism remains. The US government estimates that 500 JI members are still active throughout the region and they retain the motivation and capacity to continue their terrorist activities.

In the near-term future, political terrorism in Southeast Asia will be conducted by already existing indigenous terrorist groups perhaps in cooperation with al Qa'ida remnants who have turned to a career as professional terrorists. Southeast Asia's political terrorist groups will operate under their own direction in pursuit of their own aims and objectives and largely on the basis of their own resources. Counter-terrorism actions by Malaysia and Singapore have knocked the wind out of the sails of the regional JI network dedicated to establishing an archipelagic Islamic state. Current assessments indicate that JI is in internal disarray over whether to continue with its strategy of mass casualty terrorism. There are encouraging signs that support for militant Islamic groups is in decline in Indonesia. Nevertheless the Philippines and Indonesia remain areas of special concern.

Endnotes

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3 Michael Chandler, a UN specialist on international terrorism, has compiled an additional list of 104 terrorist individuals and entities from public sources that are not included on the UN consolidated list; see: CNN, *United Nations*, December 18, 2002.

4 Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. For a similar approach see also: Zachary Abuza, "Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 24(3), December 2002, 427-465.

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8 Anthony Davis, "Resilient Abu Sayyaf resists military pressure", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 1, 2003, internet edition.

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11 Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, 2002, 10(2), 117-124 and Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.



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Fireball on the Water: Rolling Back the Global Waves of Terror... from the Sea

by MAJ Irvin Lim Fang Jau

"The issue is how seriously do governments take the threat of maritime terrorism... We cannot continue to hope for the best and ignore the lessons." 1

"Let's roll!"2

The Maritime Terrorist Threat is a hydra that continues to pose a clear and present danger to world commerce and, ultimately, the very well-being of nations. The latest stream of explosive carnage with truck bombs in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) on 13 May 2003, gas stations bombing attacks across Pakistan on 15 May 2003, and truck bombs in Casablanca (Morocco) on 16 May 2003, and Jakarta (Indonesia) on 5 August 2003, serve as a gruesome reminder that the war on global terrorism against newly regenerated Al-Qaeda elements and their shadowy associates is far from over. In fact, it is getting tougher. We have not yet seen "the turning of the tide"3, and a new wave of attacks could be imminent around the world. Arguably more so than on land and in the air, the vast global maritime domain makes policing a Herculean enterprise, and it continues to be over-exposed to terrorist attacks.

This paper argues that in order to effectively deal with the common threat of maritime terrorism, the world's naval forces and their respective home-front elements like the coast guard, customs and port authorities must work hand-in-glove with the shipping community to enhance multi-agency integration and forge greater multilateral co-operation to protect vulnerable hulls and safeguard homelands at ports and at sea. It stands to reason then that the protracted, if not interminable, fight against maritime terrorism remains to be urgently joined and decidedly joint in efforts.

Big Sitting Ducks in Hunting Season?

The fearsome German wolf-pack u-boats conducted the most effective *guerre de course* against British seaborne trade in history during World War II. These days, the nature of the maritime threat is posed by a different breed of sea-wolf – small boats packed with high explosives on a sinister mission of deadly stealth to ram into unsuspecting hulls. The threat of maritime terrorism is not overblown as the high tide of Fourth-Generation Warfare4 is well upon the world, and the rocks of risk have been sharpened by the anticipated blowback resulting from America's troubled victory in the Gulf. Maritime attacks have stained media headlines with their bloody message of atrocity. An explosives-laden dinghy rammed the destroyer USS Cole, killing 17 US sailors and injuring 39 others on 12 October 2000.5 A similar-styled attack on the French Tanker Limburg6 plying off Yemen killed one crewman and spilled 90,000 barrels of crude oil on 6 October 2002.

The current dead calm at sea should not lull one into thinking that the threat has blown over. It would be an oversight to view the seemingly disparate and sporadic nature of postmodern terrorism7 on the high seas as isolated events. Rather, they share common motivations and are integrated in means and strategic in ends. The warning had been well served and should dispel any false sense of security: warships and civilian vessels whether in transit, at anchor or berthed in port can be targeted with extreme malice, without warning or mercy.8 With the US and its allies "hardening" their facilities on land against terrorist attack, Al-Qaeda has reportedly escalated attempts to launch sea assaults as it believes waterborne targets make for easier prey.9 The 12 October 2002 Bali attacks and vicious attacks in Jakarta on 5 August 2003, show that terrorists have adaptively switched focus from hard targets to soft targets.10 Although the global war on terrorism may have weakened Al-Qaeda and degraded its capabilities, the terrorism swamp is far from drained dry. Terror agents may have been driven deeper underground. Therefore, the terror network may be down but not out. The capacity to mount large-scale attacks cannot be discounted. In any case, Al-Qaeda is not the only terrorist group to worry about.

While the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro11 resulted in one civilian death, horrific mass casualty terrorist attacks on civilian passenger cruise ships remain a very real danger. On 23 April 2003, the Royal Caribbean's Legend of the Sea, a cruise-liner with 2,400 people on board, was sailing from Ensenada, Mexico, to Hilo when it was diverted for security sweep boarding by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force. The boarding accentuated maritime threat concerns even though subsequent investigations uncovered the threat as a hoax.12 Such well-publicised contingency response is becoming the norm in anti-terrorism security enforcement, and all threats no matter how seemingly far-fetched are taken seriously, with little left to chance.

Maritime terrorists go for neither sea control nor sea denial but seek to disrupt with strikes at sea, that can have potentially catastrophic impacts on homeland security and the larger global economy. Consider for example, the economic significance of the Malacca and Singapore Straits. Virtually all tankers from the Middle East destined for Asia pass through the two straits. Japan and China are increasingly dependent on Gulf oil. Some 400 shipping lines and 700 ports worldwide rely on the Malacca and Singapore Straits to get to Singapore. To bypass the straits would force a ship to travel an extra 1,600 km (994 miles) from the Gulf. But narrow channels, shallow reefs, thousands of tiny get-away islands, and slow traffic with some 900 commercial vessels passing through each day make the waters around Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia a pirate and terrorists' dream. Tankers carry about 10.3 million barrels a day of crude oil eastwards through the Straits of Malacca, which at its narrowest point measures about 1.5 miles. The ships inch through the straits with barely a metre or two of clearance above the bottom at some stretches. Little surprise then, the Malacca Straits is considered a prime target for terrorists bent on disrupting international commerce. Blowing up a super tanker loaded with tonnes of gas or oil would block a sea-lane that carries 25% of the world's crude oil trade. According to the US State Department,¹³ the attack on the French tanker cost Yemen about US\$3.8 million a month in lost business and extra insurance premiums.

Troubling Nature of the Rip-Tide

With an overwhelming bulk of the world's communities living near coasts or on just 10% of the earth's land surface¹⁴ and heavily reliant on maritime economic activity, the adverse impact of a mass casualty maritime terrorist attack can have serious consequences. For example, the oil spill from a ruptured tanker – the Bahamas-registered Prestige - damaged in a storm stained the coast of northwest Spain, and contaminated marine wildlife in the region in November 2002.¹⁵ More recently, another Chinese vessel - Fu Shan Hai - exploded following a collision with a Polish freighter and went down between the Swedish coast and Denmark's Bornholm Island. Its sinking produced a 15-square mile oil slick, some of which washed up at Sweden's southern beaches. The series of incidents underscore the possible dire consequences of terrorist attacks on tankers.

The commercial shipping of nuclear material is also of international concern. On 23 February 2002, when the MV Pacific Pintail sailed with a 14-tonne container cargo of highly radioactive plutonium waste from France to Japan, the progress of its supposedly "secret route" was monitored closely by many littoral states and shadowed at sea by NGOs like Greenpeace.¹⁶ In 1998, Greenpeace activists boarded a British-flagged freighter carrying highly radioactive nuclear waste as it approached the Panama Canal en route to Japan. Although Greenpeace had meant to protest the environmental hazards of shipping nuclear waste materials, the incident amply demonstrated the ease with which terrorists could sea-jack such deadly cargo.¹⁷

Pirate techniques to board ships while underway are certainly well within the capabilities of today's terrorists. To be sure, the improvised Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threat caused by the ramming/hijack-sabotaging of high-risk commercial/military transports ferrying highly toxic chemical cargo or fissile (dirty-bomb) material is a nightmare scenario calling for serious contemplation and urgent action. The protection of such big sitting ducks will not be easy if terrorists sea-jack them. Potential fall-out from a botched rescue operation¹⁸ remains a clear and present danger. What indeed are the fall-out danger zones from explosive/contamination plumes, and fail-safe distances for stopping high-risk vessels carrying deadly cargo on a terror mission? To complicate matters, the thousands of vessels registered in "flag of convenience" nations pose a particularly serious challenge to effective global shipping monitoring. There are reportedly anywhere between 12 - 50 mystery ships controlled by Al-Qaeda and its proxies.¹⁹ The unevenly regulated nature of the vast international shipping system masks flag-hopping by terrorist groups, allowing them to operate incognito with relative impunity.

With the panoply of terrorist threats arrayed at the maritime shipping community, cruising at sea with routine watch alert is no longer an option. Burning questions about early threat classification, Rules of Engagement and the Road for Avoidance against seemingly innocuous vessels bobbing forlornly on the surface wave now confront the captains of warships as well as those of the shipping industry. The difficulty of establishing hostile intent with any certainty, compounded by rules of the road norms make it hard to enforce any restrictions of Closest Point of Approach for a highly-sensitive commercial vessel or man-of-war based on any fixed standard; save safety of navigation. How does an Officer-of-the-Watch keep suspicious vessels at a safe arms-length without swerving at every spook? And is there a reasonable level of risk or datum safety buffer/distance that can be tolerated? Given that heavy traffic and narrow sea-room make passing at sniffing distance a norm for vessels plying the littorals, what should the appropriate response be? Split-second decision-making demands, spurious threat information overload and paranoia can be a deadly combination. Many operational issues remain to be worked out. But timing and accurate decision-making with well-rehearsed procedures are of the essence given the urgent threat. The ill-fated Iran Air flight 655 shot down accidentally by USS Vincennes, at the height of tensions during the Iran-Iraq War on 3 July

1988, comes to mind.

The global strategy of terror from the sea is to unleash an unpredictable wave of destruction that can strike at anytime, anywhere. From Africa, the Gulf, South East Asia to Oceania²⁰, the fact that many of the vulnerable waterways around the world meander through arc(hipelagoe)s²¹ of instability administered by weak or failed states make maritime protection operations both an operationally complex and politically sensitive task. In such areas, Grey Area Phenomenon²² associated with trans-boundary activities like piracy, gun-running and narco/human-trafficking provide a ready-made nexus for terrorism-related activities.²³ In fact, three pirate attacks on chemical tankers in Indonesian waters from 25 February to 26 March 2003, heightened concerns over their vulnerability to terror groups.²⁴ The concerns have been compounded by expert assessments, such as Rohan Gunaratna's, who revealed that Al-Qaeda was spying on Malaysian marine police operations in the Malacca Straits.²⁵ He specifically disclosed that video footage of Malaysian police patrol craft in action were among 240 tapes recovered in Afghanistan by US forces in 2002. Gunaratna had also warned of a possibility that Al-Qaeda was training to execute maritime attacks. Experts also pointed out that any potential attack in the Straits could traumatise world business, especially with the Singapore harbour in close proximity and playing a key role in the global economic lifeline.²⁶

To compound the problem, the maritime threat is not just confined to surface shipping. Vital installations and symbolic landmarks that dot the coastlines of many countries make vulnerable targets as well. Already, the threat to vital shore installations like oil terminals has stretched security blankets around many near-shore and offshore oil facilities worldwide. Countries like Singapore deployed military and police personnel and high-tech sensor equipment to deter and prevent attacks at its offshore petrochemical islands. US intelligence agencies had detected surveillance by terror suspects at three oil facilities in the US in late 2002, raising fears that plans were under way to attack oil-shipping terminals and refineries.²⁷ When a massive accidental barge explosion rocked an oil storage facility on the edge of Staten Island just off New York in late February 2003, FBI officials could not initially rule out a terrorist attack.²⁸ It is clear that the hermetic monitoring and "24/7" enforcement of the diverse range of surface maritime traffic in the congested in-shore waterways of the littorals would be daunting even for the most well-equipped and well-trained naval force or maritime security agency alone.

Top Priority Naval Mission: Homeland Security...From the Sea?

US Navy Commander Michael Dobbs had argued in the context of enhanced US Navy (USN) global missions, that the "routine forward posture makes the Navy well suited to help prevent attacks. The key elements of prevention are threat reduction, deterrence, disruption of terrorist weapons programmes, and pre-emption of terrorist attacks."²⁹ Recently, a new US military task force was deployed in the Horn of Africa for covert missions against Al-Qaeda.³⁰ In a related strategic move, the US formally proposed the formation of a NATO Response Force (NRF) at the NATO summit in Prague, Czech Republic, on 21 November 2002. The 20,000-strong NRF would consist of land, air and sea assets that would be able to strike rogue states or terrorist networks anywhere in the world within seven to 30 days.³¹

Post September 11, the US's doctrinal alignment towards "homeland security...from the sea" clearly envisages naval forces taking on a frontline role in threat reduction and deterrence. Maritime force protection and projection is something few navies can afford to ignore these days. By the very nature of their often far-flung missions, navy ships often embark on navigational passage through the archipelagic sea lanes and Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) cutting through littorals, where they are vulnerable to sneak attacks by terrorist groups. For navies like the USN, conventional Naval (counter)-force protection-projection issues go back a long way. And even at the height of the Gulf Tanker War of the 1980's, the small boat threat had largely been conventional and state-centred. Merchant ships, and even warships, were routinely harassed by a combination of fast Swedish-built Boghammers, Boston whaler-type craft and even bazooka-firing jet-ski manned by the Naval Branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, which roamed the Gulf sealanes.³²

Today, the rogue nation-state is not the sole unit of concern. Non-state actors can now easily engage in what one historian calls "random/do-it yourself war"³³ with commonplace wherewithal. In many ways, terrorist networks are learning organisations that are quintessential exponents of an asymmetric brand of indiscriminate effects-based warfare. Gulf Tanker protection tactics like area patrols and shipping protection with a force mixture of helicopters and small boats (MK-IIIIs), augmented by special forces have become the norm for naval force protection in an age of maritime terrorism. But to better deal with the range of unconventional maritime threats, a whole new generation of new force protection platforms like Uninhabited Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs e.g. Predator), littoral combat ships³⁴, coastal aerostats/blimps³⁵ and even sea lions³⁶ may have to be deployed to enhance right-on-time precision "continuum-of-force"³⁷ capabilities.

For many international navies, the mission of Homeland Security remains primarily about force protection, although some, like the USN, be called upon to conduct pre-emptive maritime operations home and away. Specifically, by working closely with the intelligence agencies and special forces, naval forces can now play an increasingly pivotal role in pre-emption.³⁸ Modern naval forces, by virtue of their sustained in-theatre presence and flexible operational capability, are uniquely placed to provide discreet force projection to take the fight to wherever the terrorism hydra may rear its ugly heads.

While the hard power of naval protection-projection is critical in sustaining the fight, the soft power of naval diplomacy and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief should also not be neglected in winning the fight. On-going outreach efforts by some navies to help uplift impoverished communities in littoral regions, where maritime terrorists may roost, should be stepped up. In a global era where “disconnectedness defines danger”³⁹, such naval outreach efforts are often welcomed by the local populace and supported by regional governments. After all, such outreach efforts constitute the “frontline” in the fight against terrorism. Operationally, they can facilitate combined maritime security training, community-building projects and even provide HUMINT on maritime terrorism activities, while potentially undercutting popular support bases for them around littoral communities by winning the battle for hearts and minds.

Integrated Coastguarding & Customs Border Protection

Post September 11, the military forces of many countries have assumed a more proactive posture in enhancing homeland security. Having said that, any effort to secure the homeland from the sea does not rest on the shoulders of the navy alone. Other agencies need to be brought onboard.

It is perhaps self-evident that close interface with civil port and maritime authorities like the Coast Guard and Customs Services will also be vital. For example, in January 2002 alone, the US Coast Guard conducted 30,000 port-security patrols and 3,000 air patrols, boarded 1,792 high-interest vessels and escorted 5,112 vessels in and out of ports.⁴⁰ Such pier-side security activities come on top of already onerous traditional responsibilities of the US Coast Guard to mount patrols in the Caribbean approaches to US coastal waters to stem the tide of illegal immigrants as well as drug smugglers. At the risk of thinning the protection of the American coastline, the US Coast Guard sent 10 cutters to support US Naval force protection operations in the Persian Gulf in early February 2003.⁴¹

Alongside enhanced US Coast Guard maritime border security initiatives involving port Vessel Traffic Information System (VTIS) integration, the US Customs has also made parallel alignments. With the launch of the Container Security Initiative (CSI)⁴², Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), Operation Safe Container and Smart Border Initiative in early 2002, the newly renamed US Customs & Border Protection has switched from its traditionally more narrow focus of domestic revenue collection to broader border-in-depth security enforcement worldwide. All the programmes are designed to involve the private sector in making the supply chain more secure. It has also started the National Targeting Center⁴³ to risk-profile the six million containers that enter the US annually for WMD. Both the US Coastguard and US Customs & Border Protection are now integrated into the new US Department of Homeland Security.

The evolving maritime security ménage à trois - naval force protection/projection, Coast Guarding and Customs Border security - will need to be both multi-agency and multilateral in nature. Beyond domestic re-structuring⁴⁴, any multi-agency sea-change must not be merely ad hoc, but sustained and strategic. There is therefore an urgent need to cultivate strong networks to fight and prevail over sinister networks.⁴⁵ For this to materialise, concrete multilateral maritime security cooperation in the littorals and high seas will be an operational imperative. Given the amorphous nature of the threat, no single country or agency can hope to stem the rip-tide of terror effectively without the aid of close allies and strategic partners. The diplomatic imperative would be for countries to forge consensus over common interests and eschew unilateral actions that may shrink, not widen, such coalitions of the willing.

Riding on the Anti-Jolly Roger Wave of Strategic Opportunities & Initiatives

The war on global terror has focused sharply the strategic maritime orientation of many countries. The oftentimes polemical “Four-Star Foreign Policy”⁴⁶ exhibited by the US Combatant Commanders (formerly known as CINCs) in their respective regional commands will continue to be a key driver in security community-coalition building in the long fight ahead. For example, in the Asia Pacific, the “unique role” assumed by the Combatant Commander of US Pacific Command (PACOM) “in working the security arrangements that underpin the region’s strong record of structural stability over the past quarter century”⁴⁷ would likely continue, if not be enhanced, in the common fight against global terrorism. On 27 November 2001, then US Pacific Commander ADM Dennis Blair publicly urged

Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to work closely to prevent terror attacks on shipping in the Malacca Straits. He had disclosed then that many nations had offered to participate in the Malacca Straits patrol and that the US was interested in exploring further such an avenue.⁴⁸

Neighbouring states are already conducting bilateral maritime patrols (Indonesia-Malaysia and Indonesia-Singapore) in the Malacca and Singapore Straits respectively. The prospect of politically widening the operational scope of such bilateral patrols to include extra-regional powers in a more multilateral setting still seems somewhat ambivalent, tentative and outwardly low-key, given latent territorial sovereignty sensitivities. Despite the guarded stance, it is unlikely to unduly hamstring greater intelligence-sharing with the US and other friendly navies. The medium-term issue of expanding bilateral patrols to joint multilateral patrols will likely evolve, contingent on the specific threat perceptions and operational capabilities of the various coastal state parties.

Countries like Japan and India, by working closely with US PACOM, have capitalised on the anti-terror campaign to further establish their maritime presence in areas like the South China Sea and Malacca Straits. The Japanese have been quick to deploy SDF surface combatants to lend non-combat support to the US-led global anti-terrorism campaign, and have also deployed Japanese Coast Guard vessels into the Southeast Asian waterways.⁴⁹ There are mounting domestic pressure and justifications for Japan to play a more active role, particularly as the Indian Ocean and Malacca Straits remain vital economic lifelines for the daily transit of Japanese shipping. Riding on its "Look East" Policy of engaging the Southeast Asian states, India has also lent stout support for the US efforts in Ops Enduring Freedom by sending warships to provide naval escorts of key US military and commercial support vessels plying up and down the Malacca Straits.

No less significantly, in a first-ever test case to go on trial in India, the Indian court assumed jurisdiction over a crime committed outside Indian waters. India imposed seven years jail with hard labour on the Indonesian pirates who hijacked a Japanese freighter. Citing Article 105 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which empowers any state to seize a ship or aircraft taken by pirates and decide on penalties, the Indian authorities seized, in international waters, the vessel that had earlier been hijacked in Indonesian waters.⁵⁰ In the same month of February 2003, a Chinese court meted out prison terms of up to 15 years to 10 Indonesian pirates. With piracy cases hitting record numbers in the first three months of 2003, the landmark decisions by courts in China and India to impose stiff prison terms could help curb the maritime menace.

Not to be left in the wake of the Indians and Japanese, a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) ship, Taicang, conducted an anti-piracy exercise while transiting the Malacca Straits for the Indian Ocean on 28 May 2002. With the increase in the projection capabilities of the modernising PLAN, Chinese vessels can be expected to seek out more operational avenues with regional partners for maintaining a strategic presence in the Southeast Asia region. Particularly as China's global shipping trade links grow and the world's merchant ships converging at her coastal ports transit through the vital SLOCs in the Southeast Asia littorals.

In sum, the disparate efforts to ride on the wave of anti-piracy initiatives need sharper focus in an era of global terrorism. Echoing the arguments made in this paper, recent calls for an "integrated multi-dimensional approach" towards enhancing maritime security, have been made by Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and then-Defence Minister Tony Tan to involve not only security agencies but also port authorities, international organisations and industry players. Such an approach should also seek to improve co-ordination in "basic areas" such as the exchange of information, and build on extant and fledgling regional anti-piracy cooperation efforts:

"We should try to build on regional anti-piracy frameworks that already exist or are starting to come into place...We have been dealing with the problem of piracy for some time, and there are methods and tactics associated with terrorism which we can identify, and put in place preventive measures."⁵¹

Many littoral states like Malaysia and Singapore have also stepped up pier-side security and sea patrols in their respective backwaters (the Malacca and Singapore Straits) to deter maritime terror attacks in a region now considered by some to be a second-front in the war on terrorism post-Bali 12 October 2002. Singapore has gazetted certain key areas within its port as prohibited or "No-Go" areas, with restrictions that cover the approaches to sensitive facilities used by tankers.⁵² Singapore naval vessels also conduct random and selective escorts for High-Interest Vessels transiting the Singapore Straits by working closely with Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority and the Police Coast Guard. Bilateral anti-piracy patrols with the Indonesian Navy continue in earnest. Malaysia has also stepped up sea border patrols with the Philippines, and instituted new sea-lanes in the waters off East Malaysia (Sabah) to better regulate and monitor sea traffic after the spate of cross-border kidnapping and arms smuggling activities in the area. A common feature of such stepped-up backwater patrols is the renewed emphasis on close

civil-military multi-agency cooperation, with enhanced scope for intra-/extra-regional bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

Towards a Watertight Shipping Industry Security Community

Besides state-centric opportunities for multi-agency and multilateral cooperation in areas of operational overlap, the shipping community, as keen stakeholders, has also proposed radical industry-wide measures to safeguard global maritime trading. In what has been touted as “the most radical security plans in the shipping history” drawn up under the auspices of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), ships passing through high risk regions would be offered armed escorts.⁵³ As of May 2003, shipping lines using Singapore have a year to improve security on their ships and in their companies to keep abreast of tough maritime security measures outlined by the IMO. Failure of shipping lines to comply with the new regulations, risk delays in cargo handling or even ban from entering the port. The tough measures form part of efforts spearheaded by the IMO, the world’s governing body for merchant shipping, to help shipping lines thwart nightmare scenarios like having WMD shipped by terrorists on a merchant ship. The rules are intended to frustrate attempts by terrorists to disrupt global trade by attacks on seaborne commerce, or endanger coastal cities by turning the highly flammable cargo aboard oil or gas tankers into lethal weapons.⁵⁴

Conclusion: Setting Convergent Course for Concerted Action

To confront the threat of terrorism in the littorals and on the high seas, effective responses cannot be unilateral or disjointed. Multi-agency and multilateral action is required with a sharp focus on the early pre-emption and hot pursuit of maritime terrorists on the lookout for easy keels and safe havens anywhere in the world. It is equally important to recognise that the war against terrorism is not a passing concern. Conflicts these days span the gamut from conventional to un-conventional warfare, and force protection-projection operations “against asymmetric threats” (posed by non-state and state actors) have willy nilly become part and parcel of warfighting missions that all militaries must be prepared for. On a sanguine note, an emergent consensus on implementing a more muscular anti-terror approach against suicide/asymmetric threats looks set to become the defining global maritime security issue of our times.

As Geoffery Till had well-noted, the major function of the navies of the 21st century will be to cooperate in the policing of the globalised world albeit by arriving at a “maritime bargain in defence of the globalised trading system”, with the USN, acting like “a system administrator⁵⁵, in the lead role.” Such naval cooperation may yet signal “a return to the preoccupations of the Royal Navy of the 19th century, where such things as the suppression of the slave trade, action against piracy and maintaining law and order in the coastal zones ranked amongst its main tasks.”⁵⁶ To be sure, despite any step-up in multilateral international cooperation, navies will never be “denationalised” insofar as their respective *raison d’être* will always be contingent on individual national interests. But common global maritime interests can now make a stronger strategic pitch, symbiotically with narrower national ambitions and conventional naval missions. They need not always be mutually exclusive; often, they are not.

On that score, firstly, the inclusion of unconventional threat scenarios into existing combined naval exercises, involving civilian agencies, could be one way to establish high degrees of intelligence-sharing, integrated contingency planning and inter-operability from the lowest unit levels up. CARAT (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training) - the series of annual bilateral exercises between US PACOM and individual Southeast Asian military forces could be a useful avenue for developing a more robust regional maritime security community with a multi-lateral anti-terrorism orientation. Multilateral CARATs may yet become a feature of the Southeast Asian regional military cooperation landscape.

Although there will be political sovereignty issues and challenges of achieving the right level of inter-operability between the respective national blue-brown water orientations, there is also potential. Sensitivities can be managed through candid mutual discussions with all partners involved. Going beyond bilateral initiatives in maritime security cooperation, bolder and more comprehensive multilateral steps in maritime security cooperation could begin by focusing on niche common interest areas like force-protection/concentration operations to counter asymmetric and unconventional threats at sea. These could later expand in scale and complexity to deal with more catastrophic maritime crisis scenarios incorporating Terrorist Incident-cum-Mass Casualty Search and Rescue exercises. In fact, members of the Five Power Defence Arrangements recently announced that they are exploring ways of adapting the security grouping to counter non-conventional threats such as piracy, illegal immigrants and terrorism, in a shift from the 32-year-old organisation’s original aim of defending Malaysia and Singapore from conventional external threats.⁵⁷ Admittedly, the character of multilateral action often tends to lack stamina, leans heavily on symbolism rather than deeds. This can be mitigated if countries can agree on common denominators of critical security

interests and act together consistently on them by building upon established norms and habits of cooperation.

Second, in an era of “embedded media”⁵⁸, joint/combined civil-military combined operations/exercises would do well to incorporate perception management in the anti-terror game plan to bolster public confidence. While the escort of oil tankers and increased naval patrols in international waters do not in and of themselves eliminate the threat of terrorism from the world’s shipping channels, good media coverage of regular maritime security exercises can have a positive demonstration effect in stimulating greater multi-agency cooperation amongst coastal states and reassure the shipping community. The crux of a deterrence-cum-denial-based approach involves demonstrating that the capability exists to mitigate the desired effects of terrorists.⁵⁹ Over time, such “hard-target” enforcement postures, with the absence of incidents, make for psychologically important positive “incremental dividends” in the broader fight against terrorism. Even if the deterrent messages may appear limited, such exercises nevertheless signal political resolve to curb maritime terrorism.

Third, rigorous multi-agency “red-teaming” to verify the robustness of maritime security regimes and identify critical homefront vulnerabilities will be another common goal to shoot for. The focus should not just be on hardening critical infrastructure, but also on second-tier softer targets like civil maritime community practices and infrastructure. It follows also that red-teaming probes should not just deal with first-order magnitude contingencies but also crippling cascading shock effects throughout the infrastructure chain. Leveraging on the expertise and perspectives of the various maritime security agencies, including the mercantile community, can help to pool resources in holistic critical vulnerability analysis and remedial programmes. It also helps to breakout of a reactive “fire-house” mentality by instilling a more proactive culture of vulnerability-probing.

Fourth, besides gathering useful HUMINT on potential threats, naval civil assistance programmes in littoral communities straddling vulnerable waterways should be stepped up to promote security through community building. Such goodwill defence diplomacy efforts would also help to mitigate concerns by some coastal states to the surge in policing forces in the region, especially by extra-regional actors.

Fifth, multinational civil-military technology collaboration can hasten the quest for innovative security solutions⁶⁰ to counter the spectrum of maritime threats. Rapid insertion of new technologies for better detection and deterrence can also encompass joint capacity-building in CBRNE (Chemi-Bio, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive) detection/crisis response capabilities between the different security agencies and industry players. Singapore, one of the world’s busiest ports, is already installing a \$1.5 million global satellite-based ship identification system as it joins an international effort to ward off a maritime equivalent of the September 11 terror attacks.⁶¹

Last but not least, extant fora like the Western Pacific Navy Symposium could be another useful professional platform for regional navies to help shape a renewed anti-terror compact and anchor commitment to enhanced multilateral maritime security co-operative regimes and joint operational protocols. Such professional fora as well as wider political ones like the ASEAN Regional Forum should be strengthened to forge consensus and coordinated action against emergent maritime security threats.

The onus will be on the world’s navies, maritime security agencies and shipping communities to sharpen their respective strategies and capabilities with the necessary resource allocation. Partnership, not un-ilateralism or dependency, will be key.

To prevent further fireballs on the water from exploding in the first place, it is high time for all concerned maritime nations and shipping communities to overcome any political-operational cross currents that may slow down multi-agency and multi-lateral cooperation. Cooperation against piracy on the one hand, with counter-maritime terrorism activities on the other, are not mutually exclusive endeavours. Rather, they are mutually reinforcing activities. This global nexus is synergistically strengthened by the three-pronged approach of greater inter-agency cooperation, forward-leaning regional bilateral agreements and proactive multilateral inter-state arrangements.

All said, terrorist attacks at sea and at port may be infrequent or episodic in occurrence, compared to commonplace piracy or terror attacks on land. But they can occur with more horrifying cataclysmic consequences than those seen so far - in an age of WMD proliferation, potentially dwarfing even the shock and awe of September 11. With little sea-room for strategic slack, there should be no let up in the momentum for concerted maritime efforts to roll back the global waves of terror... from the sea.

The unabridged version of this article is also available as IDSS Working Paper No. 53 (October 2003).

Endnotes:

- 1 See Annual Report of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) on attacks at sea. (March 2003) cited in The Straits Times Editorial on "Security At Sea", (4 Feb 2003).
- 2 A haunting clarion call for decisive action made famous by Todd Beamer, one of the American heroes/patriots of doomed flight 93 which crashed into rural Pennsylvania on 11 Sep 2001.
- 3 In the flush of victory fever back in early May 03, President Bush in an Iraq War victory speech onboard the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln had told sailors : "we have seen the turning of the tide" in America's wider war on terror.
- 4 See COL G.I. Wilson, SGT John Sullivan & LT COL Hal Kempfer, "Fourth-Generation Warfare" in Armed Forces Journal International, (Oct 2002), p. 56-62. Beyond the techne of 4th Generation warfare, analysts like Eliot Cohen and Earl Tilford have gone one step further in describing the war against Militant Islam after Sep 11 2001 as World War IV (World War III was the Cold War). See Asad Latiff, "Interview with Eliot Cohen: Charting the Course of a New World War", in The Sunday Times, (12 Jan 2003), p. 31. & Earl H. Tilford Jr., "Asymmetry and The American Way of War", in ROA National Security Report, (Jan/Feb 2003), pp. 97-100.
- 5 See "Another Key Al-Qaeda Leader Bites the Dust" in The Straits Times, (23 Nov 2002), p. 14; and "Special Report: The Secret History" in Time (12 Aug 2002) pg. 34.
- 6 The Herald Tribune, 16 Oct 2002, p.11.
- 7 See Walter Laqueur, "Postmodern Terrorism: News Rules for An Old Game", (1997), available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itgic/0297/ijge/gj-3.htm>; Andrew Tan, "The Emergence of Postmodern Terrorism and Its Implications for Southeast Asia" (2002), available at http://www.ntu.edu.sg/idss/Perspective/research_050107.htm.
- 8 See "Terrorists Talk: Useful Info for FBI But Only for 6 months" in The Sunday Times, (24 Nov 2002), p. 4; Keith Bradsher, "Warnings From Al-Qaeda Stir Fear That Terrorists May Attack Oil Tankers", in The New York Times, (12 Dec 2002), p. A24 and David, L. Brewer, "Force Protection Beyond MSC and the Navy", in Defense Transportation Journal, (Dec 2002), Vol. 58. , No. 6., pp. 6-8.
- 9 See Christopher Dickey, "Al-Qaeda At Sea", in Newsweek, (27 Jan 2003), p. 8.
- 10 The firing of two surface-to-air missiles at an Israeli civilian aircraft, Arkia Airlines Flight IZ582, which narrowly missed the plane as it took off from Mombasa on 28 November 02 serve as another reminder of the global terror threat.
- 11 The alleged mastermind of the hijacking, a Palestinian, Abu Abbas, was caught recently by US forces in Baghdad on 15 April 2003. See The Boston Globe, (16 Apr 2003), p. 1.
- 12 See "Threatening Notes Prompt Cruise Ship Diversion", available at CNN.com (24 April 2003) & "Threats on Cruise Ship Lead to Terror Charges", in USA Today, (30 Apr 03), p. 3A.
- 13 See "Singapore Confronts Fear of Seaborne Terror", available at MUZI News.com (7 Jan 2003) - <http://latelinenews.com/ll/english/1241360.shtml>; Ed Blanche, "Tanker Terror", in Middle East, (Dec 2002), No. 329, pp. 40-43; David Wood, "Experts Look Warily at US Vulnerability to Terrorism at Sea", available at Newhouse News Service, (10 Jan 2003).
- 14 See Don Hinrichsen, The Coastal Population Explosion, available at http://www.nos.noaa.gov/Products/retiredsites/natdia_pdf/3hinrichsen.pdf
- 15 See "Spain Oil Slick Hitting Wildlife" (17 Nov 2002), The Straits Times, (26 Nov 2002), p. 9.
- 16 See "Nuclear Waste Shipment" available at <http://archive.greenpeace.org/-comms/pintail.html>; See also "Germany Nuclear Waste Protest" in The Straits Times, (16 Nov 2002), p. 26.
- 17 Lewis M. Simons, "Weapons of Mass Destruction: An Ominous New Chapter Opens on The 20th Century's

Ugliest Legacy", in National Geographic, (Nov 2002) p. 17. See also Peter Heathcote, "Terrorism At Sea – The Potential Threat", available at <http://www.aiex.com.au/Qld-Terror.htm>. & Maj-Gen Julian Thompson, "The Threat of Maritime Hijackings & Dirty Bombs" in IN-TERSEC, Vol. 12 No.10, (Oct 2002), p. 4.

18 Some critics would probably cite the Russian use of gas to incapacitate Chechen rebels to resolve the Moscow theatre hostage crisis in late October 2002, that resulted in high civilian casualties, as an example where things can go tragically wrong despite the best of intentions.

19 See "US Tracking Al-Qaeda's Terror Ships", in The Straits Times, (1 Jan 2003), p. 4; orig Washington Post. See also Michael Richardson, "Terrorism Roams the High Seas Under Flags of Convenience", in The Straits Times, (22 May 2003).

20 US intelligence officials have alleged that Osama's Al-Qaeda terrorist network was moving operatives around the Mediterranean on a shipping fleet flagged in Tonga. See "Island Nation of Tonga Linked to the Al-Qaeda", in The Straits Times, (4 January 2003), p. 12.

21 My parenthetical portmanteau expression inspired by Geoffery Kemp, "Arcs of Instability: US Relations in the Greater Middle East", in Naval War College Review, Vol. LV, No. 3., (Summer, 2002), pp. 61-71. See also Joshua Sinai, "Middle Eastern Maritime Terrorism Now A Major Threat", in Journal of Counterterrorism & Homeland Security, Vol. 8., No. 3. (2002), pp. 6-10.

22 Grey-Area Phenomenon (GAP) can be loosely defined as threats to the stability of sovereign states by non-state actors, processes and organisations. GAP are not new and include problems like famine, disease, drug trafficking, terrorism and organised crime. See Jim Holden-Rhodes & Peter Lupsha, "Gray Area Phenomena: New Threats and Policy Dilemmas", in Criminal Justice International, Vol. 9, No. 1, (Jan-Feb, 1993), pp. 11-17; Peter Chalk, Grey-Area Phenomena in South East Asia: Piracy, Drug Trafficking and Political Terrorism, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 123, (Canberra, 1997); John S. Burnett, Dangerous Waters: Modern Piracy and Terror on the High Seas, (New York: EP Dutton, 2002).

23 See Ong, Op Cit.

24 See "Malaysia warns of terror threat to shipping", in The Straits Times, (30 Mar 03).

25 As alleged during the "Terrorism in The Asia Pacific-The Threat and Response" conference held in Singapore on 18 October 2002; See "Al-Qaeda Spying on Malaysian Marine Police in Malacca Straits: Expert", in New Straits Times, (19 Oct 02).

26 See "Officials Issue Maritime Terror Attack Alert", at CNN.com (23 Oct 02).

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28 See "Blast Rocks New York Oil Facility", in The Straits Times, (22 Feb 03).

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34 See Jason Sherman, "Global Teams Angle for Slice: Offer Hull Forms for US Littoral Combat Ship", in *Defense News*, (18-24 Nov 2002), p. 20-21.

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The Fatal Attraction of Suicide Terrorism

by Mr Daniel Tan Kuan Wei

“The life of this world is just a game and accumulation of possessions and children. What God has is better for me than all this”

- A note left behind by Hisham Hamad, a suicide bomber from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad¹

“While nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer, nothing is more difficult than to understand him.”

- Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky²

When the Marriott hotel bombing occurred on 5 August 2003, it signaled a new trend in the modus operandi of terror in Southeast Asia – Suicide Terrorism. Suicide bombers are the most feared weapons in the arsenal of terrorists. Usually, there is no telephone warning; the act itself and its resultant chaos announce the attack.³ Traditionally seen as a problem affecting the Middle East, South Asia, Russia, and until recently in the US on 11 September 2001, the threat posed by suicide terrorism may be spreading to Southeast Asia. Reports of a suicide bomber exploding a van near the Marriott hotel lobby in Indonesia were particularly disturbing, as it was the second known suicide terror attack in Southeast Asia after the Bali bomb blast on 12 October 2002.

Taking a working definition for the purpose of this analysis, suicide terrorism may be broadly defined as “the readiness to sacrifice one’s life in the process of destroying or attempting to destroy a target to advance a political goal. The aim of the psychologically and physically war-trained terrorist is to die while destroying the enemy target.”⁴

Subsequently, in the wake of the recent suicide attacks in Indonesia that claimed hundreds of innocent lives, suicide terrorism never felt so close to home and is indeed a compelling new scourge to Southeast Asian governments. As such, this article aims to comprehend and investigate further the phenomenon of suicide terrorism, and seeks answers to a central question of “Why is suicide terrorism an attractive choice for terror groups?” It primarily argues that despite the complexity of suicide terrorism operations, suicide terrorism remains an attractive choice for terror groups due to five main reasons:

Tactical Advantage and Success.

Cost-Effective Operations.

Personal Rewards for Perpetrator.

The Utility of Women.

Psychological Victory.

This article then sketches a brief overview of selected terrorist organisations’ suicide squads in South-east Asia and concludes by briefly highlighting two counter-strategies.

A BACKDROP OF SUICIDE TERRORISM

According to Emile Durkheim, (1856-1919) the French sociological thinker, there are three basic typologies of suicides. The first type is termed Egoistic Suicide, by which an individual commits suicide if he fails to integrate himself with his family and society. The second form is known as Anomic Suicide, by which an individual commits suicide when he feels helpless due to a breakdown of regular life, resulting in industrial, financial and social insecurity.⁵

A terrorism analyst from the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies has noted that suicide terrorism falls into Durkheim’s third type called Altruistic Suicide, in which the individual commits suicide due to his integration with

prevailing social values and belief systems. The individual feels a part of a whole and believes that there is no hope for the individual, if the society is under threat. The individual is therefore ready to give up his life, so that his “whole” might survive. The society to which the suicide bomber belongs makes him believe that the “collective whole” is under social, cultural, economic or political do-minance by an external force, which drives him to self-sacrifice for the sake of society.⁶

At this juncture, it must be noted that the phenomenon of suicide terrorism is not new. According to the Council on Foreign Relations website on terrorism, Terrorismsanswers.com, terrorism throughout history carried a high risk of death for the terrorists themselves. It quoted Walter Laqueur as saying that traditionally “the main weapon of the attack was the dagger, and unless the victim could be found alone and defenseless,” early terrorists “were unlikely to return from their missions.”⁷ Makeshift bombs used by 19th century anarchists and Russian revolutionaries were so unstable that they had to be thrown from a short distance (that is, if they did not explode first in the hands of the attacker). Those who went on an attack of this kind were fully aware of the risk and many of them wrote fare-well letters to their friends and families.⁸

Also, as early as the 11th century, the “Assassins”, Muslim fighters living in northern Persia, adopted suicide terrorism as a strategy to advance their cause. In the 18th century, the Muslim communities of the Malabar Coast in India, Atjeh in Sumatra, and Mindanao and Sulu in the Southern Philippines resorted to suicide attacks when faced with European colonial repression.⁹

While the phenomenon of suicide terrorism is not new, weapons of suicide terrorism are. Evolving from daggers and nascent bombs, there are now six contemporary delivery types of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) available for a suicide attack. According to Rohan Gunaratna, the six types consist of:

Human-borne suicide IED (See Annex A for the possible demeanor of a Human-borne suicide bomber prior to an attack)

Vehicle-borne suicide IED;

Motorcycle-borne suicide IED;

Naval craft-borne suicide IED;

Scuba diver-borne suicide IED;

Aerial- (microlight, glider, mini-helicopter) borne suicide IED.¹⁰

Table 1.1 below shows the application of these types around the world by prominent contemporary terror groups.

Also, modern suicide terrorists evolved further by targeting civilians, buildings, and institutions, rather than pure military targets on the battlefield.¹¹ More significantly, suicide terrorism is seemingly beginning to spread into Southeast Asia. While suicide terrorism traditionally affects the Middle East and South Asia, it has been extremely rare in Southeast Asia. However, Zachary Abuza, an expert in terrorism in Southeast Asia at Simmons College in Boston, noted that after the suicide bombing in Bali [and Marriott Hotel], the psychological threshold for suicide terrorism has been broken - Suicide terrorism is apparently now part of regional terrorist organisations’ modus operandi, part of their arsenal.¹² As such, with the threat of suicide terrorism emerging in Southeast Asia, an inevitable question beckons: Why is suicide terrorism an attractive choice for terror groups?

SUICIDE TERRORISM: A PREFERRED CHOICE

A suicide terrorism operation is usually a complex one with numerous actors. According to Ehud Sprinzak in his article “Rational Fanatics”, once the decision to launch a suicide attack has been made, at least six separate operations are needed for its implementation. These include: target selection, intelligence gathering, recruitment, physical and “spiritual” training, preparation of explosives, and transportation of the suicide bombers to the target area. He also noted that such a mission often involves dozens of terrorists and accomplices who have no intention of committing suicide, but without whom no suicide operation could take place.¹³ However, despite this complexity of suicide operations, suicide terrorism remains an attractive option for terror groups due to five main factors.

Tactical	Advantage	and	Success
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Suicide terrorism brings about a great degree of tactical advantage and success. According to Boaz Ganor, Executive Director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism:

Suicide attacks result in many casualties and cause extensive damage.

Suicide attacks attract wide media coverage. A suicide attack is a newsworthy event for the media as it indicates a display of great determination and inclination for self-sacrifice on the part of the terrorists.

Although a suicide attack is a very primitive and simple attack, the use of suicide tactics guarantees that the attack will be carried out at the most appropriate time and place with regards to the circumstances at the target location. This guarantees the maximum number of casualties (in contrast to the use of technical means such as a time bomb or even a remote controlled explosive charge). In this regard, the suicide bomber is no more than a sophisticated bomb—a carrier that brings the explosive device to the right location and at the right time.

In a suicide attack, as soon as the terrorist sets off on his mission, his success is virtually guaranteed.

It is extremely difficult to counter suicide attacks once the terrorist is on his way to the target; even if the security forces do succeed in stopping him before he reaches the intended target, he can still activate the charge and cause damage.

Planning and executing the escape route after a terror attack has occurred is usually one of the most complicated and problematic stages of any terrorist attack. Suicide attacks require no escape plan. Therefore, a suicide terrorist could enter a highly secure zone and accomplish his mission without worrying about escape or evasion.

Since the perpetrator is killed during the course of the suicide attack, there is no fear of him being caught afterwards, being interrogated by the security forces and passing on information liable to endanger other activists.¹⁴

In addition to these, suicide bombers are almost impossible to detect. For instance, in Israel, suicide bombers can change their appearance dramatically before suicide operations. They shave and dye their hair, dress as tourists, orthodox Jews, soldiers and policemen.¹⁵

Cost-Effective Operations

The cost-effective nature of suicide attacks may also be another possible reason why suicide terrorism is an attractive method. Bruce Hoffman argues that low cost nuts and bolts, screws and ball bearings, any metal shards or odd bits of broken machinery could be packed together with home-made explosives and then strapped to the body of a terrorist dispatched to any place where people gather—bus, train, restaurant, café, supermarket, shopping mall, street corner, promenade. These attacks probably cost no more than US\$150 to mount and are reliably deadly.¹⁶

To drive home the point of suicide terrorism as cost-effective, statistics have shown that ratio of victims to the perpetrators are immensely disparate. It only takes a handful of suicide terrorists to inflict immense damage. For instance, in Beirut, more than 250 soldiers were killed with just one suicide killer in 1983; 40 soldiers were killed in Sri Lanka in 1987 with a single driver riding his truck into a makeshift camp; thousands have died in the September 11 attacks with just 19 suicide terrorists.¹⁷ In the case of the Bali bombings, approximately 202 innocent lives were lost, with hundreds more injured by two suicide bombers named Iqbal and Feri.¹⁸

Personal Rewards For Perpetrator

In suicide attacks that are regarded as a kind of religious “Holy War” or a divine command by a particular terror group, suicide terrorism is attractive as it would bring about great personal benefits to the perpetrator. For instance, an Islamic terrorist group sees absolutely nothing suicidal about its suicide terrorists’ wayward murder of innocent lives. Instead, suicide is merely a momentary inconvenience on his or her fiery propulsion into heaven.¹⁹

Citing the example of Hamas, a Palestinian Islamic militant group that frequently launches suicide attacks against Israelis, the perpetrator of a Hamas suicide attack is not considered either by himself or by other activists to have committed suicide. Rather, he is perceived to be a shahid - a martyr who falls in the process of fulfilling a religious command, the Jihad or Holy War.²⁰ The Arabic term used for martyrdom is istishad, a religious term meaning to give one’s life in the name of Allah, as opposed to intihar, which refers to suicide resulting from personal distress.

The latter form of death is not condoned in Islamic teachings.²¹

Thus, terrorists claim that suicide attacks provide the shahid and his families with substantial rewards:

The majority of the shahids come from a low social background. The shahid improves his social status after his death as well as that of his family.

The family of the shahid is showered with honour and praise, and receives financial rewards for the attack.²²

In addition to the religious mission and the family rewards, the shahid also receives some personal benefits (according to his belief), including:

Eternal life in paradise,

Permission to see the face of Allah,

Loving kindness of 72 young virgins who will serve him in heaven.

Privilege to promise a life in heaven to 70 of his relatives.²³

At this point, a caveat must be noted. Notwithstanding the unique Islamic tenets of jihad and shahid, Muslims are not more likely to end their lives or become suicide bombers than other people.²⁴ A case in point would be the non-Islamic terror group, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), credited for numerous suicide bombings in Sri Lanka. The LTTE offers significant proof that "suicide terrorism is not merely a religious phenomenon and that, under certain extreme political and psychological circumstances, secular volunteers are fully capable of martyrdom."²⁵

The Utility of Women

Suicide terrorism may be a favoured choice of attack by terror groups because of the utility of women in suicide missions. According to Rohan Gunaratna, women arouse less suspicion, and in certain conservative societies, there is a hesitation to body search a woman. Also, women can wear a suicide device beneath her clothes and appear pregnant.²⁶ As such, terror groups may prefer suicide terrorism as they can utilise female suicide bombers to exploit the element of surprise, infiltrate highly secured areas and outsmart counter-terror forces.

Already, women suicide bombers have been a frequent feature globally. In Sri Lanka, about 30 - 40% of LTTE's overall suicide missions are conducted by women with great success. For instance, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in May 1991 by a female LTTE suicide-bomber while campaigning for re-election.²⁷ In Russia, which is presently plagued by Chechen separatism, Chechen women strapped with explosives were among the Chechen fighters who seized a Moscow theatre in the 2002 hostage drama. In June 2003, a Chechen female suicide bomber blew herself up on a bus carrying Russian troops to Chechnya, in which at least 18 people died.²⁸ The latest female suicide bombing incident occurred on 5 July 2003 when two Chechen female suicide bombers killed 14 people outside a rock festival near Moscow.²⁹

Psychological

Victory

Successful suicide attacks would also bring about a great psychological victory for the terror group, as it carries potent psychological ramifications for the target society. As David Ucko and Christopher Langton of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) succinctly put it,

"Suicide attacks suggest to the target society that their enemy is not a rational actor with a particular set of political ideals, but a compulsive and volatile force, ready to pay the ultimate price to achieve victory. In this manner, the apparent fanaticism of the attacker brings its own rewards to the terrorist group. Similarly and somewhat counter-intuitively, the apparent desperation of the attacker can raise the moral standing of the group, as the suicidal aspect connotes not the cowardice or cynicism of a conventional terrorist attack, but rather points to the frustration of last resort. These factors are force multipliers."³⁰

Regional Terrorist Organisations' Suicide Squads: An Overview

Subsequently, with the various reasons for suicide terrorism as a preferred option espoused above, this section will

attempt to piece an overview of terror organisation's suicide squads in Southeast Asia. In known terror groups that operate in Southeast Asia such as the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), there have been reports about the JI possessing an elite special operations unit called the "Laskar Khos" or Special Militia, containing a suicide squad. An Indonesian news magazine, Tempo, reported that a man going by the name of Mustafa, one of five JI members arrested in Jakarta in mid-July 2003, had confessed to being the commander of Laskar Khos. Mustafa reportedly told police that Laskar Khos had between 10 and 15 members skilled in bomb-making, who are prepared to carry out suicide terror attacks in Southeast Asia.³¹

The Tempo report however did not make clear whether 10 - 15 was the total number of potential suicide bombers or whether each cell contained that number. The report also added that Ali Ghufron alias Mukhlas, who is accused of having overall responsibility for the Bali bombing, belonged to one cell while Mustafa himself belonged to another cell and there are still members of other cells yet to be caught.^{sup}

Also, it has been reported that the JI has plans for a suicide bombing campaign, designed to transform Asia and the Pacific region into Islamic provinces, which is reportedly revealed in a 40-page manifesto – the Pupji book or General Guide to the Struggle of JI.³³

In the case of the Abu Sayyaf that predominantly operates in the Philippines, a Philippine Inquirer news report, quoting an anonymous intelligence officer based in Southern Philippines, noted that 50 suicide bombers have been trained and deployed by the Abu Sayyaf in key areas of Mindanao as early as September 2002. The bombers are reportedly fresh recruits whose ages range from 18 to 35 years.³⁴ The Kumpulan Militant Malaysia (KMM) reportedly has suicide squads as well. Malaysian Police Inspector-General Norian Mai on 26 November 2002 confirmed that two arrested KMM members with links to the JI were part of a "suicide bomber" squad to carry out attacks on key installations in Singapore, including the water pipeline from Johore to the republic, a radar installation, the US Embassy and the Causeway.³⁵

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this article has engaged the issue of suicide terrorism and primarily argued that despite the complexity of suicide terrorism operations, suicide terrorism remains a preferred choice for terror groups due to five main reasons:

Tactical Advantage and Success.

Cost-Effective Operations.

Personal Rewards for Perpetrator.

The Utility of Women.

Psychological Victory.

Also, it attempted to piece an overview of various terror groups' suicide squads in Southeast Asia, such as the JI, Abu Sayyaf, and the KMM. While it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss and analyse suicide terrorism counter-strategies in detail, two recommendations postulated by Ehud Sprinzak in his article, "Outsmarting Suicide Terrorists", are briefly highlighted here.

Firstly, Sprinzak argues that while it may not be possible to apprehend would-be suicide bombers, security services can strike against the commanders and field officers who recruit and train the suicide assailants.³⁶

Secondly, Sprinzak calls for greater physical protection of potential target areas. The idea of erecting concrete barriers reduces the effect of the suicide bombing if and when the terrorist hits the target area, and it serves as a deterrent against potential suicide strikes. Also, Sprinzak notes that such security measures offer another important benefit: They reassure the public. As suicide terrorism is a form of psychological warfare, citizens who are told that they are being subjected to psychological manipulation will develop a stronger immunity against it.³⁷

As noted by Mark Harrison, the author of "The Logic of Suicide Terrorism" (not related to Bruce Hoffman's article with the same title), regardless of the actual motivation for suicide terrorism, the tactic will be around for a long time. Suicide terrorism is an invention. Once it is been invented, it cannot be un-invented.³⁸ Subsequently with suicide

terrorism's ugly head showing signs of emerging in Southeast Asia, examining the motivations for suicide terror tactics may be a good starting point of reference for policy makers to counter the bane of suicide terrorism.

Annex A

Endnotes

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The Military and the Media: Should the Pen be Mightier than the Sword?

by LTC (RET) Sng Seow Lian

The practice of “embedded journalism” in the US-led campaign against Iraq whereby journalists travelled with frontline troops to provide news on the war belies the traditional animosity that marks relations between the military and the media. In a free society like the United States, it is the duty of the media to look critically at all the institutions of society, and this includes the armed forces and its operations in wartime. It attempts to be an honest critic by providing the public with truthful reports. This however is at odds with the military’s need for secrecy. Indeed, military commanders often try to mislead the enemy by seeding him with false or inaccurate information. In this game of deception, journalists can become unwitting tools in the hands of commanders aiming to deceive the enemy; which is not a flattering comment for members of a profession that prides itself on its watchdog role in society.

The censorship of reports during wartime is bad enough for the media (and journalists often yield to it with understandable reluctance) but the idea that they should be manipulated by military commanders as part of their deception plans is anathema. Contrary to the impression created by “embedded journalism” in the recent Gulf War, where soldiers and journalists seemed to work cosily together, the military and the media are usually not pre-disposed to like each other.

It is often said that the essence of successful warfare is secrecy while the essence of successful journalism is publicity. But the relationship between the military and the media is in fact more complex than this suggests. Although the aims of both professions are diametrically opposed, a harmonious co-existence between the two also implies that one or the other is failing in its professional responsibilities, and this can only be at the expense of the people in a free society. That journalists were able to travel with frontline troops, and to observe and report on military operations in the Iraq War was probably due to the military’s confidence of a quick and relatively bloodless victory. It does not mean that the wariness and distrust both have of each other are a thing of the past.

Animosity between the military and the media is especially marked in the US. It has a history that goes back to the Civil War. A journalist who wanted to interview General William T. Sherman in order “to learn the truth” was rebuffed with the reply: “We don’t want the truth told about things here...We don’t want the enemy any better informed than he is.”¹ To be sure, it was not always like that. When the US entered the Second World War, the military and the media worked very closely together for the first time. Both found a sense of common purpose following the shock of Pearl Harbor. Reporters were routinely briefed by military officers about plans for operations. In the Korean War, this same spirit of trust was illustrated when reporters were briefed about the Inchon landing ahead of its execution.

This cooperative spirit deteriorated during the Vietnam War just as it did in the American Civil War a century earlier when a common national purpose was lacking. Many military professionals maintain to this day that the defeat in Vietnam was due to the media’s extensive and unbridled reports which in the end eroded the people’s support for the war and gave victory to the Communists.

In Vietnam, the media had extraordinary freedom to report the war. Censorship did not officially exist although there was a need to comply with certain regulations to safeguard military security. In the absence of a US declaration of war, censorship was not legally defensible. The US military was not overly concerned about this at the beginning, but the journalists that came to Vietnam were different from those that covered World War II. According to Daniel C. Hallin, these journalists “clearly did not think of themselves simply as ‘soldiers of the typewriter’ whose mission was to serve the war effort.”² This attitude, coupled with the absence of censorship, created immense problems for the government and the military. Consider television coverage of US Marines burning the village of Cam Ne in August 1965 and the accompanying media report:

The day’s operation burned down 150 houses, wounded three women, killed one baby, wounded one marine and netted these four prisoners. Four old men who could not answer questions put to them in English... Today’s operation is the frustration of Vietnam in miniature. There is little doubt that American firepower can win a military victory here. But to a Vietnamese peasant whose home means a lifetime of backbreaking labor, it will take more than presidential promises to convince him that we are on his side.³

This report was greeted with shock as were other equally dreadful pictures later of wounded Vietnamese children running from a napalm attack; of American prisoners of war being paraded in Hanoi; and of the summary execution

of a Vietcong prisoner during the Tet Offensive. In graphic detail, television brought home scenes of death and destruction. Many officials in the Johnson Administration and in the military subscribed to the conventional wisdom summed up by Michael Mandelbaum: "Regular exposure to ugly realities of battles is thought to have turned the public against the war, forcing the withdrawal of American troops and leaving the way clear for the eventual Communist victory."⁴

Journalists were lambasted for their pessimistic and depressing reports on Vietnam; some were even accused of treason and of stabbing the military in the back. However, this popular "stab- in-the-back" theory needs to be seen within the context of journalists that were shocked both by the brutality of the war and by the gap between what they were told by senior officials and what they saw. In fact, as the war dragged on, correspondents in Vietnam increasingly doubted the rosy predictions given out at the top and began to source out news from junior officers who held different views. When one newly arrived journalist pompously declared that he never talked to anyone below the rank of colonel, he was ridiculed as most journalists had gotten to the point where they hardly talked to anyone above the rank of colonel.⁵

Blaming the media was akin to shooting the messenger for bearing bad news. Even the US Army's official historian, William M. Hammond, had observed that press reports "were often more accurate than the public statements of the administration in portraying the situation in Vietnam."⁶ Hammond also dismissed the myth that the American defeat in Vietnam was caused by the media: "What alienated the American public, in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, was not news coverage, but casualties."⁷

Notwithstanding this, the media's influence on American public opinion cannot be dismissed completely. At some stages of the war, and certainly at the beginning, public opinion was supportive of US involvement. However, when it became apparent – especially after the Tet Offensive of 1968 – that victory was beyond reach, the mood of the public changed. The media's coverage of the war hastened the process of change.

The Tet Offensive well illustrates the media's influence in war. Historians agree that the offensive was a severe political-military setback for Hanoi. On the other hand, the media's reports added up to a picture of defeat for the allies.⁸ The general effect of their commentary was a distortion of reality on a scale that brought about major repercussions in US domestic politics. Up to that point, the US Government had been predicting an imminent victory and a troop withdrawal within two years. Tet destroyed that optimism. Whatever was left of the public's will to pursue the war collapsed completely. On the media's role in the matter, Peter Braestrup of The Washington Post had this to say: "To have portrayed such a setback for one side as a defeat for the other...cannot be counted as a triumph for American journalism."⁹

Braestrup dismisses the idea that the journalists were, as a group, ideologically opposed to the war. He did note however that they were suspicious and resentful of President Johnson and his senior officials for their manipulations and half-truths. This was a reference to the Johnson Administration's professed optimism and its use of the media in projecting this mood. The result of this resentment was that when Tet came, many newsmen in Washington "indulged in retribution for prior manipulation by the Administration."¹⁰

In subsequent conflicts, the US military learnt not to repeat what it saw as the mistakes of Vietnam. Vietnam convinced them on the need in future limited conflicts to deny media access and mobility, and to limit and carefully control access to official information. This was clearly evident in the 1983 Grenada invasion and the first Gulf War of 1990/91 where greater controls than ever before were applied over the accreditation of journalists, their movement and their reporting.¹¹

During the Grenada operation, the media was kept completely in the dark until the military felt safe enough to let them know. Journalists that got wind of the operation tried to make their own way to the island, prompting Vice-Admiral Joseph Metcalf III, the commander of the invasion task force, to establish an exclusion zone around the island and to order his patrol boats to shoot at unauthorised craft trying to land journalists during the fighting.¹² The military's antagonism towards the media could not have been better demonstrated.

Thanks to satellite communications, the first Gulf War was the first war to be shown live to a world-wide television audience. More significantly, it was a news-managed war. Those who followed the war on CNN could not have missed the well-managed briefings by military officers in Riyadh where journalists were told what had happened, where they happened and when they happened. For the first time in US history, the government was able to control what was deemed permissible for the public to know about the conduct of military operations.¹³

The "lessons" of Vietnam were also not lost on the British. During the Falklands War in 1982, only twenty-nine

journalists were allowed to accompany the task force. Although military commanders got along reasonably well with these media representatives during the subsequent campaign, the reception of the journalists (especially by the navy) was initially frosty. The navy's attitude was summed up by Admiral Sir Henry Leach, the First Sea Lord, who wanted to know whether he was expected to load his ships with "pens or bayonets".¹⁴

From beginning to end, the British kept the journalists under strict control, permitting them to transmit only what would serve the government's interests. That this was the case was acknowledged by Foreign Secretary Francis Pym: "The duty of the government is to help the services win the war. In this sense if information withheld makes it easier to win the war, it should be withheld. There is no such thing as a public right to know information which reduces the possibility of the war being waged successfully."¹⁵

Falklands was not the first conflict in which the British comprehended the power of the media and sought to manage it. In December 1917, during the First World War where the carnage perpetrated has rarely been paralleled, Prime Minister Lloyd George confided to the editor of the Manchester Guardian: "If the people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course they don't know and can't know."¹⁶ Winston Churchill, Prime Minister during the Second World War, even considered commandeering The Times of London to serve as an official government publication for the purpose of guiding public opinion.¹⁷

The US military took note of the way the media was managed in the Falklands, and the freewheeling journalism of the Vietnam War, where journalists were allowed to roam all over the country at will, was not repeated in Grenada, Panama and the Gulf Wars.

Long after Vietnam, the distrust between the military and the media in the US still remains; the "embedded journalism" of the recent Gulf War notwithstanding. The underlying cause of the conflict is to be found in their differing views and aims on information management and dissemination. Further probing reveals several other reasons for the antagonism.

The American military ethos is characterised by deep patriotism, strong religious beliefs and respect for authority. US servicemen are trained to be fastidious about personal appearance and housekeeping. On the other hand, modern-day American journalists are, as William Kennedy – who had worked as a journalist and Army officer – has observed, sceptical about religion, patriotism, and authority in general. Their dislike for regimentation is often expressed by "a deliberately cultivated lack of fastidiousness in matters of dress and personal appearance"; all in all, creating a stereotype detested by the military.¹⁸

Apart from such differences in personal values, studies of the media in the US suggest the existence of a media elite which is liberal and distinctly left of centre on the American political spectrum. This sets the media even further apart from the traditionally conservative military. Conclusions reached by studies of the media have also been found to be in accord with the military profession's views which might have been formed subjectively and intuitively. More significantly, the political and social predispositions of the news profession and the media elite were found to be different from those of mainstream America.¹⁹ This explains why the public came out solidly behind the military when it clashed with the media over the latter's exclusion from the Grenada operation.

Studies also show that the media elite has a homogeneity of views and mind-sets. It perceives a world that is "peopled by brutal soldiers, corrupt businessmen, and struggling under-dogs"; it shapes facts to conform to its own version of the truth; it is emphatically liberal on social issues and foreign affairs; it is distrustful of establishment institutions, and is protective of their own economic interests.

Given their power and pre-dispositions, does the media elite treat other political actors fairly, according them fair access to the media network when there are contrary views? Where the US military is concerned, the answer is no. According to Peter Andrews (who like William Kennedy had also served in the media and the military), journalists since Vietnam have routinely insulted the US military: "Brass hats go on brass heads", "men and material are just boys with their toys", "the Pentagon doesn't know how to buy a toilet seat", etc. During the Gulf crisis, when top Air Force officer General Michael Dugan was fired by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney for some politically inappropriate remarks, he was dismissed by one reporter as a "talkative flyboy airhead".²⁰

In another case of soldier-bashing, a reporter wrote a funny piece deriding military leaders for reading Clausewitz, someone who lived before the arrival of the rifled gun barrel. Peter Andrews rightly asked whether the same reporter would have "written a similarly comic story had he discovered that economists were still influenced by Adam Smith, who, after all, is nothing more than a dead Scot who never had a credit card."²¹ It does not take much guesswork to fathom how the military feels about such reporting, and the fact that they have not the slightest control, and often no

way of getting their replies published.

One of the key issues in the conflict between the military and the media in the US is the media's insistence on neutrality in their coverage of events even if it concerns life and death during military operations. The American military still rankles over what it perceived as the media's connivance with the enemy during the Vietnam War. Take for example the instance when the New York Times despatched Harrison Salisbury to Hanoi in December 1966. Within a day of arriving, Salisbury filed his first story using information supplied by Hanoi but he failed to mention its source. To the US military, Salisbury's reporting was nothing less than treason.²² To the media, Salisbury's reporting during the trip was one vote short of a Pulitzer Prize.²³

The principle of neutrality is no better illustrated than the view of two journalists, Peter Jennings and Mike Wallace, who said during a seminar held three years before the first Gulf War, that it was appropriate for them to accompany enemy troops into battle even if they ambushed American soldiers. When asked for his response to this, a Marine colonel, George Connell, replied:

I feel utter contempt. Two days later those same two journalists are caught in an ambush and are lying wounded 200 yards from my positions, and they expect that I'm going to send Marines to get them...But I'm going to go after them, and Marines will die going to get a couple of journalists. And that's what makes me so contemptuous of them.²⁴

This lofty ideal of neutrality – an ideal which places the duty of a journalist above his duty as an American – is one of the reasons why the US military does not trust the media to cover a war without adequate safeguards. Consider these other examples of the neutrality principle in operation: In the build-up to Operation Desert Storm, Dan Rather of CBS reported from Saudi Arabia that “our tanks are arriving”. When The Washington Post called to ask whether it was not jingoistic, perhaps xenophobic, to say “our tanks”, Dan Rather apologised and promised he would never say such a thing again. When Bernard Shaw of CNN refused to be debriefed by American officials after his return from Baghdad during the war itself, he explained that journalists had to be “neutral”.²⁵ Broadcasting from Baghdad for CNN, Peter Arnett declared that he was not working for the national interest, but, for the public interest.²⁶ This principle is however a double-edged sword; if public interest is of paramount importance, the media can hardly complain if consideration of public interest justifies the military using journalists for the purpose of deceiving the enemy. As it turned out during the first Gulf War, the US military was not beyond deceiving the media in order to deceive the Iraqi enemy.

The media has an enormous responsibility; what it reports can have profound effects on the ultimate outcome of an event. The repercussions of media reports on the Tet Offensive come quickly to mind. Yet the training required of newsmen does not measure up to this level of responsibility. While professionals such as doctors, engineers and pilots need experience and further tutelage before they can operate on their own, a journalist needs only a liberal arts or journalism degree to cover, seemingly with competence, any issue however complex. Such generalists with little or no knowledge about the military whatsoever are allowed to cover military operations. Even Peter Arnett, the Vietnam veteran journalist who reported from Baghdad during the first Gulf War, seemed unable to understand the significance of the camouflage paint on the buildings which he had described as civilian installations under relentless allied attacks.²⁷ If an old hand like Arnett could make that sort of error in his pursuit of the “public interest”, might we not expect the military to be distrustful of journalists in general?

The US military has gained the upper hand in its long-running conflict with the media. The battle was already in its favour during the Grenada operation, and by the time the first Gulf War ended, the victory was complete. Although this can be ascribed to lessons learnt from their study of the way the British handled the media during the Falklands War,²⁸ it is also due to the military's greater sophistication in the handling of public relations, and to the technological means at its command. For example, when own soldiers got killed by friendly fire, military leaders came forward immediately to acknowledge the mistake rather than let the media break the bad news.²⁹ Then again, when a television reporter watching fighters take off from a Saudi base during the first Gulf War began reporting that one of the aircraft appeared to be in trouble, his satellite link was immediately shut down by military counter-measures.³⁰ The US military was able to black out the battlefield at will.

In the controversy following the media's exclusion from the Grenada operation, the public made it clear that they backed Admiral Metcalf's policy.³¹ Likewise after the first Gulf War, polls showed that the American public trusted the military more than the media, and approved of the restrictions placed on journalists covering the war.³² The “people's right to know” carried weight only in so far as they wanted to know only what the military thought they ought to know, and no more.

To recapitulate, one of the roles of the media is to keep people informed. This is particularly important in the conduct of a military campaign where lives may be endangered or lost. But complete freedom of reporting can cost lives. The lesson which the US military learnt through painful experience needs to be noted. Experience in recent conflicts involving the US shows that the American public is willing to forgo the right to know if it helps in protecting lives and in enhancing the prospects for mission accomplishment.

Endnotes

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4 Michael Mandelbaum, "Vietnam: The Television War", *Parameters*, vol. XIII, no.1, p.89.

5 See Peter Andrews, *Op. Cit.*, p.82.

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8 Peter Braestrup, *Big Story, Abridged Edition*, New Haven, 1983, p.508.

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13 William V. Kennedy, *The Military and the Media: Why the Press Cannot Be Trusted to Cover a War*, Westport, 1993, p.ix.

14 Robert Harris, *Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis*, London, 1983, p.17.

15 Mercer, *Op. Cit.*, pp.22-23.

16 See Andrews, *Op. Cit.*, p.80.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Kennedy, *Op. Cit.*, p.12.

19 See Sam C. Sarkesian, "Soldiers, Scholars, and the Media", *Parameters*, September 87, pp.77-86. Sarkesian also cited figures from a Gallup Poll in 1986 which showed that out of ten key American institutions, the military commanded the highest level of public trust. While 63 percent of the respondents gave it a confidence rating of "a great deal" or "quite a lot", television and newspapers received ratings of 27 and 37 percent respectively.

20 Andrews, *Op. Cit.*, p.83.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Kennedy, *Op. Cit.*, pp.87-89.

23 *Ibid.*, p.124.

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27 Ibid., pp.25-26.

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Viewpoints: Whose Transformation Is It Anyway?

The case for transformation has definitely been made in the July-September 2003 issue. The security, technological and wider environment has changed rapidly and, more importantly, continues to spring nasty surprises on us all, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Bali bombing and SARS. It is clear that the objective of military transformation is to enhance our deterrence and defence capabilities. However, there are many question marks about “transformation” – which seems to be the latest buzzword related to the Revolution in Military Affairs, Network Centric Warfare, Effects-Based Operations and so on.

Is transformation the active province of the many or the few? Andrew Marshall was quoted as saying “Transformation is... an imperative.” He went on, in the same interview, to caution that he “personally [doesn’t] like the term. It tends to push people in the direction of changing the whole force. You need to be thinking about changing some small part of the force more radically, as a way of exploring what new technologies can really do for you.”¹ As such, should transformation be driven by spontaneous initiatives from the grassroots, blooming like a hundred flowers throughout the SAF? Or is transformation a highly select and specialised business, to be centrally led and driven from the top by a revolutionary experimentation vanguard?

What is the balance of technological and organisational/cultural elements in transformation? As a scientist-in-training myself, I appreciate the indispensable role that technology can play but technology is rarely effective without the appropriate doctrine, training and mental models to fully realise its potential. Organisation and culture may be even more difficult to tackle than technological advancement. To illustrate this point, Tim Huxley praised the quality of our defence technology and then went on to make the assertion that: “A key problem in relation to the RMA is that Singapore’s military command and control have in the past tended to be rigid and hierarchical, with effective authority concentrated at the higher levels of MINDEF and the SAF... The SAF’s lack of organisational flexibility has been reinforced by not only the political and administrative system, which has tended not to reward individualism or creativity, but also by the local cultural milieu in which respect for elders and seniors, and considerations of ‘face’, have traditionally been central features.”² I would like to suggest that transforming the perception and reality of the above assertion among our servicemen would be a key challenge of the SAF’s trans-formation efforts.

Now that I have been provoked, by the articles in the July-September 2003, to share my impertinent questions, I hope that others will do better than myself in attempting to contribute to this debate. I look forward to future issues.

by LTA (NS) Li Lip Khoon

Endnotes

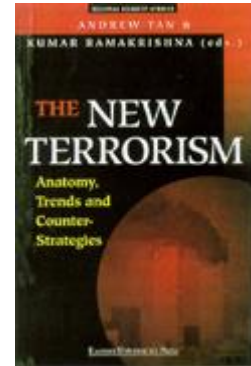
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Book Review: The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies by Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (Eds.)

by Mr Daniel Tan Kuan Wei

September 11 2001 – This date evokes a strong sense of apprehension as it immediately brings to mind the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States. According to Barry Desker, “the success of the attacks in causing a large number of casualties and the huge impact it engendered appear to validate the assertions of terrorist experts who have observed the emergence of a new form of terrorism that is global in orientation and much more lethal in its effects.”¹



To explore the new dimensions of terrorism, a Workshop on the New Dimensions of Terrorism was subsequently organised by the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) in Singapore in May 2002 that brought together a number of leading terrorism experts such as Bruce Hoffman, Kevin O'Brien and Rohan Gunaratna. The key findings and papers of the workshop are subsequently presented in the book, *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies*, edited by IDSS Professors, Dr. Andrew Tan and Dr. Kumar Ramakrishna, under the following sections:

Anatomy of the New Terrorism

Terrorist Trends and Patterns in the Asia-Pacific region

Religion and Terrorism: Southeast Asian Perspectives

Countering the New Terrorism

The *New Terrorism's* opening chapter is an article by Kumar Ramakrishna and Andrew Tan entitled, “The New Terrorism: Diagnosis and Prescriptions” that provides a good comprehensive overview of the various contributors' papers in the four main sections elucidated above. Following which, in Chapter Two, Bruce Hoffman's “The Emergence of the New Terrorism” leads the book's study on four key characteristics of the new terrorism. In his article, Hoffman primarily postulates two particular features of the new terrorism: sheer lethality and religious dimension. Sheer lethality in the vast amount of body count on September 11, and a religious dimension due to the willingness of the terrorists to kill not just their targets but themselves in the process. This is largely due to “terrorism motivated by religious imperative and the concept of martyrdom.”²

Chapter Three focuses on the third feature of the new terrorism, discussed by Gavin Cameron in “Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Prospects and Problems” where he raises the spectre of a “greatly enhanced striking capability”. He notes that there is a possibility of terrorists using Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) weapons to strike and writes that the “threat from high-end CBRN weapons arose because groups, such as Al-Qaeda, continued to seek those weapons.”³

In Chapter Four, Kevin O'Brien in “Networks, Netwar and Information-Age Terrorism” then concludes the first section “Anatomy of the New Terrorism” by discussing the fourth aspect of the new terrorism – “networked organisational structure”. He points out that the new terrorists are “likely to consist of dispersed small groups who communicate, coordinate, and conduct their campaigns in a networked manner, without a precise central command”⁴ and attributes this particular feature to the Information Revolution sweeping across the world presently. O'Brien cites Al-Qaeda's technological methods of coordinating the September 11 attacks as an example, where Al-Qaeda terrorists exploited the Internet, booked airline tickets online and exchanging hundreds of e-mails to plan the September 11 attacks.

The second section “Terrorist Trends and Patterns in the Asia-Pacific region” consists of two articles, one by Peter Chalk entitled, “Al-Qaeda and its Links to Terrorist Groups in Asia” (Chapter 5), and the other by Rohan Gunaratna entitled, “Terrorist Trend and Patterns in the Asia-Pacific Region” (Chapter 6). In this section, both authors

essentially share the view that Al-Qaeda has established concerted links and contacts with a myriad of Islamist terrorist groups in Asia, such as the Abu Sayyaf, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM). As Gunaratna pertinently observed, "The centre of gravity of terrorism has shifted from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific."⁵

The third section "Religion and Terrorism: Southeast Asian Perspectives" essentially cautions readers on the simplistic equation between Islam and terror in the Southeast Asia context. Farish A. Noor in "Globalisation, Resistance and the Discursive Politics of Terror, Post September 11" (Chapter 7), pertinently points out that terrorism is "both local and global, particular and universal. Its causes cannot – and should not – be traced back to any essentialist understandings of cultural specificity or identity."⁶ Noor further notes that the "Islamic threat" must not be taken seriously as an "epistemic" category, but rather as a discursive tool crafted for specific political and ideological reasons.⁷ Arguing on similar lines, Rizal Sukma in "Indonesia's Islams and September 11: Reactions and Prospects" (Chapter 8) portrays a non-monolithic Southeast Asian Islam by using the case of three different groups of response in Indonesia. The three groups Sukma highlights are "the radical Islamic", "mainstream Islamic" and an "essentially secularist faction".

The fourth section "Countering the New Terrorism", consisting of three articles, concludes the book by essentially recommending coordinated dual-track counter-strategies to combat the new terrorism. Track One counter-strategy involves military measures of physically eliminating terrorist groups and cells, while Track Two involves non-military methods aimed at "draining the swamp" from which the new terrorists emerge.

Subsequently, against the sombre backdrop of recent terrorist attacks such as the Bali bombings in October 2002 by Al-Qaeda affiliated group - the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) - terrorism never felt so close to home before. As such, *The New Terrorism* is highly recommended for anybody who wants to understand the changing nature of terrorism, especially after the September 11 attacks.

Among the voluminous amount of books written on terrorism, *The New Terrorism* stands out as it offers important lessons about the workings of the new terrorism after September 11, its cogent focus on Southeast Asia as well as counter-strategies that need to be undertaken to arrest this terrorism scourge. To quote Dr Jusuf Wanandi from Indonesia's Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS),

"This book [*The New Terrorism*] is a definitive book. It provides excellent analyses and insights to problems related to terrorism. It is the first work that dwells in depth on the war on terror in Southeast Asia. It is a must read book for anyone who wants to understand the ongoing regional effort to fight against terrorism."⁸

At this juncture, it must be noted that while terrorism as a phenomenon is not new, the characteristics and the threat it now poses are indeed newer and greater than ever before. Thus, in this aspect, this reviewer believes the coining of the term "New Terrorism" by the various contributors to the book seems apt. Interestingly, to tie in further with the concept of "New Terrorism", the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has also posited a perspective that new terrorist groups like the Al-Qaeda will be more dangerous. It believes that a more powerful terrorist organisation is likely to appear soon - a so-called "Al-Qaeda Version 2.0", whereby the new adaptation might be based on unknown terrorist groups. It will be a less centralised organisation, but it will be as powerful and dangerous as Al-Qaeda as new leaders replace old ones very quickly. If this is really so, it will be more difficult to destroy Al-Qaeda.⁹

To supplement counter-strategies posited in *The New Terrorism*, this reviewer believes that in order for both Track One and Two counter-strategies to be well formulated and effective, realistic assumptions about the current situation must be appreciated. For instance, according to Brian Michael Jenkins in a 2002 RAND report entitled, "Countering Al-Qaeda: An Appreciation of the Situation and Suggestions for Strategy", one assumption is that the new terrorists like Al-Qaeda, its associates and its successors will fight on as it draws upon a deep reservoir of hatred and a desire for revenge. Also, it must be presumed that Al-Qaeda has the capabilities and intentions for widespread death and destruction - with conventional and unconventional weapons – as well as continuing efforts to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction (WMD).¹⁰

Apart from realistic assumptions, this reviewer also believes that a key element - "Political Warfare" - must be noted when employing counter-strategies. According to Jenkins, the new terrorists such as Al-Qaeda are more than organisations; they are also a process, and their principal resource is its human capital. Al-Qaeda's future ability to grow and continue operations depends most strongly on its ability to gather new recruits.¹¹ He also asserts that the new terrorism may be seen as "an ideology, a set of attitudes, a belief system organised into a recruiting network

that will continue to replace terrorist losses unless defeated politically.”¹²

As such, Jenkins posits two levels of political warfare to counter the new terrorism that supplement strategies discussed in *The New Terrorism*. At a tactical level, a counter-strategy should “discredit Al-Qaeda, create discord, provoke distrust among its operatives, demoralize volunteers, and discourage recruits. At a strategic level, political warfare should aim at reducing the appeal of extremists, encouraging alternative views and discouraging terrorists’ use of WMD.”¹³

Further emphasising the importance in taking the battle against the new terrorists onto the political plane, Rohan Gunaratna has said:

“Law enforcement and intelligence will reduce immediately the threat. But to contain the mid-term threat and to disrupt the long-term threat, a political and ideological war must be waged.”¹⁴

He noted that like the communist terrorist groups of the past (the Red Brigades of Italy, Action Direct of France, Red Army Faction of Germany and the Red Army of Japan), Islamist terrorist groups would disappear when public support for them weakens and dwindles.¹⁵

Consequently, as noted by Audrey Cronin, “terrorism [today] is an unprecedented, powerful non-state threat to the world that no single state, regardless of how powerful it may be in traditional terms, can defeat alone.”¹⁶ With this kind of threat persisting today, *The New Terrorism* may be a good starting reference point for policy-makers as well as the ordinary man on the street to reflect upon.

The above mentioned title is available for borrowing at the [SAFTI MI Library](#). The catalog references are:

The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies

Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (Eds.)

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Endnotes

1 Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies*, (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), p. vi (Foreword).

2 Bruce Hoffman, “The Emergence of the New Terrorism”, in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 32.

3 Gavin Cameron, “Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Prospects and Problems”, in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 52.

4 Kevin O’Brien, “Networks, Netwar, Information-Age Terrorism”, in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 82.

5 Rohan Gunaratna, “Terrorist Trend and Patterns in the Asia Pacific Region”, in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 129.

6 Farish A. Noor, “Globalization, Resistance, and the Discursive Politics of Terror, Post September 11”, in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 162.

7 Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna, “The New Terrorism: Diagnosis and Prescriptions”, in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 16.

8 Comments provided by publisher.

9 "New Al-Qaeda to be Born", Pravda, 29 May 03.

10 Brian Michael Jenkins, "Countering Al-Qaeda: An Appreciation of the Situation and Suggestions for Strategy", (US: RAND, 2002), p. 15.

11 Ibid. p. 4.

12 Ibid. p. 24.

13 Ibid., p. 24

14 "JI Going Strong in Three Hot Spots", The Straits Times, 02 July 03, p. A1

15 Ibid.

16 Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism", International Security, Vol. 27, No.3 (Winter 2002/2003), p. 58.

Featured Author: Martin van Creveld

Martin van Creveld was born in the Netherlands in 1946, and has lived in Israel since 1950. He received a Ph.D. in international history at the London School of Economics.

Prof van Creveld has been on the faculty of the History Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem since 1971. He has acted as a consultant to the defence ministries and armed forces of several countries including the US, Canada, and Sweden. He is one of only two civilian experts ever to have been invited to address the assembled Israeli general staff, and has taught or lectured at many centres of higher military and strategic learning around the western world.



A specialist on military history and strategy, he is the author of thirteen books, including *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (1977), which draws on a very wide range of unpublished and previously unexploited sources. He examines the often-mentioned but rarely-explored fundamentals of war, namely, the formidable problems of movement and supply, transportation and administration. Subjecting various operations to analysis from his own unique point of view, he presents his take on the most important campaigns waged in Europe during the last two centuries.

His book *Command in War* (1985) deals exclusively with the nature of command. He adopts a historical perspective on the variety of problems involved in commanding armies including staff organisation and administration, communications methods and technologies, weaponry and logistics; he traces the development of command from ancient Greece to Vietnam. He examines the link between these problems and military strategy. In vivid descriptions of key battles and campaigns, he focuses on the means of command and shows how those means worked in practice. He also finds that advances in technology brought commanders not only new tactical possibilities but also new limitations.

Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present (1989) presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the relationship between technology and warfare over the past 4,000 years. It traces human conflict in an age of tools when adversaries used primitive weapons, and slowly progressed to light chariots, bows and mechanical artillery like catapults and ballistas. It examines shifting trends from cavalry and foot-soldiers in the early ages to machines, automated warfare and beyond. Going beyond the study of specific military weaponry and systems, Prof van Creveld considers the impact of technological changes not only on combat but on the totality of warfare and defence policy; from everyday physical realities of roads, vehicles, communications, timekeeping, and maps, to the complex problems involved in strategy, technological management, innovation, and conceptualisation.

The Transformation of War (1991) seeks to address the fundamental problems presented by wars in all ages: the who, how, what and why. No less importantly, it also makes the radical claim that contemporary strategic thought about all these problems, rooted in a Clausewitzian world-picture that is either obsolete or wrong, is fundamentally flawed. This ambitious work aims at providing a new, non-Clausewitzian framework for thinking about war, while at the same time trying to look into its future.

The Art of War: War and Military Thought (2000) takes us through the history of military thought from the philosophy and doctrine of the pursuit and practice of warfare. Beginning with the ancient Chinese writers, the book takes the reader through Greece, Rome, Byzantium and the Middle Ages to the moderns like Frederick the Great and Clausewitz before finishing off with a glimpse of future wars.

Prof van Creveld is notable for adroitly fusing the methodologies and substance of military history and strategic studies, both of which are essential components in the study of the art-science of war but the study of which has tended to become fragmented into overly distinct sub-fields due to academic and professional specialisation and increasing complexity. His works are a good reminder to see the wood for the trees. While the merits of many of his ideas continue to be debated, Prof van Creveld's prolific writing and willingness to challenge orthodoxy has earned him due prominence as someone whose works are essential reading for defence planners, military professionals and all students of war.

All the above-mentioned titles are available in the SAFTI Library and are featured in the SAF Professional Reading Programme.

Personality Profile: Gerald Templer

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Lieutenant General Sir Gerald Templer arrived in Malaya on 7 February 1952 to take the reins of fighting the Malayan Emergency. The previous High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, had been assassinated in a Communist ambush on 7 October 1951 while on his way for a weekend rest at Fraser's Hill. Gurney's murder was a huge shock to the British authorities as well as to the Malaysians and stern action was demanded from London. Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, who had just been returned to power, appreciated the crucial position of Malaya in Southeast Asia to the fight against international communism and the world's tin and rubber supply. He decided that a supremo would be appointed. General Templer would have the political authority as High Commissioner and effective control of the police and all services of the armed forces as Director of Operations (DirOps). No British soldier had been given such extensive powers since Cromwell, general and leader of the Parliamentary forces during the 17th Century English Civil War.



The Malayan Emergency was declared after the murder of three Britons (two rubber estate managers and an assistant) and two Chinese on 16 June 1948. With hindsight, it was clear that the largely Chinese-based Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was reactivating the World War Two units of its Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army, renamed as the Malayan Peoples' Anti-British Army (later changed again to the Malayan Races Liberation Army) with the aim of driving out the British and establishing a Communist republic in Malaya. Armed bands struck at the British and their supporters, dubbed "running dogs", in hit-and-run attacks and then disappeared into the jungle. These forces were supported by the Min Yuen (Masses Organisation) who provided food, medicine, information and recruits. The latter sprang up as Chinese fled starvation and persecution in the wake of the Japanese Occupation and blended into the towns and squatter areas on the jungle fringe. After the war, no administration had been willing or able to move the 600,000 squatters.

The British initially called the MCP's forces "bandits" but eventually realised the unhelpful connotations of this term as it had been applied against Communists by Chiang Kai Shek and the Japanese. Neither had been successful in their efforts to root out the Communists who, in the tradition of the Chinese classic, Water Margin, portrayed themselves as fighting corruption and unjust invaders. Thus the British switched to the term "Communist Terrorist" (CT). While guerillas and insurgents are not always terrorists, in the case of the CTs, it was definitely appropriate. Civilians, including women and children, were deliberately murdered. Squatter villages were terrorised into becoming Min Yuen appendages – families who dissented or did not cooperate were sometimes burnt alive in their homes. In some cases, a child would be hacked to death in front of his or her parents and if sufficient "subscriptions" were not forthcoming, the CTs would kill another one of their children next time. Likewise, tappers were ambushed and killed. Sometimes they were tied to the rubber trees and left to bleed to death from their wounds. In order to disrupt British economic interests, CTs also slashed rubber trees and smashed tin mining equipment – thus destroying the livelihood of many innocents. For all intents and purposes, this was a civil war but the polite misnomer of a temporary emergency kept insurance rates of the major rubber and tin companies from skyrocketing.

Against this backdrop, there were high expectations of Templer. He was not well known outside of the Army and was not even Churchill's first choice. However he had experience fighting insurgents in the Middle East, commanded a fighting division through an arduous mountain campaign in Italy during World War Two and performed well as Director of Military Government in the British sector of occupied Germany. Furthermore he held the important staff appointment of Director Military Intelligence (DMI) as well as the intensely political jobs of Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff (VCIGS - equivalent to Deputy Chief of Army) and Eastern Command, UK.

Templer also inherited a sound framework which was initially conceived by Gurney and then implemented by Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs, his predecessor as DirOps. The Briggs Plan had put forward the ideas and instruments that, with Templer's energetic direction, efforts and further innovations, would eventually defeat the MCP.

One such instrument was national registration and the issue of identity cards, a legacy that remains with every Singaporean and Malaysian today. The plan also called for a social revolution. Chinese squatters, an important source of Communist logistics support, would be resettled in New Villages with title to their homes and agricultural

land, a Home Guard and perimeter fence to protect them from CT intimidation and amenities such as clean water, electricity, schools and clinics. It is to Templer's credit that he managed to persuade the Malay Rulers to part with enough of their land to create the New Villages for Chinese resettlement. His personal authority and good relations with the Army ensured that there would be sufficient manpower to undertake the huge effort. British national servicemen showed great cheer and understanding in this unconventional task, moving thousands of families who were initially fearful and suspicious. Communist propaganda had spread the rumour that they were being herded into concentration camps to be killed.

Previous administrations had been reluctant to boost the Home Guard. They feared that doing so would, on the one hand, provide the CTs with a ready source of new arms. On the other, they were also worried that Home Guard-defended New Villages would be seen as soft targets by the CTs and subjected to constant attack. However Templer felt strongly that the resettled Chinese should be given a bigger role in their own security as, by actively standing up to CT intimidation, this would instill greater offensive spirit in them. Thus their sense of civic responsibility and pride could be cultivated by allowing them to play a more active role in the Emergency. To that effect, he issued the Home Guard with 20,000 weapons. Templer's faith was justified as no more than a few dozen weapons were lost and the Home Guard freed the police and army from static duties.

Another important element of the Briggs Plan was Operation Starvation. Stringent controls were imposed on the movement of food, particularly rice, and medicine through curfews, checkpoints and raids. When the CTs resorted to growing their own crops, aircraft were sent to spray pesticide on them. Templer's administration saw the realisation of the "White Area" – an area which was declared free of overt Communist activity and where most restrictions were lifted. The effect was amplified by subjecting the area to Draconian curfews and checks prior to the declaration, in order to flush out any remaining CTs and Min Yuen. Naturally the residents were overjoyed when the area was declared "white". They also gave their wholehearted cooperation to the security services as similar restrictions would be reintroduced if the Communists infiltrated the area again.

Templer also pushed for effective learning and doctrinal development in jungle warfare. Massive shoulder-to-shoulder sweeps of the jungle were good for parading manpower and firepower but netted no CTs. These were abandoned for methodical searches and ambushes by sections. Air-supplied jungle forts were constructed to wrest the native Orang Asli from CT influence and serve as forward bases for quick deployment and strikes. He demanded, and got, the collation and refinement of the wealth of jungle fighting experience from different levels into The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya, an example of successful knowledge management. The young British national service officers and men, together with the redoubtable Gurkhas, police jungle squads and Iban headhunters, eventually became as good as, if not better, jungle fighters than the CTs.

As a former DMI, Templer appreciated the value of good intelligence. It was the key to breaking the vicious cycle of no security leading to poor intelligence leading to failed operations leading to no security and so on. He centralised all intelligence collection at the Special Branch of the police; created a Director of Intelligence, a full member of the DirOps Committee, who would coordinate the intelligence activities of all the security services; and established an out-standing Intelligence (Special Branch) Training School which trained British and local agents on the ground as well as educating senior military and police officers in the guise of having them "sit in" on lectures so that they could give feedback on how to improve the courses.

Templer coined the phrase of "winning the hearts and minds" of the people. With respect to the people of Malaya, this was to be achieved by governing effectively and justly, and to be seen to be doing so. The amenities of the New Villages and a more secure environment to live, work and bring up children were all powerful weapons against Communist terror and propaganda. Against the CTs, a whole panoply of devices were employed. Leaflets publicising amnesties for surrendering CTs and huge rewards for inducing the surrender of others were dropped constantly. Templer also borrowed a DC3 Dakota voice aircraft from Korea via an old friend, General Mark Clark, with whom he had served in Italy. Personal appearances by surrendered CTs were also effective in undermining Communist morale, giving lie to the MCP leadership's claim that prisoners and surrendered CTs were tortured or killed. His wife, Peggie Templer's tireless efforts in charity, volunteer work and setting up of Women's Institutes were also helpful in boosting the image of the authorities.

The war for hearts and minds was also an intensely political one. While Templer had a soldier's distaste for politics and a very sharp tongue, he also had experience in managing the sensitivities of many different parties and dealing with high level dignitaries as Director of Military Government in Germany and as VICGS. Templer had arrived with instructions from London to prepare Malaya for self-rule and eventual independence. This undercut the main Communist aim of driving out the British as the British were planning to leave anyway.

Templer's leadership had an electrifying effect on those around him. He seemed perpetually frail but possessed reverberating energy. His experience as a sub-altern in the First World War, where he hardly saw a general at the frontlines, left him with the conviction that a general must not lose touch with his men on the ground. As with his previous appointments and commands, he toured Malaya constantly to see things for himself, including an overnight jungle patrol with Gurkhas. Using the reason of security, he would descend on a town or unit with hardly any notice to see how things actually were rather than a scene prepared for a VIP visit. Those who were found lacking were subjected to a severe tongue-lashing, complete with swear words, and he would not hesitate to dismiss those who had not learnt their lessons. Towns that he felt had consistently "behaved badly" by withholding information from the authorities, in spite of major incidents, were harangued with "unprintable" speeches and slapped with severe restrictions.

But he would also try to help make up for deficiencies he found and saw to it that his promises, for clean water or a new school or more arms, were kept. His ruthless (and often rude) efficiency was balanced by a willingness to admit to and apologise for his own mistakes. He was also willing to listen to his subordinates: in fact, he expected them to "bellyache" for all they were worth before a decision had been made but to follow orders once given. His team, which deserve much credit for his success, included people such as General Hugh Stockwell (General Officer Commanding, Malaya), Sir Arthur Young (Police Commissioner), Jack Morton (Director of Intelligence), Sir Bob Thompson (Permanent Secretary, Defence) and CC Too (Head, Psychological Warfare).

His leadership technique has been summarised by his posthumous biographer, Cloake, as:

Get the priorities right.

Get the instructions right.

Get the organisation right.

Get the right people into the organisation.

Get the right spirit into the people.

Leave them to get on with it.

Critics of Templer have pointed out that he had inherited the good plans of Gurney and Briggs and only had to follow them through. He was also lucky that, the head of the MCP, Chin Peng, worried about alienating the masses, decided to scale down terrorist activity against civilians in his October 1951 directive which was never completely implemented but led to a fall in incidents. Certainly, Templer had a good foundation to work on but the conclusion was by no means decided. The war was still his to lose. He was criticised for being anti-Chinese and of being a tyrannical dictator. In fact, he was also criticised by others for being too pro-Chinese - spending so much on the New Villages and Home Guard. While he had an autocratic soldier's manner, he also lifted restrictions on nearly 160,000 people with the declaration of White Areas and the eventual abolition of the notorious Emergency Regulation 17D which allowed him to uproot and detain entire towns.

Templer left Malaya in May 1954 feeling much more secure than when he arrived. He even had to warn against complacency by threatening, "I'll shoot the bastard who says that this Emergency is over". He returned to Malaya again for the Merdeka celebrations in 1957, now a Field Marshall and Chief of the Imperial General Staff. The Malaysian authorities would declare the Emergency over in 1960. Templer was awarded further honours and after his retirement, worked to found the UK National Army Museum (NAC). Soon after the successful conclusion of the fund raising campaign for the NAC, he passed away, aged 81, on 25 October 1979.

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