

# **ASYMMETRIC WARS – LESSONS FROM RECENT CONFLICTS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO INDIA**

The enemy's objective is to have us concentrate our main forces for a decisive engagement. Our objective is exactly the opposite. We want to choose conditions favorable to us, concentrate superior forces and fight decisive campaigns and battles only when we are sure of victory, we want to avoid decisive engagements under unfavorable conditions when we are not sure of victory.

- Mao Tse-Tung

## **Introduction**

Asymmetric warfare originally referred to war between two or more actors, or groups of actors, whose relative power differed by a significant amount (David small, Goliath big). Contemporary military thinkers tend to broaden this original meaning to include asymmetry of strategy or tactics the core idea is that "weaker" combatants will attempt to use strategy to offset deficiencies in quantity or quality.

Today, the asymmetric threat paradigm is defined by radically unconventional, random, nonlinear, anarchistic, disproportionate, and unconstrained strategies perpetrated by mostly non governmental and nonstate actors. The borders have blurred between governments and people, military and populace, public and private. New fourth generation warriors, nonnational and transnational groups based on ideology, religion, tribe, culture, zealotry, and illegal economic activities, have pushed many regions of the world into anarchy. These low intensity conflicts have no quick fix solutions. They have complex cultural, religious, and historical origins where criminality, population coercion, and extremist politics abound. Current conventional military capability lacks the "skill sets" to deal with this future asymmetric threat effectively. In the absence of a pervasive human intelligence network, this threat is extremely hard to detect.

Any attempt to judge a limited, asymmetric warfare in accordance with the same yardstick of conventional conflict is not only a clash between a regular army and a nonstate actor, it is almost always part of a broader and longer conflict, which cannot be decided militarily at a single stroke. Objectives that can be achieved in all out war are not usually attainable in a low intensity or asymmetric conflict. Inevitably, expectations, of quick, low cost battles are almost always proven to be short lived, unrealistic and disappointing. Currently, regular armies are not catered well for asymmetric warfare and therefore the stronger party is not necessarily the triumphant one.

## **What Is Asymmetric Warfare**

Water shapes its course according to the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is fighting.

Sun Tzu, The Art of War

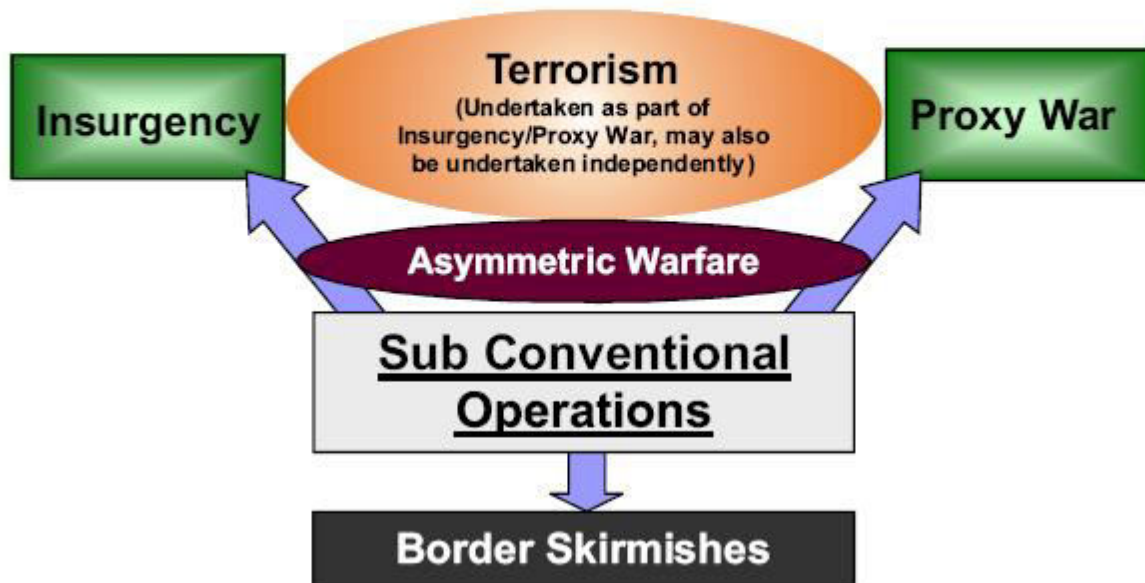
The stunning victories in the 1991 Gulf War, Afghanistan and in the major combat operations phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom are clear examples of the U.S. military's ability to overmatch conventional competitors. Opponents and would be opponents simply cannot match the lethality, speed and reach of U.S and Coalition forces. This dominance, however, creates the incentive for adversaries to level the playing field by seeking adaptive tactics, techniques, procedures and weaponry in an asymmetric approach. A stark example of this is the current threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Iraq. With a relatively small amount of resources access to common electronic components and military ordnance and basic electronic and demolition skills insurgent terrorists can build devices that literally have the capability to destroy the most prominent conventional warfare systems Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. The fact that more than 50 percent of the casualties in OIF result from IED attacks is a sobering reminder of the effectiveness of these devices.

**Definition.** In the Land Warfare Series Paper on Defining Asymmetric Warfare states : Asymmetric warfare is population centric nontraditional warfare waged between a militarily superior power and one or more inferior powers which encompasses all the following aspects: evaluating and defeating asymmetric threat, conducting asymmetric operations, understanding cultural asymmetry and evaluating asymmetric cost.

Indian Army's Sub Conventional Warfare doctrine defines Asymmetric Warfare as :- Asymmetric warfare is a term to describe a military situation in which two belligerents of unequal power or capacity of action, interact and take advantage of the strength and weaknesses of themselves and their enemies. This interaction often involves strategies and tactics outside the bounds of conventional warfare. It may include use of cyber and informational warfare, and/or chemical, biological radiological or nuclear related technologies.

The relationships between Insurgency, Terrorism, Proxy War and Asymmetric Warfare is given below :-

## SUB CONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS



### Features of Asymmetric Warfare

**Levels of Warfare.** Asymmetric warfare most commonly refers to warfare between opponents not evenly matched where the smaller or weaker force must exploit geography, timing, surprise, or specific vulnerabilities of the larger and stronger enemy force to achieve victory. At the tactical level, asymmetric warfare doctrine often attempts to specifically avoid a confrontation with the enemy's strengths, preferring instead to disrupt or impair command functions (intelligence gathering and communications) or logistics (supply and medical care) so as to prevent the larger enemy from effectively bringing their larger force to bear in an effective manner. Asymmetric attacks are often characterized as tactical operations that are meant to achieve some strategic objective or outcome. At a strategic level, asymmetric war is designed to discourage and demoralize enemy forces and political leaders of those forces from using their greater strength.

**Criminal Organizations.** The last 10 years have seen the rapid advance in networked terrorist and criminal organizations worldwide. This includes but is not limited to Al Qaeda in 60 countries, numerous terrorist/insurgent groups such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), Hamas, Hizbullah, Islamic Jihad, Central, South American and Asian drug lords that operate networks spanning the globe, and a network of loosely connected smugglers that move contraband worldwide. While it is not clear to what extent these organizations are connected, it is clear that the lines between terrorist, drug smuggler, and insurgent are no longer easy to define. Terrorist trained in Afghanistan are fighting in the Philippines, China, Indonesia, Somalia, Jammu and Kashmir and Algeria add another dimension to the inter-connected terrorist world. The rise of D Company in India is an apt example.

**Networked Organization.** In military organizations, orders flow down the chain of command while information required for decision making flows up from subordinate units. While this type of organization proves particularly useful in fighting similarly organized forces it has proven inept at fighting the types of networks. The situation is further complicated by the fact the communication between the hierarchies (military to civilian or civilian to civilian) is often only allowed at the highest level. What we have then is a nonnetworked collection of military and civilian agencies that are organized in a hierarchal fashion and are responsible for preventing asymmetrical attacks by networked terrorist and criminal organizations. It requires a network to defeat a network.

**Technology.** Technological supremacy could not prevent Holland's defeat in Indonesia, France's defeats in Indonesia and Algeria, America's defeat in Vietnam, the Soviet Union's defeat in Afghanistan or Russia's recent defeat in Chechnya. All these episodes confirm that technological superiority does not automatically guarantee victory on the battlefield. For nonstate actors and terrorists, the availability of off the shelf information technology at low cost allows a very powerful combination of the tribal and the technological.

However, new technology will not be the panacea in confronting the challenges of asymmetric warfare. All the technology is of no use if we cannot locate a foreign terrorist after infiltration hiding in the jungles of Lolab. Biometrics, artificial intelligence, and UAVs may well catch "some of the fish" and restrict their activities. However, technology alone will not stop a young woman from walking into a crowd meeting a former Prime Minister of the country and exploding a bomb that will kill herself and the Prime Minister and others around her.

**Information Revolution.** The information revolution creates new difficulties for national decision makers and intelligence officers. Modern encryption easily available in the public domain gives anyone with internet access the ability to encrypt their personal communications with keys that are virtually impossible to break. The terrorist or an opposing military can communicate with impunity via commercial channels. The time value of intelligence decays quickly. In the growing sea of bits, finding and getting to the relevant information takes significantly more time, effort, and money.

Non state actors and terrorists manipulate print and radio, distort images with perception management and background film clips on global television and disrupt the Internet. The infosphere has become a new battleground suited for asymmetric attack from across the globe.

**Culture and Value.** Asymmetrical warfare needs to be examined from the culturally distinct perspective of potential enemies. Modern war remains, a struggle of psyches and wills. As General Charles Krulak stated, our enemies have seen CNN. They watched the technology and they will not be content to fight the son of DESERT STORM. They will fight the stepson of Chechnya, the stepson of Somalia.

**Rules of Engagement.** While conventional state power always abide by the law of land warfare, the adversary is in no compulsion to adhere to these rules. He uses

the flag of truce or clearly marked medical vehicles as cover for an attack or ambush. However it all depends as ROE in Nagaland would be totally different from J and K.

**Proxy War.** Where asymmetric warfare is carried out generally covertly by allegedly non-governmental actors who are connected to or sympathetic to a particular nation's (the "state actor's") interest, it may be deemed war by proxy. This is typically done to give deniability to the state actor. The deniability can be important to keep the state actor from being tainted by the actions, to allow the state actor to negotiate in apparent good faith by claiming they are not responsible for the actions of parties who are merely sympathizers, or to avoid being accused of belligerent actions or war crimes.

The war between the mujahadeen and the Red Army during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a classic asymmetric war. The aid given by the U.S. to the mujahadeen during the war was only covert at the tactical level, the Reagan Administration was only too pleased to be able to tell the world that it was helping the freedom loving people of Afghanistan. Similarly Pakistan is waging a Proxy War against India. However, these actions have a tendency to boomerang. Pakistan and USA are prime examples of as you sow so you reap theory.

## **Asymmetric Warfare and Terrorism**

Insurgency is an asymmetric conflict driven by a philosophy that undermines human needs and aspirations. At the bedrock of such an armed struggle, therefore, always exist grievances that could be historical or generated by inefficient and at times partisan governance. Inept governance provides conditions for the generation of discontent on economic, social, religious, cultural or ethnic lines that over a period manifest into collective aggression and ultimately an armed struggle. Such warfare seeks to overthrow a constituted mechanism or arrangement of governance and employs subversion and terror as its primary means. Countering insurgency therefore, entails executing an imaginatively evolved campaign on multiple fronts to address the root causes of the imbroglio. It therefore, needs to be remembered that neutralizing armed cadres of the movement is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Today, almost all insurgency movements are witnessing a very high profile of terrorist activity that aims to cause anarchy, paralysis and disorder and helps the perpetrators to shape the asymmetrical battle space. This trend has blurred the distinction between an insurgent and a terrorist. The terrorists, beyond doubt are the most critical element of any asymmetric environment as they introduce asymmetry into the environment through an irrational, indiscriminate, unpredictable and ruthlessly destructive modus operandi.

The 'will' of the people virtually acts as a rheostat for the control of insurgency and therefore, emerges as the terrorists' center of Gravity. Without popular support no insurrectionist movement can be sustained. It needs to be understood that if 'will' and/or 'attitudes' of the people are to be transformed then firstly, it is possible only through a protracted campaign and secondly, all actions and reactions of the military will have to be so executed that they contribute towards generating the requisite groundswell for peace. Attitudes take decades if not generations to form and therefore, there can be no quick fix solutions to insurrectionist movements. There is no

example in history where insurgency has been brought down within a short span of time. It has taken India almost 50 years of unrelenting conflict management to change attitudes of the Naga people and bring them to the negotiating table.

**WMD Threats.** Today, the general grouping of weapons used in the analysis of asymmetric threats are nuclear, chemical, biological, information operations, organizational concepts, and terrorism. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are normally clustered into a disharmonious trio called Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) and are analysed as a group. Generally speaking, WMD are evaluated in the following order, considered to be the order of effectiveness: nuclear, biological, and chemical. Among the other asymmetric weapons considered, the most widely publicised is information operations; which encompasses cyberterrorism, cyberwarfare, or any generalised attacks on a nation is electronic infrastructure. Nuclear weapons could be used to inflict widespread infrastructure damage via High altitude Electromagnetic Pulse (HEMP), which is a byproduct of a nuclear bomb being detonated in the Earth's atmosphere. A 50 kiloton exoatmospheric detonation centered over central Nebraska could disable the majority of the United State's unprotected electronic infrastructure.

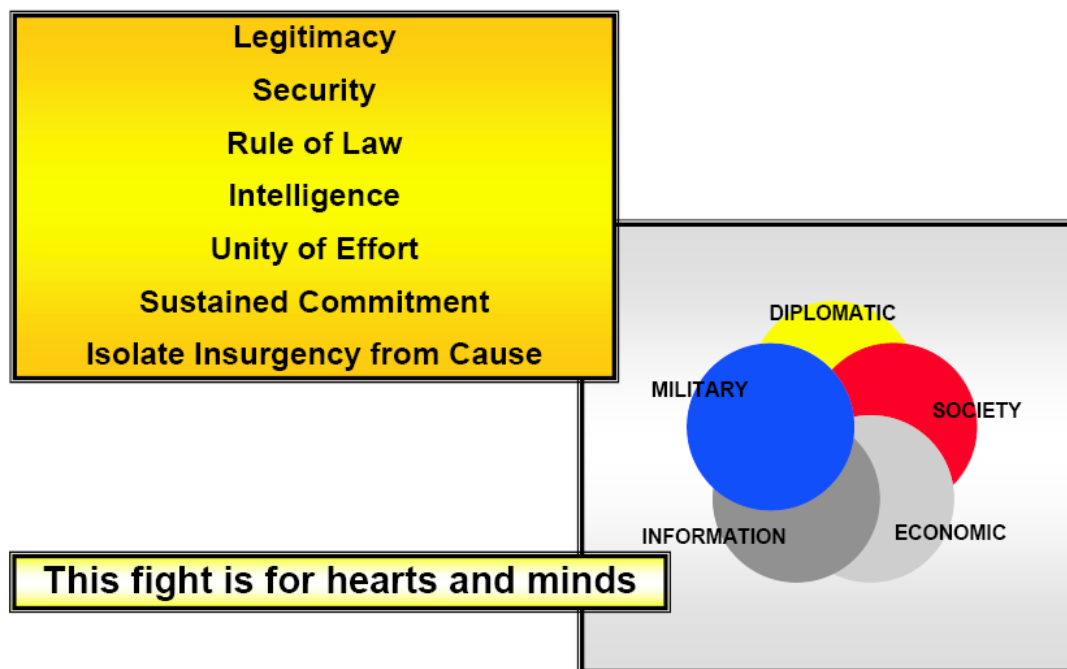
## **Asymmetric Warfighting**

Insurgents win by not losing. If the conventional power find the status quo unacceptable, but have no acceptable way to bring the insurgency to an end, then it is only a matter of time before they realize their goals cannot be achieved. This is the story of the Americans in Vietnam and the Soviets in Afghanistan. General Krulak developed a model for future warfare known as the "three block war." This model captures the unpredictability and broad spectrum of conflict that will be the centerpiece of modern asymmetric conflicts. In one moment in time, our service members will be feeding and clothing displaced refugees, providing humanitarian assistance. In the next moment, they will be holding two warring tribes apart conducting peacekeeping operations and, finally, they will be a fighting a highly lethal mid-intensity battle all on the same day all within three city blocks.

**Tactics of Asymmetric Warfare.** The terrorists use some of the following tactics for waging war against the state:-

- Ethnic cleansing.
- Human shields.
- Attacking C4I networks.
- Exploitation of rules of engagement (ROEs) and Laws Of War (LOW).
- Exploitation of laws/ constitution and lack of laws to fight the current global war on terrorism (GWOT).
- World Trade Center type of attack like Bombay Serial Blasts or Attack on Indian Parliament.
- Employment of WMD.
- Exploitation of humanitarian relief orgs and NGOs.
- Flooding refugees into neighboring countries (regional instability).

## *How do you fight asymmetrically?*



Two great military strategists an ancient one, Sun Tzu, and a 20th century one, the late John Boyd . . . explain how to fight and win such warfare. Broadly, these strategists focused on how to win by outmaneuvering an enemy mentally, so as to limit the need for actual combat. Greatly simplified, their ideas suggest that to win asymmetric war:

- ❖ Understand that military force is not the only, or necessarily the best, means of achieving national goals. Excessive or inappropriate use of force breeds resentment and plants the seeds of future conflict.
- ❖ Attract allies to one's own side, and subtract them from an opponent's side.
- ❖ Focus on two major and complementary elements: create "harmony" and cohesion on one's own side, and foster chaos and paralysis on the other side.
- ❖ Surround the opponent with sustained ambiguity, deception, surprise, isolation and menace; pursue multiple approaches and attacks, then switch between them and develop new thrusts faster than the opponent can cope; alternate unpredictably between the expected and unexpected, the orthodox and unorthodox, distracting moves and decisive moves.
- ❖ Understand that success in conflict depends most upon people, then ideas and least upon hardware.
- ❖ Fix fraying leadership and cohesion in the military, in part by ending constant personnel rotation among units, halting the system of premature discharging of mid level officers and training and empowering officers to exercise more initiative.
- ❖ End a fixation on complex hardware, which is not only unreliable and expensive, but also creates complex bureaucracies to build, deploy, operate, supply and fix it. Bureaucracies that are unsuited to exercising the most

important components of third and fourth generation warfare strategy: agility, quickness, flexibility, responsiveness, creativity, initiative.

- ❖ Structure and equip forces so that they are agile and flexible; provide commanders with multiple options; can switch between different thrusts quickly; continuously reshape themselves through experimentation and training; and most importantly, are well led.

**Best Practices.** Some of the Best Practices to defeat an asymmetric foe are given below:-

- ❖ Emphasis on intelligence, especially human intelligence. The primary source of this intelligence is the population itself.
- ❖ Separation of the insurgency from the population by employing military checkpoints and other means. This is tied to the idea of secure areas, which can then be maintained by persistent presence to ensure civic order.
- ❖ Utilization of military and civilian psychological operations campaigns to influence the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, organizations, or governments Expansion and diversification of local police forces.
- ❖ Reorientation of military forces as well as civilian institutions by decentralizing and devolving authority to the unit level.
- ❖ Denial of sanctuaries to insurgents by combining good governance and effective intelligence gathering.
- ❖ Provision of opportunities for amnesty and rehabilitation for insurgents.
- ❖ Keeping the security and other basic needs of the population foremost in mind.
- ❖ Assisting the government to show clear signs of progress for ordinary citizens in designated insurgent zones.
- ❖ Placing one person in charge of integrating the overall strategy.
- ❖ Stereotyped tactics and all patterns must be avoided. Authority and information flow including intelligence dissemination must be decentralised.

Malpractices which should be avoided are:-

- ❖ Making the killing and capturing of insurgents the highest priority.
- ❖ Utilizing battalion size (or larger) sweep operations.
- ❖ Concentrating military units on bases in order to ensure force protection.
- ❖ Giving adviser duty low priority.
- ❖ Inadequate attention to open, porous borders.
- ❖ Continuing peacetime government processes (e.g., the system of managing contracts).
- ❖ Giving primacy to the military effort.
- ❖ The objective of counterinsurgency is not victory, but a better peace. To achieve this objective, all agencies of the government must be engaged

**Paradoxes.** Some of the Paradoxes of Asymmetric Warfare are :-

- What succeeds on the tactical level can easily be counterproductive at the operation level and specially at strategic levels. By using overwhelming fire



power at the tactical level we may intimidate the local population. But if the local population starts hating us then it is a strategic defeat. Israeli military historian Martin Van Creveld argues that one reason the British have not lost in Northern Ireland is that they have taken more casualties than they have inflicted.

- What works for you in the physical and sometimes mental level often works against you at the moral level. You can win all the tactical engagement, yet lose the war.
- Weak often have more power than the strong. Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on nonviolent tactics to defeat the British is a classic strategy. Once the British responded with violence, they immediately lost the moral war.
- Our best hope in winning lies not in escalation but de-escalation of violence. There may be situations where escalation at the tactical level is necessary to obtain de-escalation at the operational and strategic levels. In these cases a Special Forces Team may come quickly, uses the necessary violence and quickly disappears. Most important key to de-escalation is simply not wanting to fight.
- Empathy and Force Protection are best served by integrating soldiers with the local population. If we live in a fortified base, completely separate from the local people it will create a hostile us/them attitude.
- We need to reduce the size of the officer Corps above Lt Col/Maj level for flattening our organization by reducing the number of headquarters and making those which remain much smaller. However, by A V Singh Committee Reports I & II we are doing the reverse! Welfare Vs lean, thin and mean military – who is going to make the hard choice.
- Soldiers need to educate and train themselves to develop a mental switch. When the switch is set to combat soldiers must fight. When it is set for fourth generation situations soldiers must be equally keen not to fight.
- It is more important not to kill the wrong people than it is to kill armed opponents. If soldier are fired in a situation when the terrorists are intermixed with civilian population, the best solution may be to withdraw. Later we can engage the enemy on our own terms. We need not 'Win' enemy firefight by leaving a pile of dead local people. There will be situation when soldiers need to escalate. But it must be over fast.
- The more you protect your force, the less secure you are.
- The more force you use, the less effective you are.
- The more successful you are, the less force you can use and thus the more risk you must accept.
- Sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction.
- Tactical success guarantees nothing.
- Most important decisions are not made by Generals, it is the strategic NCOs.
- What works this week in this district might not work next week in another district.

**Intelligence.** In conventional warfare Intelligence collection, processing and dissemination called Intelligence Cycle is hierarchical and driven top down. In Asymmetric Warfare information soldiers' need will always come from below and hence we need a bottom up approach. Intelligence from higher ups will be too general

or too late to be applicable. Every soldier must be a competent intelligence collector and analyst. He must get the training and preparation always needed to function as such. To face the asymmetric threat we must improve our capacity for acquiring human intelligence. Although human intelligence will form the mainstay, electronic and signal intelligence also need to be suitably dovetailed into the overall plan.

**National End State.** The end state sought by a national counter insurgency campaign is always 'conflict resolution', which succeeds conflict termination. This entails demilitarization of the conflict and shaping the environment wherein the issue can be pursued without violence. The requisite shaping of the environment is affected through a concurrent application of all elements of national power. It entails the root causes of the problem being addressed in right earnest. It is an arduous long haul, which requires consistency, clarity, credibility and consensus.

## **Training**

The most important ingredient of future Armed Forces will be the training and education of adaptable leaders with consistently sound military judgment. Leaders should have intellectual preparation, practical experience and knowledge of capabilities at their disposal. Fighting an asymmetric enemy successfully in complex environments is less dependent on reacting to the enemy than it is conceiving viable options that cause the enemy to react. Information technologies are extremely helpful toward being able to seize the initiative, but the creativity of commanders and their staffs is more important. Future Army doctrine, education and training must be designed deliberately to accommodate uncertainty and to foster a culture of institutional initiative and self reliance that encourages soldiers and leaders to react calmly to the unexpected, avoid predictability, treat rapid changes in mission and environment as routine and act aggressively.

Science of learning has evolved to a point where the distinction between training and education is no longer useful. On the traditional battlefield, training prepares a soldier to deal with expected situations. Education prepares a soldier to deal with uncertainty. Conventional wisdom suggests that we "train for the known and educate for the uncertain." On the asymmetric battlefield soldiers will be expected to demonstrate resourcefulness, initiative, creativity and inventiveness demanded by a battlefield on which confronting the unexpected and new is considered to be routine. Training for the asymmetric battlefield must develop these skills as well as those associated with traditional tactical tasks.

## **Leadership**

The most important challenge facing the military leaders will be the need to transform their **mentality**. A 21<sup>st</sup> century commander must be prepared for combating an enemy that is difficult to identify which uses combat methods rejected by the democratic societies, who hides behind civilian backs and skillfully uses elements of psychological warfare.

The learning establishment must also prepare individuals and units to operate in an environment of great uncertainty where individual leaders at all levels and units of all

kinds will be forced to adapt rapidly to changing conditions. Lieutenants and captains have conducted missions for which they never trained, executed operations that have outpaced Army doctrine, shifted constantly from adrenaline pumping counterinsurgency to patience demanding nation building, and received very little detailed guidance or supervision in the process. The result of this experience is a cohort of junior officers that is learning to be adaptable, creative, innovative and confident in their abilities to handle just about any task thrown at them. We in India are fortunate to have a set of skilled, battle hardened and experienced leaders in all echelons who have battle experience in Srilanka, North East and J & K.

## **Lessons From Recent Conflicts**

When I was a young officer, I was taught that if you have air superiority, land superiority and sea superiority, you win. Well, in Vietnam we had air superiority, land superiority and sea superiority, but we lost. So I realized there is something more to it.

- America's Greatest Military Theorist John Boyd

**Afghanistan.** US forces entered the fray with technological superiority in sensors and space based communications and the ability to deliver precision weapons from aircraft. Based on training, initiative and field craft, they possessed the ability to knit together new tactical techniques integrating an air operation and special forces with an indigenous formation, the Northern Alliance. Once the ground formations of the Northern Alliance were linked by Special Forces teams providing precise and timely targeting data to attacking aircraft, this resulting asymmetry denied Taliban forces the ability to control or defend key terrain. By exacting a great price on the Taliban for any massing of forces to defend or counterattack, the asymmetrical advantage of the US ground based targeting and air attack made the ground forces of the Northern Alliance unstoppable. The Taliban and al Qaeda had nothing of comparable capability with which to oppose the US advantage.

After their defeat, when the Taliban and al Qaeda forces broke apart and exfiltrated into the mountains of Pakistan and into the villages of remote Afghanistan, they removed the US advantage. Then the comparative force capabilities returned to a situation very familiar to Afghan fighters over the centuries, a relatively conventional military force on the ground attempting to chase down groups and individuals almost invisible in the native culture and terrain.

**Iraq.** The ease of victory by the U.S. led coalition forces in the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, demonstrated that training, tactics and technology can still provide one sided victories in the field in conventional wars. After Saddam Hussein's regime was removed from power and the 2003 occupation of Iraq began, the Iraq campaign moved into a different type of asymmetric warfare where the coalition's use of superior conventional warfare training, tactics and technology were of much less use against continued opposition from Iraq's various insurgent groups. In fact, the Iraqi insurgents have become increasingly sophisticated, with fatal results for Iraqi civilians and coalition troops. Counterinsurgency often involves a "vicious cycle" when military operations turn the public against the military and the military, in turn then begins to see the public as the enemy, thus amplifying the mutual hostility and making it more

difficult to win public acceptance or support. In the early parts of the insurgency, American commanders struggled to find the most effective balance between the “mailed fist” and the “velvet glove.” They have now adjusted tactics to place greater emphasis on intelligence gathering, winning public support, “friendly persuasion,” and limited civilian casualties and destruction.

## **Lebanon**

We had a first glimpse of nature of twenty first century warfare in the recent Lebanon war. People all over the world are looking at this conflict as a precursor for future conflicts.

Hezbollah built a network of fortified posts, bunkers and tunnels near the Israeli-Lebanese border and created underground command and control units and communication and eavesdropping centres throughout the country. It prepared hundreds of hiding places across southern Lebanon for ammunition, rocket launchers and missiles, mainly in open spaces (like forests and garbage dumps) and within civilian infrastructure. At times they utilised surprisingly primitive methods, such as transfer of operational messages via human couriers on bikes and donkeys (thus circumventing interception by signal and electronic intelligence measures). The nature of asymmetric unregulated warfare is such that unlawful combat forces like Hezbollah’s, whose fighters usually wear civilian clothing and move in unmarked vehicles, have effectively turned the entire population into a legitimate target.

Option for an asymmetric warfare approach was in the case of Hezbollah, a win-win option. It knew that its military capabilities were, in the final analysis, inferior to those of the Israelis, but its strength lied in its agility, intimate knowledge of local topography and noncompliance with international treaties. Luring a bigger, slower and regular army into an attrition war, in which insurgency have the upper hand was therefore the trap, which Israeli tried to avoid at all costs. Extensive aerial offensive, which was at the heart of a counter-guerrilla doctrine called the vulture and the snake was undertaken.

Israel Air Force (the vultures) was assigned the lead role in combating the guerrillas (the snakes), in a pinpointed around the clock fashion and under all weather conditions. Ground forces were to be used sparingly, moving in and out of the enemy’s territory in rapid successions to clear pockets of resistance and destroy targets that were not dealt with by the air force. There would be no attempt to maintain occupation.

This doctrine yielded mixed results. Hezbollah found that most of its long-range missile capability had been destroyed within 72 hours and its headquarters in Beirut reduced to rubble. Israeli air superiority was of little effect against the many hundreds of missile launchers that Hezbollah had scattered throughout South Lebanon, these small targets, characterised by low visibility, small radar cross section and minimal infrared signature, proved to be a significant operational headache. While the Israel Air Force eventually managed to expose and destroyed many of them, Hezbollah quickly put replacement launchers, most of them carried on small trucks or sheltered within civilian infrastructure, the pace and ferocity of its attacks remained intact and even increased towards the end of the war.

Despite all its bravado and state-of-the-art weapons systems, the IDF's attempts to stop Hezbollah from firing Katyushas rockets into Northern Israel is like a tiger trying to catch a mosquito in his teeth. Lacking high-value targets, such as industrial facilities and robust command and control nodes, Israel's main targets became Hezbollah leadership, fielded forces, and weapons, hid among the civilians and difficult to target. Not only did the IDF have limited success in killing Hezbollah leadership and destroying the mobile rocket launchers, but in trying to target the elusive leaders and Katyushas missiles the IDF inevitably contributed to the number of Lebanese civilian casualties. Rather than mobilizing the population against Hezbollah, the collateral damage seemed to have the opposite effect, rallying and recruiting sympathizers to its side in the fight against Israel.

### **Informal Networks and Asymmetric "Netcentric Warfare"**

Like insurgent and terrorist groups in Iraq and Afghanistan—and in Arab states like Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other states threatened by such groups—the Hezbollah showed the ability of nonstate actors to fight their own form of netcentric warfare. The Hezbollah acted as a "distributed network" of small cells and units acting with considerable independence and capable of rapidly adapting to local conditions. Rather than to react faster than the IDF's decision cycle, they could largely ignore it, waiting out Israeli attacks, staying in positions, reinfiltrating or having reemerging from cover and choosing the time to attack or ambush. Forward fighters could be left behind or sacrificed and "self-attrition" became a tactic substituting for speed of maneuver and the ability to anticipated IDF movements. A strategy of attrition and slow response substituted for speed and efficiency in command and control. The lack of a formal and hierarchical supply system meant that disperse weapons and supplies—the equivalent of "feed forward logistics"—accumulated over six years ensured the ability to keep operating in spite of IDF attacks on supply facilities and resupply. On the other hand IDF had serious problems of logistics support to their soldiers in terms of ammunition and water. All the modern means like Supply Chain Management and Sense and Respond Logistics came up short of expectations. The value and capability of such asymmetric "netcentric" warfare, and comparatively slow moving wars of attrition should not be exaggerated.

**The Media as a Multiplier Effect.** Hezbollah's savvy use of the media acted as a multiplier effect for its asymmetric advantages. By showcasing the damage in Lebanon and portraying the Israeli attacks against civilians as inhumane, Hezbollah was able to generate sympathy for its actions among the Lebanese domestic audience and also internationally. Hezbollah understood, as al Qaeda's number two leader has observed that 'more than half of the Islamists' battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.' By portraying the conflict as a pan Islamic fight against Israel, Hezbollah was able to galvanize support from the Shia Iranians and Sunni Syrians.

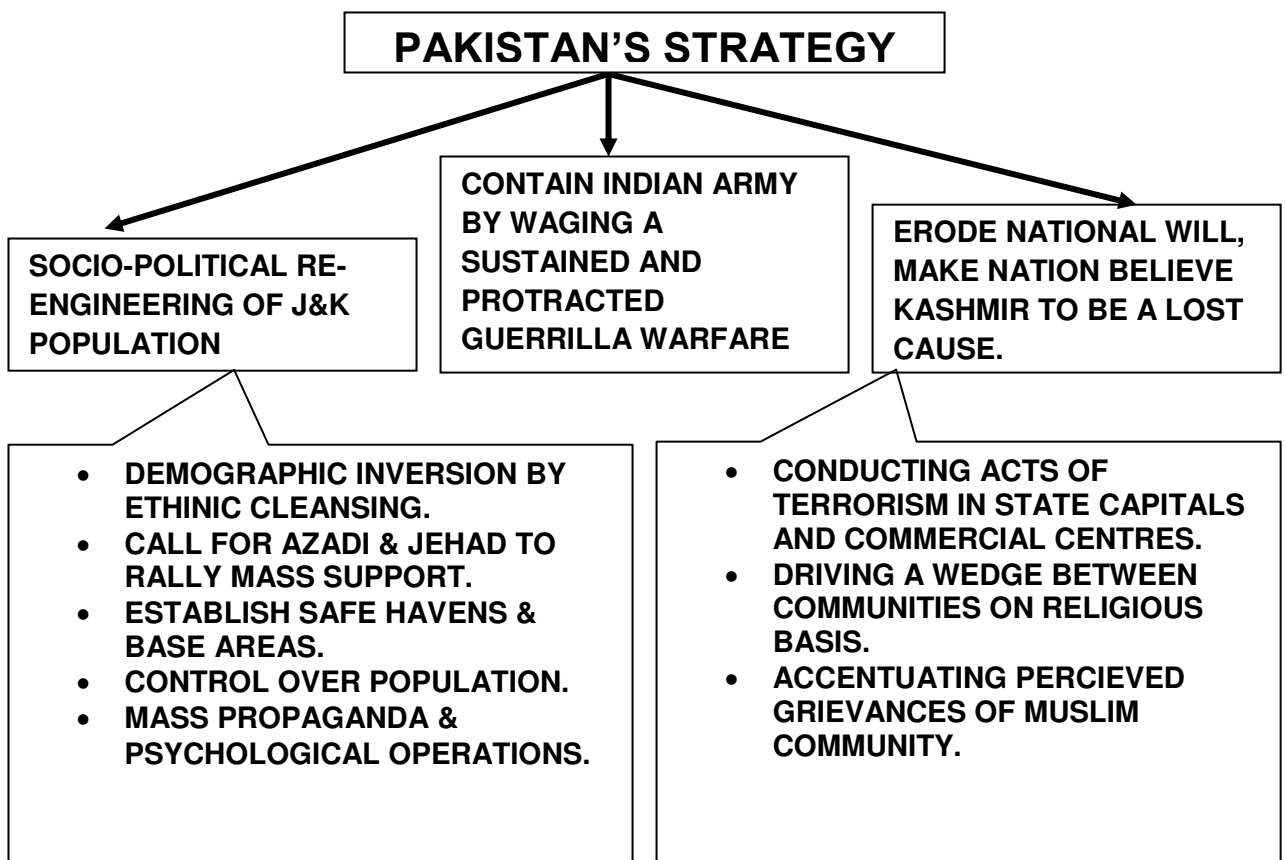
### **Application to India**

The contours of India's security challenges are numerous and varied. To the military complexities arising out of the problems of unsettled borders, the challenges of the proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir, the insurgency in the North East and the growing

naxal menace in Central India, we can now add the ever enlarging spectre of terrorism and numerous non-military threats to our security.

Ever since the failure of Pakistan to achieve its aim of capturing Kashmir even after fighting three conventional wars with India, it launched a proxy war with the aim of bleeding India through a thousand cuts. The *modus operandi*: spawning many terrorists outfits, to disrupt normal life and tie down the security forces to fighting an invisible enemy, when they should be training to fight bigger wars. The result has been a terrible human cost in innocent lives and a large drain on economic, human and military resources of India. Innumerable instances of attacks on the very existence of our social fabric through indiscriminate killing of innocent citizens abound ever since Pakistan initiated the proxy war in the 1980s. Use of force by military and other security forces has also given rise to human rights issues, which at times has tended to put the security forces on the defensive. The tactics employed by terrorist organizations impose an asymmetric threat on the nation.

Pakistan's strategy to wage Proxy War against India is given in the following diagram :-



The relevance of the above motivations varies from region to region and is dictated largely by the underlying causes of insurgency. Therefore, there may be a need to examine each group and perhaps each individual separately to understand the pulls and pressures that take individuals towards violence.

**India's Response**

These factors add up to make it difficult in practice to disrupt terrorist networks, as Anit Mukherjee's experience clearly expresses: "During the first year of my counterinsurgency duties, I believe I created more insurgents than I ... eliminated. This was not only because of inexperience, but also because I lacked fundamental knowledge of the terrain, the people, and the culture. I also did not know how to sift through local intelligence effectively. A combination of my own naïveté and enthusiasm, not to mention pressure from senior commanders to deliver results, resulted in actions that alienated the locals and, inadvertently, helped the insurgency." — Anit Mukherjee, "Lessons from Another Insurgency," NY Times, March 8, 2006

The fact that it is this form of asymmetric warfare that India is facing today needs no emphasis. A comparatively weaker power, in this case Pakistan, is using terrorism as a means of striking at the vulnerability of a stronger, democratic power, i.e. India. So far, the reaction of the government appears to have been to try and contain terrorism through strategically defensive use of military power. The country's decision makers over the years have persisted with the dominant army and paramilitary way of thinking and success in terms of a complete cessation of terrorism has eluded the nation. Cordon and search operations, border fencing and patrolling, chasing militants on intelligence reports etc have been the norm. In the process, the army and the nation have lost thousands of lives and cross-border terrorism continues. In the meanwhile, new recruits replace the neutralised terrorists, security forces and innocent civilians continue to die, the economy keeps bleeding and the wounds inflicted on national security keep festering.

## **WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS**

Let not the fruits of action be the motive of your actions, otherwise you might be disappointed and leave the path of right action.

- Rigveda

Since populace compares the centre of gravity, winning their hearts and minds is central to be success of asymmetric warfare. To achieve this, it is imperative that military operations besides being undertaken with a humane approach must also be supplemented by developmental activity coupled with imaginative public information and perception management initiatives.

Winning Hearts and Minds has active and passive facets. Both help create a conducive environment, generate a healthy image for the Army and resultantly a groundswell for peace.

### **Active Civic Action**

- ❖ Construction and functioning of School.
- ❖ Assistance in emergencies and natural disasters.
- ❖ Medical and veterinary camps/assistance.
- ❖ Construction of roads and bridges.
- ❖ Projects aimed at empowering people and generation of self employment.

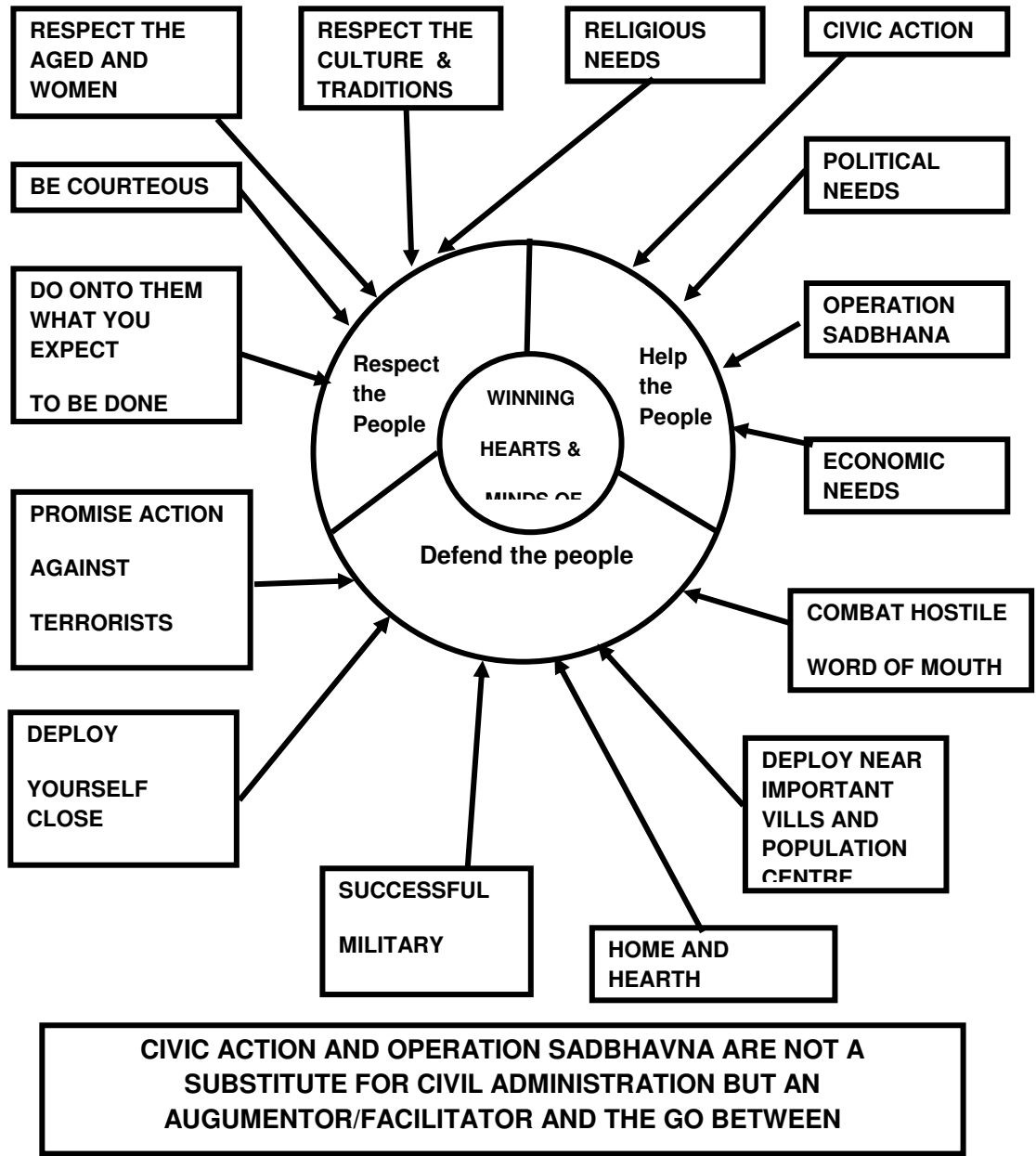
### **Passive Civic Action**

- ❖ Respect to elders and women.
- ❖ Respect for local customs and traditions.
- ❖ Good behaviour of troops.
- ❖ Minimum population control measure, in consultation with state administration.

A suggested model of winning hearts and mind of the population is given below :-



## WINNING HEARTS AND MIND (WHAM)



### Conclusion

This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin—war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat; by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him. . . . It preys on economic unrest and ethnic conflicts. It requires in those situations where we must counter it, and these are the kinds of challenges that will be before us in the next decade if freedom is to be saved, a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.

-- John F Kennedy in his address to West Point Graduating Class

The world order is being challenged by a new form of insurgency – transnational, distributed, networked and ideologically driven. Continuing resistance to democratically elected regimes in along with periodic sensational terrorist are currently the primary manifestations of this insurgency. Successful operations create the political conditions for local governments to gain legitimacy, provide security, generate economic growth, and create stability both within their borders and, often, across their regions – which eliminate the conditions in which insurgent movements flourish. Defeating insurgencies, therefore, requires the use of all elements of national power. In the military realm, effective counterinsurgency operations require conventional forces to adjust their mindset, organization and doctrine, and to create new capabilities, tactics, techniques, and procedures to secure populations and deal with guerrilla and terrorist threats.

Indian Army has a long tradition of fighting Asymmetric Warfare. We have had our share of success and failure. There are not many success stories all over the world in these operations. The operations are invariably long, protracted and increasingly coming under media glare and human rights activists. No wonder we are widely regarded as one of the most experienced and battle hardened forces in the world today and armed forces from many countries are willing to learn from us.

We have to address the root causes of the conflict in line with our national policy and strategy. All military operations have to be people centric as population is the Centre of Gravity of such operations. Winning the hearts and minds is central to all efforts during conflict management and resolution. We should use overwhelming force against foreign and hardcore terrorists while affording a fair chance to indigenous elements to shun violence, surrender and join the mainstream as per laws of the land.

## **End Notes**

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