

Land Doctrine for Sri Lanka; In Anticipation of Future Threats to the National Security to Sri Lanka

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Abstract- *The Indian Ocean region has always been a sensitive and a complicated area in Geo-political, Geo-strategy, Geo-economic and Geo-cultural point of view. Situated in right middle of this mighty Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka's Geo-strategic location draw many a foreign influences to a great extent. Many nations have paved their interest in Sri Lanka in different outlooks. A tribute to its location Sri Lanka's geographical shape, size, and the ground configuration together with natural harbours of the country too draw the attention of any nation that has an interest in and around the Indian Ocean. It's surely not a spot to be missed out in context of maritime interests of the world's sea going nations in particular and in general the overall security concerns in and around Indian Ocean.*

Even during ancient times there are records to prove how important Sri Lanka had been in the maritime interests of the sea going nations. Silk route era and even beyond Sri Lanka had been a hub or a transit location. During the colonial expansion Sri Lanka drew the attention of the three major powers such as Portuguese, Dutch and the British. Their confrontations over the control of this tiny island and onwards events unfolded in the colonial era clearly demonstrate a strategic importance Sri Lanka. During World War I and II, again Sri Lanka became the Command location of the South East Asian Command of the Allied Forces. The Trincomalee harbour housed the maritime assets of the South East Asian Command, the second largest fleet of the Allied Forces. Then, during the Cold War period, two superpowers and their allies' interest, their overt and covert undertakings in Sri Lanka once again had proven how important Sri Lanka is for these power struggles.

In the contemporary world, again and again Sri Lanka is a concern for many a nations. Rising South East Asian nations and their interest on security, energy and resources, once again Sri Lanka will be one of their prime concerns. Supremacy for power between rising nations and those establish power

bases will surely extend whatever the methods that they can to exercise command over the control of the Sri Lanka. To survive and to exist in and around this ever challenging security concerns, Sri Lanka needs a formidable Grand Strategy and a Land Doctrine to shape its defence forces. Policy makers thinking to be executed at operational and tactical level, there has to be long term understanding which will be the blueprint for the military leaders to organise, train, equip the country's military apertures. A sound land doctrine is a must to be developed and this paper is an attempt to highlight the need of a Land doctrine for the country and suggest a possible way out for developing such a doctrine for the country in absence of a one.

Keywords- Doctrine, threats and security

I. INTRODUCTION

"If you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperilled in a hundred battles; if you do not know your enemies but do know yourself, you will win one and lose one; if you do not know your enemies nor yourself, you will be imperilled in every single battle"

Military Doctrine is an intellectually rigorous document in which guide lines are spelt out to conduct Military operations. Doctrine can be defined as the fundamental principle by which military forces guide their actions in support of the objectives. Essentially, military doctrine guides armed forces on how to conduct themselves in operations. These principles or the doctrinal concepts are carved out from the careful and enthralling study of history of skirmishes, battles, campaigns, and wars, the each country has experienced through their history. Military efforts are crucial and times decisive, demanding military forces to follow specific and scientific methods to adopt in forming a course of action. Obviously

these actions are governed and drawn out from lessons learned in their own previous experiences, could be stalemates, defeats, or victories.

Doctrine has its foundation in the history and derived its authority from being the distillation of many hard won experiences. Military doctrine helps planners and commanders' to approach stressful, perilous, confusing and unfamiliar situations with clarity of thought that is based on rigorous analysis and comprehensive knowledge of hard-won lessons from human history and national military experiences. It is also a logical and a scientific approach to a problem or a situation or at a strategic level to develop a concept that a country should adopt defending its interests. It also allows working on a common platform in unfamiliar areas of interest through brainstorming. To make it very simple, doctrine is what we believe about doing the things at its best. However, a doctrine could be for any principle, but the purpose of a military doctrine is to provide a cohesive body of thinking to approach the conduct of war or to build up ones Armed forces to defend its territorial interests.

In the Sri Lanka Army, military Doctrine is a subject that has not received the attention it deserves, despite the fundamental importance it has in determining how Army think, what experience is carried forward, how they currently fight, train and adapt to changing operational conditions and look to the future. Although there are a number of reasons for the absence of a military doctrine, the most obvious is the national security concerns of Sri Lanka formulated as of the interest of the British colonial masters.

It was why the Sri Lanka never felt the requirement of its own doctrines to shape up and develop a doctrine to safeguard the national security environment. However, Sri Lankan land forces effectively countered three major civil uprisings in 1971, 1981 to 2009 and 1987 to 1990 bringing various changes of its military. Without a doctrine Sri Lankan Armed Forces managed to win over one of the most ruthless yet effective guerrilla forces that emerged in the contemporary world. However, after nearly 30 years of experience in high and low intensity counterinsurgency warfare, the Sri Lanka Army is likely to rank among the most combat experienced armies in the world. A specified land doctrine helps how they are currently fighting, train and adapt to changing operational conditions and

look to the changing future. This contributes to need, Sri Lankan land forces establishing a pertinent land doctrine.

II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Before the colonial invaders took control of the island nation, ancient Sri Lanka maintained a formidable Army with its own sound tactical concepts to defend against outside threats. Sri Lanka faced severe internal as well as many number of external threats, especially from South Indians. However, great Sinhalese kingships protected this motherland from those invasions and developed a unique Sinhalese identity. Although it was never a standing Army, olden Sri Lanka had a system to assemble sizable trained warriors at short notice. The weaponry used, the tactics used, command and control, all had its own uniqueness ideally suited for nature, custom of the population, the geographical aspects etc. That was fact on how the Kandyan Kingdom managed to hold it for long years against the invading powerful British Army. All these strengths what we had are destroyed beyond trace as of today. Systematically, they have been erased with the introduction of colonial rule and intoxication of safeguarding the colonial interests.

The origins of the today's Sri Lanka Army date back to the 1949 when the country gained its independence from the British. Since then, Sri Lanka Army functioned in varying circumstances by adopting both identified doctrinal guidelines from foreign nations as well as adopting own techniques, procedures and tactics in framework of operations and has derived principles and conceptual understanding from doctrine of various foreign nations. Absence of a doctrine of our own led a few consequences specially fighting with a formidable guerrilla force like the LTTE. Surely, Doctrinal guidelines of counterinsurgency of Northern Ireland or some other country may not be suited for our terrain, tactics and circumstances and it warrants a custom made land doctrine to suit our country.

III. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

All most, all the nations that were colonized had its own setbacks immediately after their independence. Long years of colonization that divided the people, its assets and number of other contributory factors influence internal disputes within countries. So much so, in some cases

breaking up countries into two or even more with so much destruction of human lives. End of Second World War and the power struggle for supremacy in the world order by superpowers also added misery for these pre colonized countries. With that basic background in Sri Lanka is also facing the changing international environment in which it must enhance its own national security system. These changes called for Sri Lanka to transit from comparatively large armed forces, designed for protection within national borders, with a smaller, yet better equipped and trained professional armed forces, ready to deploy in the any threat within and outside of Sri Lankan territory.

Sri Lanka Army considerably influenced by the Revolution in Military Affairs and military technological advancement due to fact that it had to meet the sophistication acquired by the LTTE. This necessitated transformation of strategic vision along with a paradigm shift in organizing and enhancing Sri Lankan Army fighting prowess in varying situations. Even though the LTTE was militarily defeated a threat pose to Sri Lanka is not yet over, and advisers are sometimes unknown. Hence, formulating of a doctrine is utmost important to modernize the army as well as safeguard the national interest with farsighted vision.

Having defeated the LTTE, the Sri Lankan Government is heading yet in challenging environment to develop Sri Lanka in terms of economic, political, diplomatic and social significance, preserving its own identity. Like in any other country in the world, Sri Lankan Government also puts their main effort on Sri Lanka Army to secure its national interest in different and varying situation. The Sri Lanka Army needs to accelerate this government effort by providing a conducive environment free of hinderence by actively supporting the nation building tasks, re-radicalisation and reintegration of former combatants and resettlements of displaced persons, transforming into fully peace time Army, it is also a must for identifying future challenges in terms of national security and then bringing in the changes that it needs. The Army has to develop the hitherto long delayed grand strategy and then doctrine for the land forces to strategically meet the above objectives.

IV. NECESSITY OF DOCTRINE

Military doctrine establishes guidelines on how best to employ the military instrument of national power to achieve strategic objectives. The principle purpose of military doctrine therefore, is to provide the armed forces with guidance for the conduct of operations.²The Sri Lankan Army possess a sound military prowess and philosophical military concepts, which derived from various doctrinal teaching from other nations.

Absence of a doctrine made commanders at all levels with uncertainty and ambiguity about their end-state resulting many drawbacks at last. However, absences of intellectually rigorous and clearly defined doctrine made Sri Lankan Army to operate in a reactive mode rather than proactive mode. This reactive mode of conduct by the Sri Lankan Army is clearly visible in all most all its counterrevolutionary, counter subversive operations and internal security operations. Weakness of absence of a doctrine was well manipulated by LTTE and they developed into formidable guerrilla force by taking advantage of said weaknesses. Having had a well formulated and conceptually visualize doctrine, results would have been early accomplish at fighting the enemy. There should be a mechanism to transform government strategic vision to military perspective. That mechanism should be a well formulated doctrine. Military Doctrine produces a way of thinking about Army fighting power and the conduct of operations. It provides military personnel with clear vision about their roles and objectives. At the military-strategic level, doctrine informs the wider defence as well as interested members of the public about the roles and political utility of military forces.

V. FORMULATION OF A DOCTRINE

The successful conduct military operations require an intellectually rigorous, clearly articulated; time tested and experience base understanding that gives advantage to countries armed forces in the managing of conflicts. Complexities are much greater than what they have been earlier and much will in the future. In order to influence the possible adversaries and facilitating commanders to use their judgement in both war and peace is vital for secure the any successive government interest. Hence, any sovereign nation requires a doctrine of their own. It gives an introduction to how we think

and work in the Army: its style of command and way of doing war. It encourages you to think for yourself, to act on your initiative, to follow the doctrine of mission command; which is to say understanding what the team is to achieve, and why, and then using your own training, experience, expertise, professional knowledge, imagination and gumption to achieve assigned part in that plan without prescriptive direction from above.

Formulating of a new doctrine's emphasis the ability to augment existing strengths, develop new skills, think imaginatively and attempt innovative approaches to cope with the emerging environment. The challenges confronted will set stage to visualize what Army of the future should look like and accordingly develop suitable approaches to structures, equipment's and training to emerge with higher level readiness force to meet conflict situations in future. The impetus for change must come from within and flow through the entire Army. Having a doctrine empowers the commander in his decision making process and commander can take mission oriented decision based on doctrinal guidelines. Vision for this worthy cause is to have a well-equipped and optimally structured Army, enabling it to respond effectively to varied situations and demands whilst it continually adapts itself to meet future challenges.

The Sri Lanka Army has to maintain a high level of readiness in war fighting in varied terrain conditions and should have the capability to operate in the selected spectrum of conflict according to the capabilities adored. Also, it should be ready to support in the government machinery in an event of a national disaster. In order to face these varying situations, it is necessary to formulate our own doctrine that outline a framework for the better understanding of the approach to warfare and provide the foundation for its practical application. The Sri Lanka Army not only defeated the LTTE militarily, but also it has introduced a model for counterterrorism for the world. Many militarily and economically developed countries failed in this attempt.

The novel concepts of 5R and Sri Lankan experiences in post conflict management provide an example to the many other conflict affected countries. In modern day Wining Armies in the world do not necessarily require overwhelming combat power.³ Hence, there is a need for

improved operating cultures and optimization of the resource base on our war fighting experiences along with well formulated engaging philosophy that can visualize and comprehend threats more clearly.

The Sri Lanka Army needs to articulate a doctrine that binds all conceptual components, moral components and physical components together to meet all challenges. Based on which every arm in the army, every regiment in the Army, every directorate in the Army, every training school in the Army will have to develop its own doctrine to meet its own mission to achieve. These Doctrines will provide a base to keep strategic thinking down to the last soldier of the army and it will create conditions to achieve victory over the adversaries on a cohesive footing.

With the advancement of the Revolution in Military Affairs, warfare has become more complex and it is being challenged with asymmetrical warfare. The emergence of information warfare is a major force multiplier heads clearly towards network centric warfare. Present trends indicate a significant shift towards the manoeuvre warfare and mission command concept, which have proven success in contemporary conflicts. Concurrently, the requirement for joint operations and the need for greater integration and interdependence amongst the three Services are viewed as being essential for success. Formulating of a Doctrine for Sri Lanka Army emphasizes that the profession of arms is a calling. The hallmark of a good soldier entails having a sense of responsibility, professional expertise and loyalty to the Nation and the Army.

The ethos and moral code set forth principles and ideals; these exhort every man in uniform to abide by his duty with no regard to personal safety. This ethos forms bedrock of the Army's preparedness in peace and is the key to its effectiveness in war. The Sri Lanka Army contributes to achieving the Government's strategic objectives by raising, training, and maintaining operationally prepared forces and carrying out government-directed operations. In today's society, the Sri Lanka Army must take a comprehensive approach. A comprehensive approach involves responding to crises through coordinating the activities of the military, other government departments, and, if applicable, international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Doctrine must be a living intellectual schools of thought that draws on the past, lives in the present, evolves, develops and, if necessary, gives way to a new thinking relevant to the present or anticipated future operating conditions and changing weapons technology. Considering the Tamil diaspora and its connectivity over the non-state and key political elements, it is essential to visualize their mode of threat perception well in advance and need a counter mechanism base on strategically focused and analytically visualized doctrine. The Sri Lanka Army is also value to friendly foreign partners who will benefit from an understanding of Sri Lanka Army's military doctrine, ethos, cultural values, and general approach to strategic and military issues. Having a doctrine also serves to inform those who have a legitimate interest in the way the Sri Lanka Army conducts its engagement.

Doctrine is the commander's way, from the military strategic level through to the tactical level, controlling his forces in writing before military action. In general, it is to derive the greatest benefit from current land forces in support of national policy. Doctrine is the companion and instrument of good leadership.⁴ It is the basis of all that that implies cohesion, reliability in battle, and mutual understanding and support.

Sri Lankan Army officers primarily expose to doctrinal teaching and guidelines only at the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) and it gives whole philosophical understanding and high level military thinking in all spectrums of operation. This education is limited to a few numbers and others work without conceptual understanding of warfare. However philosophical education is one of the major factors of early termination of a conflict and post conflict situational handling without any problem. It should be noted that, somebody may paint human rights allegation on Sri Lanka Army, but when considering the actual ground realities and post conflict development, credit goes to the Sri Lanka Army of their commitment and dedication.

All these tasks had done without a well formulated doctrine and by these unique experiences there is a necessity of preparing a doctrine by visualizing our future threats. Doctrine may also be thought of as every action that contributes to the unity of purpose in a joint or multi-national force. Doctrine is greater than tactics in that it encompasses all

aspects of Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Information, Infrastructure, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4I3SR). Sri Lanka Army needs a doctrine that soundly articulates intention concerning the use of its military power in pursuit of safeguarding its national interest and accomplishing its national objectives. By rendering direction to the subordinate concepts like force structure, education and training, operational planning, rules of engagement, and tactics. Doctrine should be aimed to instil a sense of purpose and provide guidance to the men and women in uniform.

The Sri Lanka Army achieved its military excellence with physical and moral components, but need considerable attention on conceptual components too. Military Doctrine plays most precious role in conceptual components by providing guidelines or way of conducting war for the commanders with far reaching strategic objectives. Military excellence should be achieved by using all elements of fighting power and need a review of our method of warfare to implement to deliver the Army effectively for the future threats by taking into consideration of preserving core skills and professional military standards.

When we look at the history, the enemy we fought, not the enemy we expected and they were well ahead of us with their focused strategic vision. Many operations were either unsuccessful or defeated or rather could not achieve its end state due to absence of focused vision. The future security situation will be fast, fluid, and complex. There are end numbers of non-state actors who challenge our national interest and they will continue. Sri Lanka has endured a three decade long, brutal insurgency, which pushed the nation to the brink of catastrophe. Notwithstanding the little knowledge and experience in COIN, Sri Lankan Army was haphazardly deployed to mitigate the threat posed by the LTTE terrorists. Devoid of a proper political scheme and without well formulate end state.

However, the military response considerably failed to yield the intended outcome over the years until 2005. However, with the same troops, same field commanders and same general populace Sri Lanka Army was able to win over its adversaries. Absence of a doctrine can be identified as the major reason of waging war. Hence, in order to prevent such a

situation, it needs to formulate a well-focused far sighted and analytically visualized doctrine to enhance our war fighting capabilities.

Experience gain through 30 years of war is worth understanding and there is a necessity to document that innovative and achievable tactic, techniques and procedures with the view of preserving and determining training concepts for the intended conflicts in the future. Hence, it's required to centralize and conceptualize all experiences as a base for developing future doctrine.

Doctrinal teaching should not limit to the DSCSC. It should share with junior officers and ranks as a means of workshops, seminar or any other potential means to transform strategic vision to the last soldier of the army to achieve durable success. Developing a sense of understanding on this important aspect of national security is imperative at this challenging situation. There should be doctrinal guidelines to integrate with sister services and civil authorities. Intended Doctrine should more focus on information and asymmetrical threats from non-state actors and should give specific guidelines in order to face such threats. There is a necessity to review principles of war in relation to the non-state actors.

VI. CONCLUSION

The experience the Sri Lankan Army acquired during its 3 decade war against LTTE has so many lessons. Starting from very low internal security situations in late 70's and then the gradual transformation of terrorism into a counter revolutionary war and in the last phase almost a semi conventional war, Sri Lanka has learned lots through a very costly undertaking. Fighting a unconventional enemy at its best, Sri Lankan military has developed so many new and innovative ways and means to fight yet they have not transformed this know how into future lessons. The three insurrection campaigns Sri Lanka Army had to fight must be converted to sound doctrine in which military will structured, organised, Equip, trained, deployed and kept ready for any eventualities that May unfolded. May it be a civil unrest, terrorism, foreign aggression or even natural disasters have been preparing are the best to be.

The land force of the country has vast experiences about unconventional forms of warfare and we had

managed international standards in military doctrines when we conducted land doctrines against those unconventional military forms by the enemy. Meanwhile, the entire world has been faced similar military threats with the uprising of global terrorism, but we couldn't find the applicable doctrine from the international to apply our forms. As a result, our military organizations and commanders had developed a special military doctrine to counter the enemy.

Formulating a sound accepted military doctrine not only will govern the acts of its members in a better organized way, but it will also shape up and educate the whole nation especially the people who are interested in the conduct of their own Army. It also can make the bureaucrats to understand the role played by their own army and warn one's adversaries to act as a deterrent. In this ever changing security environment in the world Sri Lanka need to check the developments that are taking place not only to the country but also outside among diasporas, state and non-state actors and continuously progress their conduct against the country.

He who knows when to fight and when not to fight will win.

He who understands how to handle both superior and inferior forces will win.

He whose ranks are united in purpose will win.

He who is well prepared and lies in wait for enemy who is not well prepared will win.

He whose general are able and not interfered with by sovereign will win.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere gratitude and appreciation goes to all who provided me tremendous support throughout the research and helped to accomplish this dissertation. My first and foremost thanks and appreciation goes out to KDU and all its Academic Staff for opportunity extended for me to undertake study that is a need of the hour.

My heartfelt thanks to Academic Sponsor Dr Prathibaha Mahanamahewa who was a great mentor and the best critic of my work, and he also provided me his continuous support and guidance.

Finally, my sincere and heartfelt appreciation goes to my beloved Spouse Dinithi and my two daughters Yohani and Shavindri for their inspiring encouragements and for being never shied away

from hardship and their resounding support underpin this effort entirely. You are a blessing to me and words fail to convey the depth and width of my appreciation.

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