

## RESTRICTED

### ABSTRACT

“War is intrinsically unpredictable”. This attribute of the war is specifically prominent when belligerents of the two opposing sides are markedly disproportionate in their “war powers” or “ASSYMETRIC”.

The history of human conflict is replete with examples of asymmetry. Even the oldest written works on warfare refers to the principles of targeting vulnerabilities and of doing the radically different. Chinese strategist-philosopher Sun Tzu penned this concept in his master piece *The Art of War*, written in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, “An army may be compared to water, for water in its natural flowing avoids the heights and hastens downwards. So in a war, an army should avoid strength and strike at weaknesses that the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe with whom he is fighting.” Much later in 1513 the military thinker Niccolo Machiavelli agreed, “Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times”.

Asymmetric warfare is as old as warfare itself and as recent as the last terrorist attack. History provides up several examples of what are perceived to be asymmetric encounters where the weaker protagonist has used unusual methods which are often based on what were new technologies at the time to challenge the stronger.

In the present context, acts of international terrorism have brought the term to the attention of a larger audience. When considering the present insurgencies occurring all around the world in great intensity and irrespective of the region, asymmetric warfare poses a huge threat on world peace. The effects imposed by small weak players - the asymmetric adversaries - could be felt both by military actors on battle fields and by civilians in their own home lands. Records on terrorist attacks in the recent past have clearly shown that targeting the vulnerabilities of the stronger opponent has become a very popular war tactic around the globe today. This was prominently seen in the sectarian war which lasted for 30 years in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore revolution in the military affairs also has termed conventional warfare as outmoded concept. Asymmetric warfare develops in many forms and shapes such as terrorism, cyber - attacks, insurgencies and fundamentalism. So responding to this

## RESTRICTED

new trend, many developed countries like United States and United Kingdom have already altered their army training curriculums.

At present Sri Lanka is considered as one of the most peaceful countries in the region. After the victorious breaking off of the humanitarian operation against Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), one of the fiercest terrorist groups in the world, people in this country enjoy the long awaited sensation of prosperity and secureness at its best.

However, this calm and quiet condition prevailing in the country does not guarantee that Sri Lankans are well protected from the terrorist activities which may sparkle out from over enthusiastic Tamil diaspora operating from overseas. Additionally, the strategic position of the country and its socio economic structure also may form a background which will nourish the disastrous activities of various extremist groups operating all over the world. Thus, it is part and pares to review the potential threats that may hinder the national security at any moment and to evaluate the national security strategy accordingly.

It is inevitable to talk about the preparedness to face future asymmetric threats without considering the condition of the training courses of elite troops since the tasks performed by such Special Forces plays a pivotal role in any war. The Commando Regiment of Sri Lanka Army serves as one of the most elite force which has profound fame over its bravery.

Structure of this research was carefully planned and performed in such a way to address all these concerns. The study heavily depends upon available literature since the study and the practical application of the subject in Sri Lanka at present is minimum. However, the opinions of the officers who had experiences in the battle field and those who have sound knowledge on the content of foreign courses were also taken into consideration when producing the final recommendations at the end of the study.

The data upon which the final outcomes rely on was collected through three main sources; namely questionnaire, interviews and literature. The general opinions on the

**RESTRICTED**

existing course curriculum were tested through the questionnaire and at the same time their opinions on new additions to the curriculum were also measured. The opinions of the sample were quantified by assigning values to the answers selected by each individual and the recommendations proposed by the test population were finally determined on the marks earned by each recommendation.

Findings of the survey were also coupled with the recommendations produced by the careful reference of the available literature and the opinions given by the senior officers during the interviews. However, the findings of this comprehensive study open up the stage for a further discussion on the feasibility of these modifications.