Civil Military Interdependency to Counter Terrorism: A Case Study of Sri Lanka

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Abstract— Terrorism has become a major threat to many countries worldwide and has made it difficult to maintain world peace whereas some countries find it difficult to manage due to the destructive terrorist activities of various terrorist groups with innovation. Terrorism is an issue that Sri Lankan military and the communities consider as a security threat. Since Easter Attacks, Sri Lankan military and law enforcement authorities have been increasingly tasked with preventing, responding to, and investigating extremist movements and terrorist organizations. The aim of this article is to examine the importance of building relationship between military and local communities, creating an information highway in order to counter terrorism. Data collected from secondary sources and existing literature confirmed the findings of the article on this topic. The findings explain the importance of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and how to utilize a maximum output to the intelligence services from the local communities by developing a civil military interdependency. In order to build that, building trust is a major component. This also focuses on strengthening information sharing through better relationships. This demands that Military and law enforcement agencies to establish a system of public participation in the countering terrorism measures by working closely with their communities. The conclusion of the article demonstrates suggestions to build better relationship among the military and civil society which namely are initiating the concept of civil joint task force and inculcating community building and education. Some broader implications were also extracted for the Sri Lanka Military from a realistic point of view.

Keywords— terrorism, law enforcement, intelligence, civil military cooperation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, nations across the world have engaged in some kind of war with other nations or terrorist groups due to different reasons. According to Tzu (2005), terrorism has become a greater threat to world peace and some countries find it difficult to manage due to the destructive actions of these terrorist groups. And the worst part is that these terrorist activities are taken place in society interrupting general human routines and takes strenuous operations in tracing them. In the contemporary world, a lot of technology is used by the military to trace such activities but the greater challenge is that the terrorists are hidden from the eyes of the security forces (Collins, 2007). Either they live in the society among civilians or deep forests in which even satellites are being unable to keep a track of such activity.

According to Richard (2011), the 9/11 attack was a dreadful incident of which happened due to an intelligence failure that took terrorism to a whole new level. Everyone, including the military intelligence sector around the world, was shaken by the dexterity of preparation and the precision of its execution, the death count and more. The United States which is known to be equipped with the best military and intelligence services failed to make their information into intelligence and one of the most valuable lessons learned was that their enemies also had changed their existence to be able to disclose their secrets. What we can learn from this is that terrorists participate in warfare of asymmetry, forming capacities toward human weakness and poor security. They engage in intense tactical investigations through a huge quantity of information available to them. To overcome this, it is very important to build trust and a positive relationship with the community, the people. The most effective way of fighting against terrorism is the Isolation Theory (Collins, 2007). This refers to the process of isolating the terrorist from the general public. In order to do that, the military must make sure that the public is on their side. This is where the trust component and the civil-military interdependency should come into the limelight.

II. INTELLIGENCE AND HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is one of the most important factors in statecraft. In the military aspect, Intelligence is a crucial component in defeating terrorism. How does Intelligence help to defeat terrorism? Intelligence is an exclusive thing with a dark world with secrecy (Turner, 2005). According to Jackson (2014), it is the first step in preventing terrorist activities and more importantly, it is the process of obtaining information about the terrorist and their operations. Intelligence isn't something that is only limited within the borders of a country, but also outside the borders due to changing environment of global terrorism at a transnational level. Intelligence is all about identifying the possible trend, challenge or threat with conclusions by processing and analyzing information. According to Warner (2002), intelligence refers to a secret state activity to understand foreign entities and influence them. He also identified intelligence as key policy information, gathered by accessible and covert means and evaluated for educational purposes, informing or assisting policymakers in the formulation and implementation of national security and foreign policy. His definition of intelligence as "every sort of information about the enemy and his country – the basis in short of our plans and operations"

International organizations may be linked to other states that could not clarify non-state actors that are threats to national security; this conception often falls on the same dialectical deficiency (Gill and Phythian, 2006). A variety of sub-state actors, corporations, non-commercial, criminals, and terrorist groups often feel the need to gather and evaluate intelligence to defend against the theft of secrets. In intelligence, several intelligence disciplines are used by the military to acquire information. These disciplines are broadly categorized into human intelligence (HUMINT), open-source intelligence (OSINT), and technical intelligence (TECINT). Lohman (1989) insists that out of the above human intelligence is the most important and the most valuable intelligence function. It is very accurate and timely. Human intelligence is received through interpersonal contracts built on trust. Most nations, and many private organizations, have HUMINT capabilities that they use to collect data on their adversaries and competitors.

HUMINT plays an integral, if not an indispensable role within the intelligence and national security arenas. Whether it is against traditional nation-state adversaries or newer and more pronounced threats, such as terrorist or insurgency networks, or the more esoteric, like cybersecurity, the human factor remains a dominant force (Thompson, 2016). Intelligence should come from the human being. To do that, the military needs to create an environment including the civilians. Therefore, before creating an information highway, trust must be built between the military and the civilians. This strategy is known as interdependency.

III. INFORMATION SHARING AND CIVIL-MILITARY INTERDEPENDENCY

Many countries around the world are facing terrorism threats which some governments have been able to manage diplomatically, but some have failed. Field (2009) stated that many intelligence failures have occurred due to the lack of intelligence sharing among the military and the community throughout history. Information sharing is very important as it is the first step to prevent a terrorist attack (Travers, 2021). Shared information can improve the quality of investigations as there could be vital information or a missing piece. A single piece of information that comes from the community could be the key to an investigation. Day-to-day activities that happen in society may have a connection to a terrorist network. Dealing with currency, smuggling, money laundering, drug trafficking may have direct connections with terrorism as they may be funding sources for terrorist activities. Travers (2021) stated that throughout history, there had been many failures happen due inability of connecting these dots with different pieces of information gathered from the community. Many civilians have very valuable information, but without a good trusted relationship and proper system or a position in the body to coordinate, sharing of information is very limited. Getting the support of the community into the intelligence process is not simple. It takes a lot of commitment and a lot of faith needs to be developed among the military and the community. The ultimate objective is to prevent terrorism using valuable information and to safeguard national interests at large.

Civilians are suffering the consequences of armed conflicts increasingly. They also find themselves close to aggression, attacks, and security, requiring the military to be increasingly involved in situations of conflict (Tzu, 2005). When there is a conflict or lack of security, people of the community live in fear and anxiety. When military operations take place, it is very important to build a positive relationship with the

community with which they live. The discipline which the military should maintain and the way they mingle with society is very important to develop a positive relationship. In some cases, there had been incidents around the world where activities of the military obstruct the day-to-day life of civil society. Connell (2012) states that "When civilians see soldiers with red collars, they fear. When the civilians fear the military they will not be transparent and will not share information. Locals are hesitant to deal with military personal if such encounters happen and many of them will withhold their valuable information of terrorism activities or might help the enemy to get rid of the military. However, the confidence and the trust between the local community and the military is very important to increase security effectivenessas the main duty of the military is to protect the civilians. The military has to understand the importance of such mutual trust and implement strategies to create civil-military interdependency.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING TRUST

The trust component plays a vital role when it comes to building effective relationships. The role played by the trust is the most important aspect in whatever the engagement activity and it cannot be underestimated. Trust is the key to a strong, consistent relationship which makes a strong pillar in every organization (Connell, 2012). Whether it is a private or public organization, military or non-military, building trust among the stakeholders is the key to success. However, the challenge is that we are in a world in which trust is declining at every level in society irrespective of the country. Due to these trust issues military is facing a lot of challenges to engage with the communities to make effective discussion and get the required support in defeating terrorism. The military should always see the possibility of building trust among the public mindset and making use of it to the maximum of national interest.

According to Tzu (2005), trust is very important when using human intelligence. There are several reasons for deteriorating trust, and effective management processes should be implemented to address the issues. These problems include;

- Lack of emotional intelligence of military

- Limited involvement or understanding of the processes and expectations of engagement of local community

- The growing gap between the military and people, due to complex governance processes and practices.

In literature, they have identified many ways of building trust. Effective communication is a vital factor in building trust. If communication is done effectively, more people and communities understand the process, priorities, and expected results of the military. The community will know the formal dedication done by the military to ensure the security of the society and its people. Respect also plays a significant role in building trust. Although this sounds obvious, it is absolutely important that the tone, material, and facilitation of military interaction activities fully appreciate the feedback of all participants, even if it is challenging at times. Next will be the transparency of military processes. The military should be transparent and well-understood in their entire participation activities within the local community. Free of personal, political, or informative and truthful about the role and effect people would have in the decision-making or implementation of solutions. In this regard, many community involvement programs have failed. Successful commitment and confidence enable all parties involved to function as best as possible from a shared understanding of the issue. If the community believes that knowledge is exchanged only with certain stakeholders or that all the views on a topic are not taken into account, it is highly doubtful that the military will build confidence in a successful or lasting interaction. Closely related to respect, people will show greater faith and confidence in the engagement efforts that account for their perspectives, view their contributions and employ their skills in a manner that they feel is consistent with their involvement.

V. SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE

Nearly three decades of brutal terrorism which crippled Sri Lanka's economy and social structure ended in the year 2009 giving the people of Sri Lanka a ray of hope and opportunity to embrace peace and pursue prosperity. In 2019, a decade of peace was shattered by the Easter Sunday attack on churches and luxury hotels by a small terrorist group linked to ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). In order to counter those challenges and threats, a strong National Security policy was deemed a prerequisite. For Sri Lanka to be secure, the policy should focus on all levels of the National Security Complex and sectors giving special emphasis to the ethnic group level. History has shown that the tensions are at that level due to fear of

extinction and survival by ethnic groups in Sri Lanka which should be erased through a solid policy (Perera, 2020).

Due to unsettled Islamist extremism issues during the recent past, some radical Muslims have been encouraged to form groups like NTJ (National Tawheed Jamath) & JMI (Jamaathei Millath Ibrahim) resort to violence by marginalizing Muslim moderates. Finally, this group carried out the Easter Sunday attack on 21st April 2019. Before the Easter Sunday attack, the traditional Muslim community was able to provide reasonable information regarding this extremist group and its development. Months before the bombings, Mohamed Razik Mohamed Taslim, a Muslim social worker from Mawanella, had been at the forefront of efforts to investigate the extremists. Taslim's story depicts both how the country's traditional Muslim community actively tried to stop the emerging radical elements within their own community, and how the authorities failed to recognize repeated warning signs ahead of the Easter Sunday attacks (BBC, 2019). His information and coordination with Criminal Investigation Department led to the raid in Wanathavilluwa, Puttalam where a large number of explosives and chemicals were found. Moreover, a Muslim religious leader, Mufthi Mohammed Rizwi who testified before the select committee looking into the Easter Sunday attacks said he had warned the defense authorities on the National Thawheed Jama'ath in November 2012 (Daily Mirror, 2019). Therefore the information from this community is very important to combat extremism by obtaining information about extremists behaviour within their community.

VI.   RECOMMENDATIONS

A.   Civil Joint Task Force

The concept of the Civil Joint Task Force (CJTF) is the main suggestion we would like to make for the Sri Lankan military to get the community involved in achieving the National Security Strategy of Sri Lanka. CJTF is a well-structured entity consists of civilians from the local community that operates in an organized manner with more authority. The CJTF should be created and strengthened to reposition the agenda for state intelligence. We suggest that every village or administrative region must have an intelligence unit to be coordinated by the military. This will provide reliable intelligence and early warnings against terrorist threats, if well-arranged and organized.

During the 30 years of ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan military received that support from the local communities and their contributions to the successes of the military were remarkable. However, with the emergence of religious extremism, the strategy of forming the CJTF has to be revamped and new strategies have to be put in place. The nature of modern terrorism has taken the fields of combat too close and its asymmetrical nature makes predictability difficult, if not impossible.

Members of the CJTF can provide reliable intelligence as representatives on the supporters or terrorist activists, providing information about particular individuals or groups, suspicious activities, changes in the religious ideology, potential attacks,which makes it easier for the military to analyze from the root level to conduct proactive operations.Another advantage of initiating this is that these members are locals who know the culture of the areain which they live in and they are fully aware of the evolution of fundamentalism, radicalization, and extremism which leads to terrorism. This initiative brings intelligence to the local community from the high levels of governmental circles. Also, the state must strengthen this and expand their intelligence to the top to the bottom level if early signs of terrorist threats can be detected and avoided. The higher intelligence officials will have to focus on external threats, detect and respond them while maintaining firm intelligence efforts within the state and society at the same time.

Moreover, the value of information received from the local community in countering terrorism also serves as an identification of the potential reasons the individuals are enrolling for acts of terrorism. Reflecting on such themes could lead to the discovery that we wouldn't be able to explain terrorism until one can completely empathize with the pain and the frustration that cause it (Stern, 2003). Gaining a better understanding of these facts could lead to appropriate actions towards fighting terrorism. CJTF will have the capacity to provide the military with valuable information that will help them to prevent terrorism at the base level itself. Hence this can become the human intelligence scheme applied in fighting terrorism ensuring the security of the community as well as the state.

The Civil joined Task Force is responsible for gathering information related to any existing or perceived threats and act as a Terrorism Early Warning (TEW) group, those who receive information from the local communities. This team may include

religious leaders, retired military officers, intellectuals, and representatives from youth and social welfare organizations within the community. These groups engage with social activities and this enables CJTF to identify the changes happening within the society. It enables the military to obtain early warning on any potential threat. CJTF which consists of different sectors in the community can contribute in different ways to achieve the national security objectives. The information should be evaluated within this group before disseminating it to the authorities. Proper training and awareness programs such as terrorism awareness and first responder training should be provided to CJTF frequently by the military. Furthermore to terrorist threats, this group should involve in finding other threats such as drugs and other criminal activities within their areas. Social and economic problems also need to be addressed, because these are factors that motivate vulnerable individuals to engage in criminal activities. CJTF should be able to identify the preconditions of terrorism in areas in which they live and monitor radical political, religious, and racial activities. CJTF should have proper coordination and integration with the military. Collected and disseminated information should be properly stored in a secured database.

Recruitment of this CJTF should be conducted under the direct supervision of the military with coordination of the area law enforcement agencies. Proper recruitment and selection need to be taken place to ensure the effectiveness of operations. Moreover, the loyalty of members of CJTF is very important as the security of the information has to be ensured and information to be shared in real-time. However, it is the responsibility of the military and intelligence community to verify the information received by the CJTF. Processing and analyzing the information and the dissemination have to be done effectively for maximum utilization of the information received from CJTF. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the military to provide feedback to the CJTF which they receive from the security authorities from a higher level.

B. Community Building and Education

One of the key things that the Sri Lankan military should do is to establish relations with the local communities in which they operate. Sometimes there is a broad divide between civilians and the military to protect their rights. However, the military can bridge the differences through volunteerism and community relations. Military getting involved in community work is very important and education is one main aspect which military can get involved in. Through these practices, the military will show the nation in many ways' parallels and common values.

For an example officers or soldiers can volunteer at schools and help students with their education. In addition, soldiers can be mentors to the students of the community who helps out the community to build up their personal and professional development. There is sportsmanship build in every military personnel. Hence, soldiers can serve as coaches for sports for school teams and youth groups. Developing sports or sportsmanship which improves the relationship with the youth will be very useful in keeping them attached to the military. Also by doing sports they help children and youth to stay healthy and active. Moreover, soldiers also get a chance to improve their skills by being mentors and role models. They also help teach teamwork, resiliency, leadership, discipline, respect, confidence, and sportsmanship

In our opinion, the additional hours military put in their community work keeps the bond between the society and the military which eventually improves the security. Even though none of these results can be physically influenced, individuals and society certainly experience them. The social links between military and civil society will lead to a more stable, friendly, and confident relationship between both parties. These activities open up the world to military and communities who may not otherwise come in contact with people who are different – ethnically, religiously and politically. The strong relationships developed by volunteerism and community engagement allow us to see beyond the common ground differences and demonstrate that differentiation is not inherently evil.

VII.   CONCLUSION

No doubts are admitting that the information obtained from civil society or human intelligence is more essential than was necessary to introduce policies to deal with the most important part of countering terrorism. The main role of intelligence is to assist the leadership of the state in statecraft and human intelligence plays a vital role in it. However, controlling the quality of the intelligence received by the community is a very challenging task and trickier than the other means of collecting information. So, military must be very careful when processing human information into intelligence as outcomes are not determined in mathematical precisions. Tzu states that "just water which carries a boat from bank to

bank may also be the means of sinking it, so reliance on human intelligence, whilst production of great results is often timing the cause of the utter disaster."

Trust is very important when using human intelligence, according to Walker (2012), within the same community, there may be people who were former terrorists who have been deposed or degraded or undergone punishment and expecting to have vengeance. Human intelligence must take the lead in the battle against terrorism, with help from electronic collections and an open-source infrastructure. Terrorists are not states, they are non-state actors. They protect themselves by mixing their activities into normal social life, and they are ready to risk their lives for whatever belief they have.

In National Security, the information you receive from the locals is very crucial for intelligence. Moreover, Tzu (2005) states that "knowledge of the spirit–world is to be obtained by divination; information in the natural science may be sought by inductive reasoning; the laws of the universe can be verified by mathematical calculation: but the dispositions of the enemy are ascertainable through spies and spies alone". In the heart of the enemy country, the intelligence community must win people over through kinder treatment to fill the demand for information by the local community.

However, the collection of information is yet another small step in the process. In the contemporary world, there is a lot of information and this information has to be converted into intelligence where the bigger picture can be seen. However, this valuable information or processed intelligence itself is not enough, possible action should be taken on time to prevent an incident which means it must lead to action. Lack of Cooperation can be seen as one major reason for information not being shared. Cooperation among local communities is of utmost importance when promoting counterterrorism.

Educational Institutes like General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) has an important role in developing the civil-military relations in Sri Lanka. The military and the civilians receive the opportunity to interact, get connected and produce knowledge and research through such education channels. KDU creates a tendency in both the civil and military mindset that they could trust and work together in achieving the national security objectives of Sri Lanka. This could also be expanded by introducing domestic preparedness programs, terrorism awareness and first responders training

programs to educate the civilians in understanding the basics on threats and how to act against.

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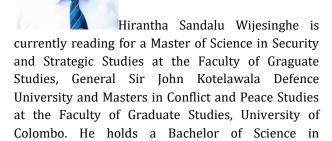
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