

FIGHTING AGAINST TERRORISTS: AN ANALYSIS ON CHINESE AND SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCES

Pahani Wandana Attanayake & P.R. Dismini Premachandra

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Abstract

Sri Lanka fought a war against domestic terrorism for three decades and defeated it physically. However, Sri Lanka had to face a lot of allegations by the western media during the post terrorist conflict period. Majority of the allegations were hyped due to the strategic media usage of anti-Sri Lankan elements working day and night from abroad to tarnish the image of Sri Lanka. There is a western media hype against the Chinese government as well. The Chinese authorities label the crackdown on dissent on the Muslim minority in western Xinjiang as "war on terror." Meanwhile, the Western media institutions in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and France, United States and human rights organizations are labelling Chinese reaction to terrorist as "genocide." Among the allegations against the Chinese government are the mass trial and imprisonment of more than a million Uighurs and other Muslim minority groups in "re-education camps" without a proper trial. In addition, torture, long imprisonment, sentences or the death penalty after serious unjust trials, measures to prevent the birth of women and the forcible transfer of Uighur children from their community are also included in the list of allegations against Chinese. This article will draw parallels of the Chinese situation with Sri Lankan situation by using various reports published by media institutions in the West.

Keywords: *Uighurs, Extremism, Islamophobia*

CHINA'S WAR ON TERROR

Xinjiang is the largest autonomous region within China, which officially became a part of communal China in 1994. Xinjiang lies on the north-western corner of the country and borders eight countries, including Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The Westerners also refers to it as Chinese Turkistan, as it is mostly inhabited by people with a culturally Muslim identity. Xinjiang is home to more than 40 different ethnic groups, including Uyghurs, Han Chinese, Hui, Mongolians, Khalkha, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Manchu and Sibos, Tajiks, Tatars, Russians, and Tahurs, etc. Of these, the largest Muslim group in China are the Uighurs and the Hui. In addition, Kazakhs and Tajiks also follow Islam. The Uighurs are Sunni Muslims who speak their own

Turkic language. However, the Uighurs living in the area received less government attention. Although the Hui Muslim community is recognized as a Muslim community with a Chinese culture, the Chinese government is tempted to portray the Uighurs as a foreign and minority community. Therefore, Uighurs faced economic marginalization and political discrimination. As a result, a series of protests were erupted by the Eastern Turkish Islamist Party (ETIP) against the Chinese government in 1990. Then, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, separatist groups rose to prominence. The controversy escalated in 2001 when the United States was hit hard by Islamic terrorists (9/11 attacks). China's suspicion of the Uighurs grew, and Islamophobia spread around the world. China has long been a source of social and political disunity, and the Uighurs' actions have been cited as a threat to local stability. The Uyghurs are branded as radical Islamists and are seen as a threat to national sovereignty. Meanwhile, the Chinese government had witnessed an extremist flow of large Uyghur nationalist movements linked to international radical Islamic movements. According to a Chinese report released in 2002, the Uighurs had carried out more than 200 terrorist acts between 1990 and 2001, including bombings, incarceration and abductions (Zambelis, 2010). China blamed the ETIM (East Turkistan Islamic Movement) group for all these abuses. Many believe it is a group of Uighurs who fled to Afghanistan from Xinjiang during the 1990 riots. In 2003, the Pakistani military raided the hideout of a Muslim man named Hasan Mahsum, who was suspected of being the leader of the ETIM group (Zambelis, 2010). After the assassination of Hasan Mahsum, the group was thought to be non-existent, but in 2008 the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) threatened the Chinese government. This was due to China's continued persecution and political dissent of the Uighurs. China stated that this TIP group is affiliated with the aforementioned ETIP group. The group released a video online claiming that they were responsible for the series of bomb attacks in Xinjiang, Yunnan and Shanghai (Zambelis, 2010). In addition, there were warnings that the 2008 Olympics to be held in Beijing, could be disrupted. TIP had stated that, "Our aim is to target the most critical cities severely using the tactics that have never been employed" and it further angered the Chinese government (Anon., 2014).

Xinjiang has long been an independent Muslim state in central Asia, and with the increasing migration of Han Chinese to the area, that independence diminished, with the Han taking the lead. In July 2009, ethnic riots erupted between Han Chinese and Uighurs, unsettling the Urumqi (capital of Xinjiang). During this time, the Uighurs damaged Chinese government offices, railway stations, and open-air market, killing at least 200 people (Maizland, 2021). This was mainly due to a confrontation between Uyghur migrant worker and Han Chinese at a toy factory in Guangdong province, which caused the death of two people (Zambelis, 2010). With the intervention of the government in this issue, the Uyghurs launched protests. In 2013, Xi Jinping began to build a land route (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) under the Belt and Road Initiative project, which initially fell through the Kashgar in Xinjiang and connect to the Indian Ocean via Gwadar port. However, these major projects brought large-scale developments to Xinjiang, attracting many young, technically qualified Han Chinese from eastern province. The Chinese government was also anxious to get more and more Han Chinese to settle in Xinjiang. Therefore, they started a campaign called "Go West" (Zambelis, 2010, 4).

There was bloodshed in April 2013 and in June same year, what state media described as a mob armed with knives attacking local government buildings (Anon, 2014). Moreover, in 2014, a number of similar incidents were reported. In May, two cars crashed through an Urumqi market and explosives were tossed into the crowd. Also, in April, bomb and knife attack occurred in south railway of Urumqi. During that incident 3 people were killed and 79 got injured. Furthermore, In July, authorities said a mob had attacked a police station and government offices in Jharkhand, killing at least 96 people. Terrorist activities did not stop, and another bomb blast was reported in September in the Luntai area. According to the report, about 50 died in explosions police stations, a market and a shop in Luntai province in central Xinjiang (Anon., 2014).

China had raised suspicion that Uighurs have been linked to the Taliban and Al Qaeda in many parts of the world and China's suspicions turned out to be true when Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the 2009 riots (Zambelis, 2010). Also, Al Qaeda spoke on behalf of Uighurs, but it was not until 2009 that their attention

was drawn to Xinjiang. At that time, The United States had been cracking down on extremist terrorist groups based in the Islamic state concept since 2001. The government, weary of the continuing terrorist attacks, started to follow the same process and launched a counter-terrorism program. As a result, re-education camps were started under the Uyghur Rehabilitation Program in Xinjiang.

SRI LANKA'S WAR ON TERRORISM

Sri Lanka is officially known as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. It is an island lying in the Indian Ocean. The population of Sri Lanka is made up of different nationalities. Ethnicity is high to some extent and the majority of the population is Sinhalese. Among other ethnic minorities, Muslims, Christians and Burghers, the Sri Lankan Tamils are the largest minority group in the population. However, there was a perception that the Tamil people were facing difficulties under the Sri Lankan government. Thus, the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) insurgent group was formed under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran with the idea that the Tamil people should have equal rights and Tamil Eelam (a separate state for Tamils) (Anandakugan, 2020). LTTE began campaigning for a Tamil homeland in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, which is predominantly Tamil. Initially, this was supported by a host of groups. The war between the LTTE and Sri Lankan state began (in July 1983) after triggering riots and the killing of thirteen government soldiers by LTTE (Bajoria, 2009). In addition, they carried out terrorist acts, including suicide bombings and abductions of political leaders. FBI labelled LTTE a terrorist group after launching these terrorist tactics (Anandakugan, 2020). Although the Sri Lankan government initially pursued a policy of disrupting peace talks, the LTTE's violence was unavoidable. They also attacked peacekeepers sent from India (Bajoria, 2009) and were responsible for the assassinations of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Ranasinghe Premadasa, former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and any other political figures (Reuters, 2007). The LTTE was known to the world as an innovative, dangerous insurgency force and alternatively as 'guerrilla fighters' (Fernando & Amarajeewa, 2020). They increase the manpower by forcibly recruiting kids and young people (Bajoria, 2009). Moreover, they were receiving financial supports internationally. Thus,

the LTTE was able to operate across the country. The security situation deteriorated further due to high suicide attacks on the foreign minister, defence secretary, Pakistani high commissioner and army chiefs (Anandakugan, 2020). In response, the Sri Lankan Army carried out counter terrorism campaigns against LTTE (Mashal, 2019). However, this War lasted three decades and ended in May 2009 killing LTTE's mastermind Velupillai Prabhakaran. A number of countries in the world have proscribed the LTTE as a terrorist organization especially following the 9/11 attacks in 2001 during which a global pledge was made to rid the world of terrorism. Furthermore, the Council of European Union pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1373/2001 formulated the European Union Terrorist List proscribing the LTTE as a terrorist organization up to date (Fernando & Amarajeewa, 2020). Although the LTTE were militarily annihilated, their ideology is promulgated in other ways through an extensive international diaspora and especially warfare in the cyber domain.

LTTE: PRESENT THREATS

The LTTE political wing had been active even though the war ended in 2009. Also, Sri Lankan government has been weak in countering the legitimacy of the LTTE claim of the Eelam, 'Tamil Homeland' in the cyberspace. The LTTE cyber strategy is to conduct "cyber-attacks", use cyberspace for amassing funds, and support ideological propaganda (Fernando & Amarajeewa, 2020). The LTTE has attempted to deface and hack the government of Sri Lanka's websites several times. Moreover, according to cyber security analysts, the virtual Eelam that had been created by the post-war new generation of Tamils in exile are formulating new narratives of Ceylonese history portraying a government in exile; a different approach to reclaiming Eelam. They basically use social media networks to brainwash young people. Therefore, Sri Lankan government need much more efforts to resist LTTE-driven ideology and virtual Eelam narratives that have proliferated over the internet and social media.

The global Tamil community is one of the largest Diasporas in the world, which gather in advocacy on Tamil issues. Tamil Diaspora organizations are making requests to the High Commissioner's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to gather evidence on human rights violations and related crimes in Sri

Lanka. Furthermore, they have suggested investigating violations under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, including the deliberate destruction of Tamil cultural heritage during the period 1977-79, when torture and disappearances began (Anon., 2021). In addition, they are pressuring other countries not to support Sri Lanka in this case. Because of this, even though the India is the most neighbouring country to Sri Lanka, they abstained from voting on the (UNHRC) resolution on Sri Lanka due to threats from the Tamil Diaspora that the turnout in Tamil Nadu could be reduced. Besides, there are invisible hands of the Tamil Diaspora behind the British government's provocation over the Sri Lankan issues.

WESTERN MEDIA HYPE: ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE ACTIONS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS

Transforming Xinjiang into a surveillance state: According to media reports, Xinjiang is governed by a grid management system. Towns and villages are split into squares of about 500 people, each of which has one allocated police station. The people living in these villages are monitored using the latest technologies. There is a large-scale collection of data on citizens of Xinjiang, also known as 'Integrated Joint Operation Platform' (IJOP). These databases use closed-circuit cameras, face recognition cameras, fingerprint and spywares to monitor information on mobile phones, as well as Wi-Fi-sniffers (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). In addition, they use warrantless manual researches such as 'physicals for all' to collect biometric data. Also, special apps like 'Zapya app' (Maizland, 2021). With the help of this information collection, suspects are found and a list of criminals is compiled with the help of artificial intelligence. Later, the suspects are arrested and sent to the above-mentioned re-education camps for rehabilitation. Many observers refer to this as a 'new model of policing'. Mulvenon, who has been doing in-depth research on these issues in Xinjiang, said: "The Chinese believe that artificial intelligence and machine learning can actually predict crime by collecting large amounts of data. Also, they think that, these will be able to anticipate possible events as well as identify populations that are prone to anti-government actions" (Mulvenon, as cited in Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). It mainly uses technologies such as machine learning,

artificial intelligence, and command and control platform. This is an incident that has taken technology to a whole new level, which is different from the methods used in other countries. It is like an 'cybernetic brain'. But media reports have accused that, the Uyghurs living in Xinjiang are facing the dark side of it. Human rights are being violated through this system. Also, they point out that, this system is very detrimental to the privacy of the people in the society and thus has a severe psychological impact.

Much of the allegations about re- education camps came to forefront based on the report called "Telegram", which was leaked by a media team (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). The report, published in 2019 and includes a series of instructions issued by the Chinese government to the relevant authorities on how to manage the Vocational Training Centers. According to the media report, the people who are admitted to these camps are classified based on the offenses they have committed. After that, there they are rehabilitated and given vocational training under strict security. Detainees are required to spend time away from their belongings, and even the use of a mobile phone is prohibited. Another newly leaked 'Qaraqash Document' revealed the reasons for detention for more than 300 individuals. Its causes include growing a beard, wearing a veil, and violating the one-child law in China (Chavkin, 2020). Thus, western media have declared that people have been imprisoned for even the most minor offenses. In addition to these, torture, the penalty of death, force Uighur women into sterilizations, forced to have birth control pills, family planning lectures and the forcible transfer of Uighur children from their communities to state-run child welfare agencies are included in the allegations against China.

However, the Chinese government says that their process is completely different from the way the Western media portrays it. The Chinese authorities further say that there is also misinterpretation of the steps taken to promote public health in their country. Meantime, China has insisted that some of the media outlets that carry out such false propaganda are not independent but Western-affiliated (Anon., 2021). Mainly, detainees are taught China's national language (Mandarin), law and skills. Students trained in this way are referred to a professional skills development class for 3 or 6 months to further develop their skills (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). The Chinese government has stated that it will

provide vocational training to detainees under a 'poverty alleviation' policy. Therefore, a program is being implemented to direct students who complete vocational training to factories as professionals. In addition, the government has also launched a follow-up program to find out more about the people employed in the profession (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019). In the struggle to fight against terrorism and maintain stability, it is a strategic, critical and long-term measure to focus on free vocational skills education and training for key personnel. However, the government says these actions have reduced Xinjiang's pre-existed extremist activities. It is aimed at perspectives of both combating terrorism and reducing poverty.

Meanwhile, western media accusing the Sri Lankan military of killing thousands of Tamil civilians in the final stages of the war. In addition, extra judicial killings, torture, rape LTTE detainees during investigations, abductions and arbitrary detention are some of the allegations against Sri Lankan Government (Channel 4, 2014). Channel 4 News first aired videos of the final stages of the war. Video footages were released of activities allegedly carried out by Sri Lankan Army battalions. Based on the videos, it has been concluded that terrorist women may have been sexually abused. Their articles further state that, a senior Sri Lankan army commander and frontline soldier stated that orders were issued from above to carry out such operations (Millar, 2010). The allegations cannot be accepted as there is no revelation from the soldiers who claim to have made those statements. The Sri Lankan High Commission told Channel 4 News that it "strongly denies" the authenticity of the video, saying "it was part of an unprovoked and unconfirmed scandal and propaganda retaliation" (Channel 4, 2014). It is now almost 12 years since the end of the war. So far, all these are just allegations made by the Western media. None of that has yet been proven to be true.

Furthermore, the Western media allege that the war was sparked by disputes between the Sinhala and Tamil communities. They also say that the origin of these matters goes back to the past. One of the western media websites have argued that after becoming independent from British throne, many Sinhalese moved to higher echelons of government (Anandakugan, 2020). The Sinhalese came to power and gradually adopted measures to expel Sri Lankan Tamils, and

one such action was the 1956 'Sinhala-only law' (Anandakugan, 2020). They have said that, it made Sinhala the only official language in Sri Lanka and barred the Tamil people from trying to get government services or getting government jobs. Furthermore, the report alleges that standardization aimed at providing more educational opportunities to Sinhala students emerged in Sri Lanka and that there was a Sinhala-dominated government in Sri Lanka. Many complain that such conditions still exist in Sri Lanka and that injustice is still being done to the Tamil minority. Since the majority of Sri Lankans are Sinhalese, the official language has become Sinhala. Tamils also live-in large numbers in countries such as Canada. But there they have to use English language. In the present context, Tamil language has been named as the second national language of Sri Lanka and Tamil literacy is considered as an essential factor in the recruitment of Sinhalese people to the public service. The Western media is keen to brand this war as an ethnic war between Sinhalese and Tamils. Sinhalese people were not the only ones killed in the terrorist bombings. The terrorists also killed Tamil political leaders. In addition, it is no secret that the LTTE terrorist group used Tamil civilians as a shield during the war. Clearly, this is not a Sinhala-Tamil conflict; it is simply an attempt to suppress a selfish terrorist group that has risen up against the Sri Lankan government.

MEDIA: THE TROJAN HORSE

In both cases, the western media seems to have acted like a Trojan horse. A trojan horse is someone or something intended to defeat or subvert from within usually by deceptive means (Anon., 2021). The western media establishment are the most powerful in creating narratives. These media establishments have good reasons to work against states that are not inclining to their interest. In such circumstances the Western media in a robust campaign of creating pessimistic narratives against independent states. Since China is a communist country with a dictatorship, the democratic West is often resentful of China. Also, Sri Lanka is a country with a special location in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, many powerful western countries are turning their eyes to Sri Lanka. However, Sri Lanka is more diplomatically annexed by China than the West. Due to the displeasure of the west on all these matters they are utilizing soft power against China and Sri

Lanka. It is perhaps somewhat surprising whether the West still lives in the Cold War mentality. Western media was in a rush to present articles citing research done by anti-Chinese. They spread narrative without any reality checks. But western media stay silent and turned a blind eye when China published documentaries on the struggle against terrorism in Xinjiang. Let's dive deeper into how the role of the Western media has indirectly affected the national outlook of Sri Lanka and China?

Sri Lanka is one of the fascinator's destinations in the map of the tourist of the world. In the aftermath of terrorist war, Sri Lanka became concerned about certain atrocities in the tourism industry. The Western media has accused the Sri Lankan armed forces of violating human rights, judicial and external killings, torture, sexual harassment, abductions, and arbitrary detention. However, later western media concerned that Sri Lankan armed forces are deeply embedded in the tourism industry, and they intimidate potential tourists to refrain from traveling in Sri Lanka (Anon., 2018).

Sri Lankan tourism has received international recognition as a premier tourist destination though the western media has been accusing that Sri Lankan tourism itself appears to have been a major component of the government's attempt to white-wash the past and to project an image of itself as an island 'at peace' following a triumphal victory over terrorism. They have compiled a list of tourism ventures that tourists should consider avoiding (Anon., 2018). Including ventures that are owned by, or have financial links to, the Sri Lankan military or other individuals believed to be complicit in grave human rights violations. Further they highlight that, Sri Lankan tourism risks the money spending in travelling the country and that money helps the lines of the pockets of war criminals and human right abusers. They have encouraged ethical travellers to ensure they are not supported, and to deny the military the financial resources with which they have been able to maintain a tight grip over civilian life, particularly in the war-affected side of the country. They delineate that Tourism in Sri Lanka has been vastly developed since the end of the armed conflict with the ulterior motive of refrain from the war crime oppositions and tourism has frequently been used by the government as part of its strategy to distort the past and to deflect attention from ongoing human rights violations (Anon., 2018).

Although these articles may seem like a tourist guide on the outside, in depth they contain lot of facts against Sri Lanka.

The influence of the Western media narratives on China is enormous. The city Xinjiang is home to natural resources. It has the boasts of the highest concentration of natural gas, oil reserves, coal, minerals and water resources. Energy and allied industries such as petroleum extraction and petroleum are industries in Xinjiang (Qian & Zhou, 2021). The renewable energy (hydropower, wind, solar) industries are also showing good growth in Xinjiang. According to estimates, Xinjiang produces more than 80 percent of China's cotton (Lehr and Bekrakis, 2019). The province is also a major sheep breeding area in China and is home to a fine wool production base. Textile products and shoes based on these industries are the most sought-after export items. There are other well-known factories that make textiles using cotton imported from Xinjiang. In addition, Xinjiang's fruits have a special demand in the export industry as well. Mainly apples, coriander pears, seedless white grapes and green melons (Qian & Zhou, 2021).

Beyond that, Xinjiang has become a hub for trade between Europe and Central Asian countries and China via the China-Europe China Rail Express freight train. This allows goods from different parts of China to gather in Urumqi and leave China by train through the ports of Xinjiang. The process covers 23 Asian and European countries and regions (Qian & Zhou, 2021). Also, Xinjiang most often attract foreign investment by utilizing its resources and geographical advantages. Furthermore, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is lining through Kashgar, a main city in Xinjiang. Kashgar connects China and Central Asia and is a major trade and supply bridge (Anon., 2017).

Considering all of the above, it can be understood that Xinjiang province is of great economic importance to China. China is one of the most economically powerful country in the world and poses a serious challenge to the West. International opposition to the abuse in the Xinjiang region is mounting due to allegations leveled through the Western media. Many major brands have expressed concern over allegations that Muslim Uyghur minority groups are being used as forced labor in cotton industry (BBC, 2021). Meanwhile, some companies' online stores have been blocked and some digital maps have made

Chinese stores disappear (BBC, 2021). Also, Several Western countries have imposed sanctions on China. Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), a cotton standardization body, has suspended the issuance of cotton licenses in the Xinjiang region due to pressure from anti-Chinese parties in the West (BBC, 2021). All of these circumstances will adversely affect China's economic development and stability. The West, reluctant to look at China's emerging economy, is hoping for an advantage here.

COLLECTIVE PAIN AS A TRUMP CARD

Collective pain is primarily about causing collective grief and collective trauma (Lee, 2020). Watching the devastation narrated by Western Media of the final months many Tamils, particularly the younger generation born in the West, grew deeply disillusioned. The same happens due to the way the western media reports Uighurs conflict in China. The Western media narratives against China and Sri Lanka propagate Collective pain in the minds of minorities. Collective pain arises in various ways: Concerns about the loss of a large number of community members, the feeling of hearing or seeing group mourning expressions (waking, walking, virtual acts of cooperation, etc.), the feeling that the opposing parties do not have a sense of community, the loss of community prosperity Anger, etc. (Lee, 2020). The Western journalist has successfully used his words and voice to evoke the sense of collective pain. The terrorist groups are using it as a trump card.

The LTTE created a dedicated organization to capture the imagination of youth. While in Sri Lanka and in India, it created the Student Organization of Liberation Tigers (SOLT), overseas it created the Tamil Youth Organization (TYO) (Nathaniel, 2014). Although the Indian youth involved have never been to Sri Lanka, Compassion and justice for the Tamil people of Sri Lanka have been instilled in their hearts. In this way, LTTE affiliates are having benefits, exacerbating the collective pain generated by Western media hype.

In the case of China, it has managed to draw the attention of Muslims in other countries to the issue of Uyghurs and they have begun to support and finance uprisings against the Chinese government. Also, terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda are advocating for the Muslim minority in Xinjiang and by taking

responsibility for some of the atrocities Uighurs have committed (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2019), they try to lure more Uyghurs to their extremist cause.

USA WAR ON TERROR

It was the United States that first began to take major measures through government to counter terrorism. Almost all former US presidents, including President George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Trump, have fought terrorism under the “war on terror” (Harris, 2020). Therefore, it seems that China and Sri Lanka are not the only countries fought against terrorists. As Human Rights Watch accused, during the War on Terror campaign hundreds of Iraqis who were detained have described abuse at the hands of UK forces. Their testimonies show a pattern of violent beatings, deprivation of food and water, religious humiliation, and sexual abuse (ECCHR, 2020). Nonetheless, the United Kingdom has failed to address the issue of Iraqi prisoners of war being abused by its troops in Iraq. And the government has not been able to find or prosecute those responsible for these crimes. Now UK has introduced a new law called The Overseas Operations Bill, which would increase the power of the attorney general, to protect soldiers from prosecution for crimes committed abroad (Natt, 2020). It puts members of the armed forces above ordinary criminal law in a way that never happened. It was an attempt to put the military above the law. The bill serves as an effective restriction on bringing in a ‘triple lock’ of measures, including war crimes, torture or other dangerous abuses (Natt, 2020).

US led Afghanistan war on terror campaign currently tops the list of the world’s deadliest conflicts. But Terrorists have been least killed and most civilians have been killed in the Iranian war. The table below illustrates it furthermore. Wars are inherently violent, and deaths occur on both sides in a war. Since the United Nations began systematically documenting the impact of the war on civilian terrorist activities in 2009, more than 100,000 civilians have been reported killed and more than 35,000 injured (Smith & Williams, 2020). There have also been allegations of alleged murder, imprisonment and deliberate targeting of civilians by the Afghan government, the Taliban and US forces. Obama, however, vehemently denied the allegations against the United States for non-compliance with torture policies. With the November 2019 decision to pardon two U.S.

soldiers convicted of war crimes in Afghanistan, President Trump also seems to have ignored the allegations.

Breakdown of Overall Deaths in the Conflict			
Category of those Killed	Sri Lanka War (1983-2009)	Iraq War (2004-09)	Afghanistan War (2001-14)
Friendly Force Personnel	29%	17%	29%
Enemy Force Personnel	37%	22%	46%
Civilians	34%	61%	25%

Table: 1 (Lyton, 2015)

THE WAY FORWARD

Sri Lanka and China Should tell their version of the story to the world. Sometimes, hard power alone can't solve problems. Therefore, China and Sri Lanka should use both the hard and soft power in fight against terrorism. It means they have to concentrate more on smart power strategies. China seems capable in countering those narratives but shown a lethargic attitude in countering them. Sri Lanka wants to act against such negative media propaganda but still have not initiated her strategic communication mechanism.

During the global war on terror, the United States frequently explained to other Muslim countries that not to consider it as an attack on Muslim countries by aggressive Christian states and that Al Qaeda terrorists had become a threat to other fellow Muslims as well. Because they were killing Muslims, who did not belong to their sect.

In answering allegations made by other media, it is important to present the truth of the inside to the world clearly. Strategic communication is part of soft power. It can be used to reduce the stiffness of hard power. Also, it helps to create attractive image of the country. It is important for the media to inform the public about the happenings in the country, the course of action to be taken and future plans. This makes it difficult for other opposition parties to reach out narratives.

CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka and China should restore a balance between the constitutionally binding obligations of international cooperation and accountability. Because another factor behind these problems is that the West views Sri Lanka as a pro-Chinese country and China as an emerging government that threatens the West. Moreover, as a non-aligned country, Sri Lanka must maintain a balanced relationship between China and the West. Also, it is a challenge for China to show other countries that China is not a threat but an opportunity for them.

The loss of life, property and genocide perpetrated by terrorists is immense. Governments prevent such crimes because national security is the responsibility of the state. It is not appropriate to describe the war in Sri Lanka as a civil war. Because it is not a Sinhala-Tamil war, it is simply an action taken by the Sri Lankan government against brutal terrorism. At the same time the actions of the Chinese government could also be act against terrorism. However, there is no way that the world can listen to the Chinese version of the story because the western media dominates the issue. This gap creates an opportunity for the popular media to 'sell well' their Channels. This type of media behaviour is an obstacle to maintain unity and peruse reconciliation between the conflicting parties. The Sri Lankan and Chinese governments should be given more opportunity to comment on the allegations and to initiate a communication strategy to solve this. Instead, western media should refrain from using those accusations for their own purposes. Ultimately, both governments should work to clear their tarnished image of the country.

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About the authors



Pahani Attanyake is an undergraduate day-scholar who studies Strategic Studies and International Relations at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. She is interested in Modern world issues. This is her first research and she wants to understand and explore the causes and effects of current and future human interactions.



Dismini Premachandra is an undergraduate-day scholar who studies Strategic Studies and International Relations at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. She has a very keen interest in public affairs and issues in the contemporary world. This is her first research, and she hopes to consider the world issues in different perceptions and provide better solutions for them in the future.