
Counter-Terrorism: A Regional and National Perspective

V P Malik

Introduction

There is rarely a lucky day in South Asia these days when our people are not confronted with an act of terrorism somewhere or the other, in some form or another, for some reason or the other. As per the US State Department Report on World Terrorism for 2006, more than 14,600 attacks were recorded in this year; a frightening figure of 40 attacks per day – an increase of over 6 per cent on the previous year. Terrorism ebbs and flows.

Terrorism is neither definable within geographical boundaries, nor within traditional moulds of rationality. Modern technology and globalisation do not recognise geography. State sovereignty stands diluted. It is easily challenged. Terrorist groups do not owe loyalty to any national flag, religion, or even ethnic society. They extinguish innocent lives as legitimate victims, and seek 'martyrdom' in suicide missions. Currently, the terrorists' threat is magnified by their acquiring aerial capability, and the very real prospects of acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the pursuit of their endeavours.

Understanding Terrorism

Before proceeding further, I would like to point out that the so-called war on terrorism is a misnomer because terrorism is neither state specific nor an ideology. *It is a method of employing political violence in pursuit of an ideology.* World War II was not against *blitzkrieg*, but against Nazism, which used *blitzkrieg* to overrun Europe. The war on terrorism is just a mobilising term. It cannot achieve success unless there is a comprehensive grand strategy, which is implemented in both letter and spirit.

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Terrorism is 'violent tactics' strategy, being increasingly used to influence and change the political, social and economic policies of those in authority. It has the capacity to produce among the masses, a widespread belief in the futility of resistance and a loss of faith in the state and its agencies and their ability to protect life, liberty and property. These patterns of thought gradually create a denial among the people of their own fear, and an increasing justification of the terrorist cause. Not only the people, but the leadership and the state itself can become susceptible to this sentiment of futility, the implicit justification of terrorism – as in the various 'root causes' theories advanced – and the erosion of the will to fight across the nation.

Currently, a wide array of acts of violence—terrorist and insurgent—are being called international terrorism or Islamist *jihad* with little effort at judicious examination. On many accounts, the threat has now magnified to the beginnings of a 'clash of civilisations'. I agree with KPS Gill, former director general of police (DGP), Punjab, who in a recent lecture, stated, "It is crucial that rational judgments and a considered approach prevail over such sentiments, if terrorism as a tactic of war is to be effectively resisted." Objective assessments are necessary. KPS Gill has emphasised three aspects of terrorism that need to be taken into account while understanding terrorism. These are:

- Shock, the psychological and emotional impact of international terrorism, far exceeds the actual material and human damage it inflicts. Due to media proliferation, the reality and impact of terrorism has, in fact, been vastly exaggerated in recent years.
- International terrorism has done – and continues to do – infinitely greater damage to its sponsoring and supportive states and societies than to its targets.
- Terrorists are able to secure some of their objectives principally because the target states and societies fail to appreciate these realities, and succumb to the distress, horror and revulsion that the murder of innocents provokes, responding in panic, and ignoring the basic imperatives of a systematic, systemic and strategic reaction to the challenge.

The United Nations and Democratic Nations

In the last 44 years, starting September 1963, the United Nations has adopted over a dozen conventions concerning counter-terrorism. The number of signatories kept increasing with each successive convention, indicating that when the international community feels a real threat to most of its members, it tends to unite and find the best ways to ensure the security and well-being of the world population.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1373, condemned the attacks on 9/11, unanimously and unequivocally, and expressed its determination to prevent all such acts. It urged the member states to work together urgently, to prevent and combat terrorist acts. It also decided that member states should “deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts.” It called on nations to find ways of accelerating exchange of operational information regarding terrorists’ networks, traffic in arms, explosives or other sensitive materials, use of communication technologies by the terrorist groups, and the threat posed by their possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Resolution 1373 was further reinforced in Resolution 1456, when the UN decided to monitor its implementation and establish a committee, with appropriate expertise. Unfortunately, we must admit, that so far, these provisions have not been translated into effective mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance. It is for this reason that the Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiyyeba, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and other such groups have, over the years, developed the ability to finance their activities through charities, drug trade, and gun running. The nexus between drug smuggling and terrorism, organised flow of arms from East and West into South Asian nations, by seas and across porous land borders, resulting in increased terrorists’ activities, is self-evident.

It is also a recognised fact that democratic societies are more likely targets of terrorism. That is so because pluralism, peaceful coexistence, dialogue as the basis of resolution of differences, adult franchise as the optimal means of organising the internal affairs of nations—all these are anathema to the terrorist groups. Such democratic societies challenge the very cause and rationale of the terrorists’ existence.

For this very reason, democratic nations have a more significant role than other members of the coalition in counter-terrorism. They would more naturally develop the multilateral institutions and multinational coordination required for this purpose. They would not get bogged down in definitional or

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causal arguments. Blocking financial supplies, disrupting networks, sharing intelligence, simplifying extradition procedures—these are preventive measures which can only be effective through international cooperation based on trust and shared values. I believe that institutions like the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations should comprise only the hardcore democratic nations.

Counter-Terrorism in South Asia

Geo-politically, South Asia represents an integral security zone. And in that, India has special ties with each of her neighbours—of ethnicity, language, culture, common historical experience, or of shared access to vital natural resources like water—of a degree of intensity that is not shared by any two others. Currently, the whole of South Asia— India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Afghanistan and Pakistan—is going through internal unrest and upheavals due to insurgency movements, ethnic conflicts, religious fundamentalism, or just cursed political polarisation that encourages and uses terrorism. Their terrorists' activities also have a long history of crossing national boundaries and leading to inter-state tensions. The impact of terrorism in neighbouring states is always felt in India. As Harish Khare, a well known journalist, stated recently, "In this age of globalisation and the Internet, it would be foolish to insist that not a single Muslim should allow himself to be brainwashed by the global Islamist fervour." The general impression is that the terrorist situation in South Asia has deteriorated due to lack of political consensus, a comprehensive collective strategy, a will to implement and inadequate capacity building.

In the November 1986 summit held in Bangalore, the heads of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations recognised the seriousness of the problem of terrorism and its adverse impact on the security and stability of the region. They agreed, therefore, that cooperation was vital if terrorism was to be prevented and eliminated from the region. They condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and deplored their impact on life and property, socio-economic development, political stability, regional and international peace and cooperation. They recognised the importance of the principles laid down in UN Resolution 2625 (XXV) which, among others, required that each state should refrain from organising, instigating, assisting or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another state or acquiescing in organised activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts. The member states passed the "SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism" in 1987, agreeing to the following:

Article I. Subject to the overall requirements of the law of extradition, conduct constituting any of the following offences, according to the law of the Contracting State, shall be regarded as terroristic and for the purpose of extradition, shall not be regarded as a political offence or as an offence connected with a political offence or as an offence inspired by political motives:

- (a) An offence within the scope of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at the Hague on December 16, 1970;
- (b) An offence within the scope of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on September 23, 1971;
- (c) An offence within the scope of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, signed at New York on December 14, 1973;
- (d) An offence within the scope of any Convention to which the SAARC member States concerned are parties and which obliges the parties to prosecute or grant extradition;
- (e) Murder, manslaughter, assault causing bodily harm, kidnapping, hostage-taking and offences relating to firearms, weapons, explosives and dangerous substances when used as a means to perpetrate indiscriminate violence involving death or serious bodily injury to persons or serious damage to property;
- (f) An attempt or conspiracy to commit an offence described in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e), aiding, abetting or counselling the commission of such an offence or participating as an accomplice in the offences so described.

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Article II. For the purpose of extradition between SAARC member States, any two or more Contracting States may, by agreement, decide to include any other serious offence involving violence, which shall not be regarded as a political offence or an offence connected with a political offence or an offence inspired by political motives.

Article III. 1. The provisions of all extradition treaties and arrangements applicable between Contracting States are hereby amended as between Contracting States to the extent that they are incompatible with the Convention. 2. For the purpose of this Convention and to the extent that any offence referred to in Article I or agreed to in terms of Article II is not listed as an extraditable offence in any extradition treaty existing between Contracting States, it shall be deemed to be included as such therein. 3. Contracting States undertake to include these offences as extraditable offences in any future extradition treaty to be concluded between them. 4. If a Contracting State which makes extradition conditional on the existence of a treaty receives a request for extradition from another Contracting State with which it has no extradition treaty, the requested State may, at its option, consider this Convention as the basis for extradition in respect of the offences set forth in Article I or agreed to in terms of Article II. Extradition shall be subject to the laws of the requested State. 5. Contracting States which do not make extradition conditional on the existence of a treaty, shall recognize the offences set forth in Article I or agreed to in terms of Article II as extraditable offences between themselves, subject to the law of the requested State.

Article IV. A Contracting State in whose territory a person suspected of having committed an offence referred to in Article I or agreed to in terms of Article II is found and which has received a request for extradition from another Contracting State, shall, if it does not extradite that person, submit the case without exception and without delay, to its competent authorities, so that prosecution may be considered. These authorities shall take their decisions in the same manner as in the case of any offence of a serious nature under the law of that State.

Article V. For the purpose of Article IV, each Contracting State may take such measures as it deems appropriate, consistent with its national laws, subject to reciprocity, to exercise its jurisdiction in the case of an offence under Article I or agreed to in terms of Article II.

Article VI. A Contracting State in whose territory an alleged offender is found, shall, upon receiving a request for extradition from another Contracting State, take appropriate measures, subject to its national laws, so as to ensure his presence for purposes of extradition or prosecution. Such measures shall immediately be notified to the requesting State.

Article VII. Contracting States shall not be obliged to extradite, if it appears to the requested State that by reason of the trivial nature of the case or by reason of the request for the surrender or return of a fugitive offender not being made in good faith or in the interests of justice or for any other reason it is unjust or inexpedient to surrender or return the fugitive offender.

Article VIII. 1. Contracting States shall, subject to their national laws, afford one another the greatest measure of mutual assistance in connection with proceedings brought in respect of the offences referred to in Article I or agreed to in terms of Article II, including the supply of all evidence at their disposal necessary for the proceedings. 2. Contracting States shall cooperate among themselves, to the extent permitted by their national laws, through consultations between appropriate agencies, exchange of information, intelligence and expertise and such other cooperative measures as may be appropriate, with a view to preventing terroristic activities through precautionary measures.

Article IX. 1. The Convention shall be open for signature by the member States of SAARC at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu. 2. It shall be subject to ratification. Instruments of Ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of SAARC.

Article X. The Convention shall enter into force on the fifteenth day following the date of the deposit of the seventh Instrument of Ratification with the Secretary-General of SAARC.

Article XI. The Secretary-General of SAARC shall be depository of this Convention and shall notify member States of signatures to this Convention and all deposits of Instruments of Ratification. The Secretary-General shall transit certified copies of such Instruments to each member State. The Secretary-General shall also inform member States of the date on which this Convention will have entered into force in accordance with Article X.

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The Resolution was adopted at the 11th SAARC Summit Declaration in Kathmandu on January 6, 2002. An “Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism of January 6, 2004” recognised the importance of updating the Convention to meet the obligations devolving in terms of Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001).

In April 2007, the heads of state or government, once again agreeing to work on the modalities to implement the provisions of the existing SAARC Conventions to combat terrorism, narcotics and psychotropic substances, trafficking in women and children and other transnational crimes, expressed their commitment to take every possible measure to prevent and suppress, in particular, financing of terrorist acts by criminalising the provision, acquisition and collection of funds for such acts, including through front organisations and also to counter illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, trafficking in persons and illicit arms. They reiterated the need for law enforcement authorities of member states to enhance cooperation in the prevention, suppression and prosecution of offences under these Instruments. They also directed SAARC interior/home ministers to ensure regular follow-up and implementation of the decisions taken. Despite committing themselves to all these resolutions and pious words, many SAARC nations continue to provide direct or indirect support to terrorist organisations. For their survival and success, terrorist organisations need recruits, sanctuaries from which they can operate, funds, arms and ammunition, explosives and other material required for their acts of terrorism. State sponsorship adds to their strength and to the difficulties of the counter-terrorism agencies in dealing with them. Experience shows that whenever terrorist groups stop enjoying foreign sanctuaries and state sponsorship, they tend to wither away

A few nations in South Asia still hold the belief that someone's terrorist can be someone else's freedom fighter. Such a notion is puerile. Any pre-meditated and unlawful act of violence against innocent people or non-combatants, irrespective of its cause and motive, is nothing but terrorism. Some nations also believe that terrorism is a weapon of the small to bleed bigger nations. Such notions and advocacy reflect lack of commitment to the war against terror. Here, I must repeat what I have been stating ever since the Kargil War in 1999, which is, “*Terrorism is a double-edged weapon. It is like a wicked dog, which often bites the hand that feeds it.*” India experienced it with Bhindranwale and the LTTE of Sri Lanka during the 1980s. Pakistan is realising that situation now, after sponsoring the Afghan Mujahideen in the 1980s and 1990s. Even the Pakistani military, which supported and controlled them earlier, is finding it difficult to

control the situation in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and other areas of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). I have also repeatedly said that “*a proxy or sub-conventional war through terrorists’ activities can easily escalate into a conventional war.*” We experienced that in 1947-48, 1965 and in 1999.

I believe that the most important requirement to counter terrorism in South Asia is for the SAARC nations to raise the level of trust and confidence, and take voluntary action against terrorists’ activities on their soil, rather than respond to complaints from neighbours. SAARC nations need to work together, and cooperate proactively, as counter-terrorism partners. Cooperative regional efforts only can produce genuine security improvements — particularly in securing borders and transportation, enhancing document security, disrupting terrorist financing, and restricting terrorists’ movements.

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A New Approach and Strategy

Terrorists’ activities anywhere will stop only when their fuel runs out. There is a need to combat and defeat the menace in all its manifestations. We do require regional cooperation and grand strategy, but essentially of local operatives and doctrines. Here, I wish to make a few important points.

One: Islamist extremism and terrorism must be clearly separated from the larger community of Muslims who are victims of these excesses to an even greater extent than the purported enemies identified by the Islamists. The seeds of destruction of the international Islamist movement are contained within itself. Elements that erode the capabilities of terrorist organisations and their sponsoring institutions — including supporting states — need to be identified and systematically targeted by national and international policy.

Two: At the ideological level, this war is between terrorist groups which do not believe in the values of democracy, multi-culturalism, ethnic and religious tolerance. The counter-terrorism grand strategy followed in many countries with its preponderance of “defeat, deny and defend” elements is far too militarist and operationally focussed. It does not cover the ideological milieu adequately. Long-term ideological and politically sensitised counter-terrorism elements must play a more dominant role. A pure military approach, given the fragility of the institutional framework in operational areas and volatility of

developments, can easily descend into anarchy. I support those who believe that 'ideologues' should be included in the strategy and operational fight against terrorism.

Three: We need to devise collaborative strategies at the highest level. But a uniform top down strategy must not be applied everywhere. Counter-terrorism operational strategies and action plans should be worked out for each region, and each location. They must take into cognisance the important indigenous and local factors to neutralise terror networks. The terrorists do have ideological, doctrinal and sectarian differences; even ego clashes, arising from different cultural and national backgrounds. We need to take advantage of these differences. This can be done only if we attempt to analyse them properly. How are they linked? How are they financed? How do they operate? It is important that each country facing the problem analyses these factors independently, and then we pool this information. We need to build on elements of stability, nurture democratic impulses, nudge regimes to provide greater socio-political and socio-economic justice, and engage in dialogues. Partners in the campaign to isolate terrorism should, as far as possible, be regional, with leadership that emanates through domestic democratic processes.

Four: Counter-terrorism strategy and cooperation should deal with all aspects of international terrorism: its linkages with transnational organised crime, illicit drugs, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, and proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials and their means of delivery. It should also seek a firm commitment and action to meet cross-border threats posed by the terrorists.

Five: Terrorism is not just a military problem. It is primarily a major socio-political problem. In the counter-terrorism strategy, besides checking violence, we have to isolate and combat an ideology that is irrational and not acceptable to modern society. We have to use all elements of national power; not just military but political, economic and other kinds of persuasion and pressures. For this, we need hard power as well as soft power: hard power to deal with armed terrorists, and soft power to deal humanely with different societies, their culture, traditions and ethos. The intellectual and psychological dimensions of the threat are as important as its physical dimension. Youth organisations, educational networks, women's empowerment and local development initiatives should all play a role, with the government as a supportive partner.

Some important elements of that collective strategy and action plan in the South Asian region would have to be:

- Establishment of a Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre with experts from different countries who would work under a common umbrella to provide professional guidance and secretarial support to the SAARC political leadership, and to monitor implementation of their resolutions in letter and spirit.
- Capacity building in combating terrorism by intelligence, police, para-military and military in each other's schools of instructions and, thus, learning from varied experience.
- Greater liaison and coordination for counter-terrorism operations. This would require a certain amount of interoperability. The backbone of such interoperability is sets of common interoperable communication systems and operating procedures.
- Updating of equipment required for counter-terrorism operations. This does not involve heavy weaponry but force multipliers which enable better day and night surveillance, faster decision-making and reactions, and accuracy to avoid collateral damage.
- A common database at the regional level, multilateral/bilateral intelligence sharing, and a mechanism for joint interrogation of terrorist leaders and important suspects.
- Trust and transparency of action against sanctuaries in foreign territory and against states sponsoring terrorism. Effective action against terrorist funding, gun running and narcotics production and smuggling.
- Legal assistance to each other in matters relating to investigations and prosecution.

Experience in India

India has a population of over one billion, spread over 3.1 billion sq km. We have people speaking 16 major languages and 200 dialects. There are a dozen ethnic groups, seven major religious communities with several sects and sub-sects, and 68 socio-cultural sub-regions, all part of a developing, semi-literate society. There are rapidly rising social, political and economic aspirations of groups in our multi-ethnic, lingual, cultural and communal social structure. The ancient, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity has its plus and negative points. It also makes our national security quite complex.

India is among the countries that have been victims of terrorism for the longest time. But we have also handled terrorism successfully in Punjab and many other parts of our country. More importantly, we have not allowed terrorism to politically or economically destabilise our nation. We adopt a

comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism, based on a national consensus. Our counter-terrorism approach treats terrorism as a phenomenon with political, economic, social, perceptual, psychological, operational and diplomatic aspects, all of which need equal and simultaneous attention. It seeks a holistic approach to all these dimensions. Therefore, we have the system of unified command in terrorist affected areas under a governor or an elected chief minister, with committees comprising all the important functionaries.

We also believe in a healthy, well-functioning democracy, good governance, and a secular and liberal mindset, which makes no distinction between the majority and the minority, and treats everyone as equal in the eyes of the law. Firmness and determination in action, tempered by civilised and democratic behaviour by the state have been the hallmarks of India's counter-terrorism policy.

The aim of the security operations is only to isolate and arrest or eliminate the hardcore secessionist elements, and to deter their supporters. The security forces use a 'stick and carrot' approach and employ the principle of 'use of minimum force' during such operations—not the overkill required in a war. The security forces not only fight militants and anti-social elements, but also reassure innocent people feeling insecure or neglected due to inadequate civil administration.

Tough measures lead to increasing alienation. Conversely, attempts at appeasement carry the risk of being read as a sign of weakening resolve. You have to find the right balance. With experience, we have realised that we need specially organised, equipped and trained, areas-oriented security forces to deal with insurgencies and terrorism. Special forces, Rashtriya Rifles, rapid reaction force — these are some examples. These forces, and those who work alongside, must be given training for the local terrain, people, their language, customs, and traditions. Special training schools have been established for this purpose. The army must continue to insist that every soldier, deployed for such operations, carries a 'Do's' and 'Dont's' card on his person.

During sustained operations, the security forces must involve senior and respected citizens, and professionals as a link between them and the locals. They also need to form citizens' committees to learn about their difficulties, and hold meetings with them as frequently as possible. Along with sustained operations, small and large-scale civic action programmes must be undertaken. In some areas, the army has formed the Army Development Group and launched Operation Sadbhavana (Goodwill) which serve a most useful purpose. The overall aim is to win the hearts and minds of the populace. It is counter-productive to alienate hundreds and thousands of fence-sitters, in order to kill a suspect. At no stage can any nation afford to give full licence to the security

forces to operate freely. There is a requirement to define their responsibility, authority, legality, and accountability clearly.

The most important and, possibly, the most difficult counter-terrorism requirement, is preventive intelligence. The post-Kargil macro-level review of our intelligence capabilities has not achieved much success in the inter-agency frictions, adequate technological upgradation (to be able to penetrate terrorist networks), or in the centre-state intelligence and operational coordination. The multi-disciplinary centres under the Intelligence Bureau (IB) comprising representatives of all Government of India agencies dealing with terrorism have yet to make their mark. It has become fashionable to call terrorists the faceless enemy. That does not help. It conveys defenselessness and makes us more vulnerable. Who do you take action against unless you can identify the terrorists and their sources? Identification of terrorist group(s) responsible for each incident is a major challenge for our intelligence agencies. I am certain they would be fully involved in this already. But if they need specific directives and additional resources—technical and non-technical—these must be given to them on priority.

We should have no qualms in taking hard measures against identified fundamentalist and extremist outfits that spread hatred in the name of religion in our society. A chief minister giving a clean chit to an organisation that has been named and banned by the Centre cannot be accepted. *Hawala*, gun and explosives running, drug running, and any terror act having external linkages should be treated as federal offences under central government authority.

We also need tougher anti-terrorism laws. Legal punishments to terrorists, their active or logistic supporters, and corrupt officials who enable smuggling of arms and explosives into India need to be made more severe. Our political parties keep fighting over counter-terrorism legal provisions. Terrorism is an act of war. During such circumstances, nations suspend their normal laws. We must ensure that the perpetrators of terrorist acts are punished promptly. At the same time, adequate care should be taken to prevent the abuse of such laws. The United States and the United Kingdom have provisions in their anti-terrorism laws that are much tougher than India's. It is time our professionals have a greater say on framing appropriate anti-terrorist legislation. The professionals should advise political leaders sincerely and expose anyone who misuses these provisions for political interests. The law enforcement agencies need to be energised and revived. We need special and more accountable judicial officers and courts.

We have had sufficient experience of terrorist activities in urban areas. Mumbai, alone, has seen five major blast incidents in recent years. Our human resources as well as equipment, particularly surveillance and communication

equipment in metro cities and urban areas need to be upgraded. Security of areas where large numbers of people tend to congregate should be reviewed. Unnecessary visitors at the airports and railway stations (including those who come in hordes to receive the VIPs) should be discouraged. There is a cynical view that our police forces get no respite, or refresher training, because a large number is deployed round the clock on VIP protection duties.

In the aftermath of a terror attack, it is important for the state administration and its agencies to reach out to the people immediately so that they are not alienated, and come forward as willing partners in the counter-terrorism efforts of the government. Every city needs a robust action plan to deal with the fallout of a terror attack and to provide immediate relief to victims. We have a disaster relief management plan for each big city (worked out along with the armed forces). Similar plans should be prepared for major terrorist activities or breakdown of law and order. For this purpose, the civil defence set-up in urban areas can be rejuvenated.

Strategically, India cannot afford to be perceived to be buckling down under terrorist pressures. That would be disastrous. Neither can it afford to depend on others to take care of its internal security. Hard decisions, based on hard analysis of options in the current trend of terrorist activities, have to be taken. We need to make counter-terrorism statements clear, sting-loaded, if necessary, to all those who persist in supporting terrorism against India.

Conclusion

There are no quick solutions to counter terrorism. It is always a long process. Also, there is no military solution to a terrorist or insurgency or secessionist problem. The military can only create conditions wherein the adversary is inclined, or feels it necessary, to come to the negotiating table. Ultimately, the solution lies in the political domain; within existing national Constitutions, and sometimes with slightly modified Constitutions.

Counter-terrorism in South Asia needs a comprehensive strategy that encompasses political, economic, social, perceptual, psychological, operational and diplomatic issues, at regional and national levels. The military operations have to be country specific with local players. The key success factor, however, is the commitment by South Asian nations to work with each other. It is essential for the governments of the region to cooperate, build trusted networks, seek active informed support from their people, provide responsive, effective, and legitimate governance, and engage closely with the international community, to be able to eliminate terrorism, prevent instability and avoid conflict in the region.