# Book Reviews

***America, Pakistan and the India Factor***
**Nirode Mohanty**
(UK: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2013)
$83.12


Nirode Mohanty's book chronicles the roller coaster ride of Pakistan's relationship with the United States ever since Pakistan became an independent country in 1947. The study's construct divides the ties between Washington and Islamabad into five distinct phases, i.e. the Cold War, Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons (even if it were to come at the cost of 'eating grass'), the great game in Afghanistan beginning 1979 and the introduction of 'strategic assets', finally delving into the phase which could best be described as a complicated irregular network of paths in which it is difficult to find one's way—a phase which appears to be continuing till date. The equation between the two countries rests on suppressed hostility and duplicitous talks primarily designed to mask an underlying feeling of reciprocal mistrust. Mohanty's work is yet another addition to numerous works undertaken previously on Pakistan's relations with the United States, including the seminal piece by Dennis Kux titled *The United States and Pakistan, 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies*; by Husain Haqqani titled *Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding*; and by Bruce Riedel titled *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad*.

Establishing diplomatic relations roughly two months after the foundation of Pakistan, Washington and Islamabad began to forge a strategic alliance albeit having divergent strategic goals. Pakistan's one-dimensional foreign policy of parity with India, using *jihadists* as its

foreign policy instruments to wage global *jihad,* has continued since 1947. Mohanty argues that the Indian threat has been exaggerated within Pakistan in that the fomenting unrest in Kashmir often becomes a rallying factor for Pakistan to unite all the political parties, a melange of terrorist organisations, and the sectarian groups. Since the mid-1990s, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) favoured the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) as its preferred instrument for war against India. The group's dominant Punjabi composition, which matched the ethnicity of most of the Pakistan Army and the ISI, its willingness to engage in risky military operations throughout India, its demonstrated savagery in encounters with the Indian military, its readiness to inflict high and indiscriminate levels of violence on its targets, and, above all, its absolute loyalty to its state sponsors made it more favoured in comparison to other state-supported groups such as Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) and even the dominant Kashmiri Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM). Pakistan's relations with America are often determined through the prism of America's ties with India. The author posits that India is seen as the greatest enemy in Pakistan.

The book has a substantial section discussing the greatest dangers for Pakistan stemming from radical Islam—an existential threat to Pakistan's survival. In 1979, President Zia ul-Haq used *jihad* to drive out the Soviets from Afghanistan. At that point, America supported Pakistan's Mujahideen with money, military hardware and training. With the defeat and departure of the Soviet Union, America left Pakistan, abandoning thousands of weapons, training camps, and hundreds of thousands of well-trained Mujahideen terrorists.

During that period, radical Islam surfaced with thousands of *madrassas* and mosques to fight the *kafir*, infidels. The terrorist organisations regrouped for a new *jihad*. Pakistani dictators Zia ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf, a hawk on Kashmir, sustained and supported the terrorist groups and Taliban fighters as their state assets against Afghanistan and Kashmir. The author is accurate while positing that Pakistan, passionately and insecurely obsessed with Islam and hyper religiosity, is a state that denies everything—its

involvement in providing sanctuaries to militants and terrorists, abetting and aiding insurgents in Jammu and Kashmir, and any role it played in the dastardly terrorist attack in Mumbai, India, in 2008. Each Mujahideen is driven by the myth that he can defeat another superpower, America. India's connect with Afghanistan has complicated America-Pakistan relations, making the war in Afghanistan unwinnable. There is a large section within the Pakistani military and civilian leadership, who rely on American weapons and economic aid, and are convinced that they are indispensible to the US. This, in fact, is a debate that goes on to the extent that America abandoned Afghanistan and outsourced the war to Pakistan.

There is a looming question as to whether America's "pivot" policy in Asia will align it with India, thereby derailing Pakistan? Although the author has argued that Pakistan expected the US to give Kashmir to Pakistan for its pro-American policy and for its role in liberating Afghanistan, this is not necessarily the case. What is more applicable succinctly is that Pakistan was expecting more proactive and vocal American support on the Kashmir issue, thus, tilting the international debate on Kashmir in favour of Pakistan. Similarly, while the author mentions that some leading American Congressmen are urging President Obama not to abandon Afghanistan, it would have been beneficial had the author delved into this aspect in greater detail by providing a deeper insight into various facets of the 'lobbying' that takes place in the US Congress vis-à-vis Afghanistan.

The study has put forth an analysis of Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons with Zulfikar Bhutto's zeal for the bomb in a determined move to deny India's supremacy in the region. Interestingly, the author has referenced that Saudi Arabia provided over 60 percent of the cost of Pakistan's "Islamic Bomb", started as India-centric. Pakistan's Islamic bomb was a strategy of creating a trans-Asia axis to emerge as a formidable Muslim country, and the leader of the Islamic world of 52 Muslim countries. Given the tangled history of US-Pakistan relations, especially with regard to Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, America should work with Pakistan to ensure the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear

weapon sites, especially in the backdrop of the rising tide of *jihadist* and terrorist elements in Pakistan.

On the contrary, the signing of the ten-year US-India Defence Agreement in 2005 between New Delhi and Washington has transformed the Indo-US relationship from "historical estrangement to deep engagement"—and the waiver at the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) backed by the Bush Administration, notwithstanding India's refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The author could perhaps have considered highlighting a new twist in the nuclear politics of the subcontinent: that of Pakistan upping the nuclear ante by choosing to go down the tactical nuclear weapons route and placing existing deterrence stability in South Asia under considerable strain. This needs to be emphasised against the backdrop of the military's perceptions not being fully anchored in Pakistan's overall domestic political (civil) narrative—in the presented setting of a dysfunctional polity.

Despite the unison of being a nuclear Muslim nation, the conflict between Sunnis and Shiites lingers and looms all over Pakistan, with Sunni extremist groups, who view Shiites as heretics, being implicated in a surging number of sectarian attacks. Mohanty's earlier work titled *Radicalism in Islam* published in 2011 has dealt with the subject and argued that radical Islamists, breeding sectarian violence, blasphemy laws, discrimination against minorities, Sufis, Baha'is, Ismailis and Ahmadis, even scaring judges and journalists, are an ugly reality in Pakistan.

*America, Pakistan and the India Factor* declares that state and non-state terrorists are funded and supported by the state in the case of Pakistan. Non-state actors, terrorists, ultras, extremists, freedom fighters, or suicide bombers, whether in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) or Swat (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), cannot exist without the patronage of the state. The LeT's policy to abjure attacks inside in Pakistan; the LeT, FATA militants, and the Haqqani network [designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) by the US State Department in September 2012] makes them being considered the "good Taliban" while the Al Qaeda (AQ), Tehrik-e-Taliban

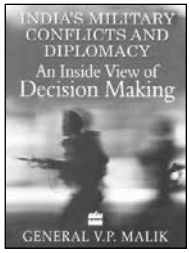
Pakistan (TTP), Ilyas Kashmiri and JeM, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) are considered the "bad Taliban".

The author spells out that although Pakistan extended its writ to all tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, Iran, and other countries, it did not wrest control of North Waziristan (FATA)—a base of the Haqqani terrorists who are involved in attacks on Americans. Pakistan's strategic calculus needs them despite the terrorist attack on Lal Masjid in July 2007, on Pakistan's famous Marriott and Pearl Continental Hotels in 2008 and 2009, the naval Mehran Base in Karachi in May 2011, on the Sri Lanka cricket team in 2009, and their alleged involvement in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007. In addition, in 2011, the Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, and Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti were killed, leading to an uproar and pillory. The journalist Saleem Shahzad, who reported the suspected ISI connections, was brutally killed. For journalists, Pakistan is the most dangerous place. Malik Qadri, Taseer's bodyguard who killed Taseer with 27 sub-machine gun shots said, "Salman Taseer deserved to be killed because he had called the blasphemy law a black law." Qadri, who was showered with rose petals by hundreds of lawyers, was praised as a "hero of the Muslim world".

Citing all these ghastly incidents, Mohanty goes on to hypothesise that Pakistan is not a failed state, however, it is dysfunctional, not addressing the shortage of power supply, not providing protection to its minorities, not establishing civilian order to quell civilian turmoil, despite possessing some of the finest educational, administrative, media and judicial institutions. All in all, this book provides an insight into the evolving trajectory of the US-Pakistan relationship and how the 'India factor' plays up in the existing setting, making it an appealing read which must be studied by all those who follow the politico-military situation in Pakistan and its ties with the US.

Dr **Monika Chansoria**
Senior Fellow, Centre for Land Warfare Studies, New Delhi

***India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy: An Inside View of Decision-Making***
**VP Malik**
(Harper Collins Publishers India, 2014)
Rs 699/-




Military literature in India is often limited to focussing on operations undertaken by men and women in uniform. Rarely does it analyse or weave in the civil or diplomatic decisions that dictate military action. The absence of a holistic narrative is perhaps symptomatic of the deep suspicion that hangs over relations between the civil and military bureaucracy. General VP Malik's latest book, *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy: An Inside View of Decision-Making*, gives us a peep into how the military gets roped in or left out in important national decisions, depending on who is at the helm. It is an insider's account and not a ringside view.

As India's Army Chief for three years (1997-2000)—the 1998 nuclear tests and Kargil conflict happened on his watch—General Malik had been part of India's highest decision-making apparatus on security and defence. But even before he became the Army Chief, he was involved in, and witness to, some momentous events that needed India's military intervention in the immediate neighbourhood.

When, in 1988, Maldivian President Abdul Gayoom was under siege from rebels determined to overthrow him in Male, the Indian armed forces created history by successfully capturing the mercenaries and the rebel leader after flying 3,000 km from Agra to Male! All the three forces—the Army, Navy and Air Force—contributed to the smooth conduct of an unprecedented operation. But very little is known about the way India's politico-diplomatic leadership of the time reacted to the situation. This book fills that gap.

As General Malik writes: "While the military operation, a part of the mission, was witnessed and discussed widely all over the world, not many people are aware of the drama that took place at the highest level of the government before the concerned political, military and civilian leadership worked out a joint plan for the intervention. The single factor most responsible for our success in the operation was the speed at which it was decided, planned and executed jointly by the armed forces...unfortunately, many of these lessons have been lost at the political and bureaucratic levels. This has happened primarily because no one prepared a complete report on the decision-making process, planning and coordination in any of the different ministries or service headquarters of the government."

There have been numerous debates about the condition of the country's higher defence management apparatus. Instead of evolving into a seamless structure in the six decades since independence, it has in my view degenerated into a disjointed, fractious entity with ad hoc appendages getting added on to existing mechanisms further muddying the waters. General Malik has given examples of India's military-diplomatic forays in recent decades to illustrate the need for improvement in the higher defence management of the country. Operation Pawan, India's disastrous military intervention in Sri Lanka under Rajiv Gandhi and General K. Sundarji is analysed in some detail and so is Operation Shakti, India's successful nuclear tests in 1998.

The Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) returned from Sri Lanka nearly 24 years ago, but the hurt the troops felt on landing in Madras and being booed by a hostile crowd still lingers among the younger lot in the Army.

Operation Pawan was a politico-military disaster. General Malik has cited numerous instances which illustrate the complete ad hocism that marked decision-making during that time. When the accord was signed in Colombo, there was no indication that Indian military help would be required so quickly. Rajiv Gandhi succumbed to the wily JR Jayewardene's

pleading that the Indian military be sent to Jaffna and Mullaitivu to relieve Sri Lankan troops which he said were needed for law and order in Colombo itself! Not only did Rajiv Gandhi accede to that request but also allowed Indian Air Force planes to transport Sri Lankan troops to the Sri Lankan capital. All this without taking the military leadership into confidence.

The accord itself was signed hastily and much against the wishes of Prabhakaran. General Malik quotes General Depinder Singh and Lieutenant Colonel Madan Gopal, who later went on become Director General Military Operations (DGMO). Madan Gopal told the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were not ready to give up arms and were, in fact, prepared to fight it out. General Sundarji laughed off his assessment.

But sure enough, political intrigues by the Jayawardene government and the confusion in the exact role of the IPKF resulted in total chaos. The Indian troops went in as peace-keepers but turned peace-enforcers on foreign soil. The communication gap between the political and diplomatic leadership in Delhi and the peace-enforcers on the ground widened.

While Rajiv Gandhi and his cavalier advisers in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) should take the major blame for India's IPKF fiasco, General Sundarji's role also needs to be critically examined, with the benefit of hindsight, of course, in not thinking through the military deployment. Although General Malik is gentle in his criticism, it clearly comes out from his writing that General Sundarji did not do his own independent military thinking despite his staff and the MO advising caution in rushing in without adequate preparation.

While trying to read up on Operation Pawan, I came across this astonishing remark by General Sundarji. Speaking at the 3rd DR Mankekar lecture on February 13, 1991, he said: "India's intervention into Sri Lanka had no national strategy, which placed commanders and

troops in an unacceptable and impossible position. When the government in power (Rajiv Gandhi's) took a decision to adopt a hard option against the LTTE, it turned out to be nasty move. The problem could have been avoided if the decisions taken had formed part of a well developed National Security Strategy which the Parliament and the people were aware of."

General Malik's book and especially his assessment on the IPKF episode is relevant for any future role that the Indian military may be asked to play in the neighbourhood. As he says, sending the military out requires multi-institutional handling, political consensus and continuity. It cannot be left to individuals or personal advisors. Turf battles between intelligence agencies and the Army or to put it mildly lack of communication between the two resulted in the most tragic situation where the Indian Army was fighting the very cadres of the LTTE who were trained and armed by the Research and Analyses Wing (RAW).

Ultimately, all strategy is driven by political aims. This, in Sri Lanka, was a question mark. We tended to confuse between genuine political aims and political expediency. Hindsight tells us that we treated political expediency as strategy and consequently suffered for it.

If foreign and defence policies are considered two sides of the same coin, as General Malik writes, then it is incumbent upon both the Defence and External Affairs Ministries to have a certain level of trust, confidence in, and understanding of, each other. That cooperation, despite the occasional successes, remains a chimera in the Indian context. Very often, the Indian military's advice is at variance with India's diplomatic stand. India's recent engagements in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh and the mess that New Delhi finds itself in some of these countries is, in my view, the result of the two ministries working in independent verticals.

However, for me, the bonus of this book is the insight provided by General Malik on Operation Khukri, India's peace-keeping operation in

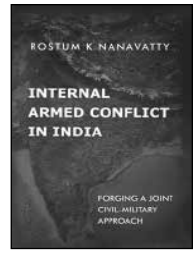
Sierra Leone, the West African country under a UN mandate. It is one of the best examples of successful military-diplomatic-political intervention.

General Malik's book, his second after the one exclusively focussed on the 1999 Kargil conflict, is an important work simply because a former military chief has highlighted the shortcomings in the diplomatic-military synergy. His aim is to draw lessons from India's own experience in these matters. Written in an easy-to-understand manner and peppered with several anecdotes many of us remember hearing about, the book is a must read for students of military history. General Malik also has first-hand accounts from many of the main players involved in some of these operations. As a former Army Chief, he, of course, has the advantage of knowing and working with many of them!

General Malik concludes: "Given today's rapidly changing geo-strategic environment, it is imperative that we change our mindset and attitude and look beyond narrow boundaries defined by 'turf' and parochialism. Politico-military strategy is too vital a subject to be dealt with in watertight compartments. We need to reengineer our national security paradigm and defence management structure and processes to make them more holistic and broad based. Only then can we be fully prepared to take on the role that we see for ourselves in the global community..." In short, military diplomacy is needed to be taken more seriously. That, however, as the former Army Chief himself knows, is a tall order, at least in the foreseeable future. And that is the tragedy of India, a wannabe regional, if not global power!

Mr **Nitin A Gokhale**
Security and Strategic Affairs Editor, NDTV

***Internal Armed Conflict in India: Forging a Joint Civil-Military Approach***
**Rostum K Nanavatty**
(New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2013)
Rs 595/-




Low intensity conflict is at the forefront of security concerns all over the globe. History tells us that an insurgency cannot be predicted. Its beginnings are vague and it emerges out of a difficult political legal and historical problem. As it spreads, conflicting goals arise within a movement. This makes it difficult to tackle and a template solution cannot be adopted to eradicate it as the dynamics of every insurgency is different. This is particularly true of the various internal armed conflicts in India. This conflict is distinguished from war not by the intensity of violence but by a difference in purpose and method. The goal is to resolve a political problem by political means, with the minimum necessary use of military force.

Some verities of the process of tackling this menace remain eternal. It is easier to intervene militarily than to get out. Friends are as likely to create problems as adversaries as the responses of all the agencies involved are unpredictable. Thus, the spread of a conflict is as difficult to control as it is to resolve the internal causes of the conflict. This has been amply highlighted in the book *Internal Armed Conflict in India: Forging a Joint Civil-Military Approach*, written by Lieutenant General Rostum K Nanavatty (Retd), a highly respected military professional and former Army Commander Northern Command in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). A combat hardened veteran who also led Counter-Insurgency (CI) operations in Sri Lanka and the northeast, he brings to bear his considerable operational experience on the subject, raising some extremely pertinent issues that merit serious reflection.

The author amply stresses that no proposed order can be based exclusively on military considerations. Political understanding is an important determinant as military pacification has to be followed by political rapprochement. He highlights the imperative need for a "Whole of the Government Approach". It is the political nature of the operations that prevents competition by an effective military capability. The environment is of conflicting and contesting interests, where organised violence is used to affect or influence outcomes. Thus, all elements of national power need to be employed, in which the military dimension is employed for political, economic and informational effect. His thesis is an invaluable document that needs to be widely studied and disseminated.

Though the writings of various foreign classical experts have been delineated, essentially the book has an India-centric approach. It is based on the presupposition that internal armed conflicts within the country will continue and the armed forces will, perforce, have to continue to play a role in their management and resolution. The author has associated the views of experts with his own experience and suggested ways in which the underlying principles of counter-insurgency operations can be applied in the Indian backdrop to create conditions necessary for the success of a campaign.

The book is the result of deep and rigorous research when the author was holding the Chattrapati Shivaji Chair in Pune University for two years. In the book, he has tackled three major issues: first, he dispels the illusion that counter-insurgency is a matter for the security forces alone; second, he emphasises the need for a joint civil-military methodology towards tackling internal armed conflicts; and, lastly, he highlights the need to devise a civil-military doctrine to address the issue.

Of special relevance is the chapter, "Fundamental Principles Revisited" wherein he discusses the five principles of a government campaign in CI operations. These are that the government must function according to the law, deny external involvement, resurrect the institutions of the

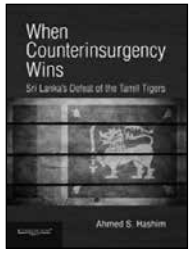
state government, ensure unity of effort and mobilise the population. From these, the author has derived specific principles to be followed by the security forces while tackling insurgency. He has also applied these principles for creating conditions for success, with emphasis on synergy of operations and intelligence. He has also delved into examining the future 'prospects' for the internal armed conflict–prone J&K, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and states impacted by Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

The ambiguity of many situations, as well as their suddenness, means that it is difficult to secure the necessary support before the event. Military professionals invariably pay attention only to the military aspects of a given situation, leaving the political aspects to politicians. This has no relevance in combatting internal armed conflict where military and political concerns overlap. However, nothing is more difficult than matching actions to intentions. Personalities and bureaucratic procedures inhibit the process of accomplishing anything positive. There is a difference between killing militants and killing militancy.

The book is written in an easy to comprehend and readable style. This erudite treatise should be essential reading for the politician, civil servant, law enforcer, and soldier. It is strongly recommended for those who have an interest in national security issues.

Colonel **Harjeet Singh** (Retd)
Defence Analyst, Chandigarh.

***When Counter-Insurgency Wins: Sri Lanka's Defeat of the Tamil Tigers***
**Ahmed S Hashim**
(New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
Rs 850/-




Sri Lanka has done what no other country has been able to do—it has successfully won its war with an insurgent group. It is the first country to have been able to achieve this in the present century. The war between the Sri Lankan Army and the Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LLTE) or Tamil Tigers as they were also known, has generated a lot of controversy in the international community. The Sri Lankan government and the armed forces have been put in the dock, to be questioned on the way in which they defeated the forces of the Tamil Tigers. This has not only surprised Sri Lanka but also infuriated it. It now asks how it is acceptable that the West can formulate a policy of "non-negotiation with terrorists" but Sri Lanka cannot. It is this and the nature of the conflict that has been very lucidly brought forward by the author, Ahmed S. Hashim.

Detailing the colonial past, the author points out that the British administration changes such as separation of religion from politics, English education and merit-based job opportunities, had an impact on the societal structures within Sri Lanka. This change in the status of the people within the society would impact the politics of the island nation post independence, leading to the civil war. Under the British, the Tamils availed of the opportunity of English education, so that when the British left, they would occupy a majority of the top civil services and military positions as well as enrolment in institutions of higher education. The British also changed the economy and class structure of Sri Lanka, changing the role the various groups played within the society. Post independence, the government took affirmative action to promote the rise of Sinhalese

students and professionals. The author has made a study of the various institutions wherein the government systematically, through its policies, changed the composition of the institutions. In educational institutions, Sinhalese students were preferred, ensuring that deserving Tamil students were unable to get quality higher education. This was the beginning of the Tamil students protest. Similarly, Sinhalese Buddhism was promoted as well as the Sinhala language. Even in the armed forces, Buddhist Sinhalese were recruited and the Tamils were slowly marginalised. The armed forces were soon seen as a Sinhalese force and the Tamils were less willing to join them. This would prove to be detrimental later, when the Tamils would view the Sri Lankan armed forces as an occupying force, and would support the LTTE movement. This would lead to the demand for a separate state for the Tamils.

The four wars between the Sri Lankan forces and the LTTE were brutal and fierce. The roots of the conflict lie in the history and politics of the region: while one viewed it as a terrorist organisation, the other viewed itself as a liberation movement. The long drawn out conflict divided the country, and perhaps it continues to do so. The conflict was based on the divide of ethnicity, community, language, religion and aspirations of one group as opposed to the other. What was unique and this has been pointed out by the author more than once in the book, is the "minority complex" of the Sinhalese majority of Sri Lanka. Explaining this ironic situation, the author explains that the Sinhalese majority looks at the region as a whole. In the larger Dravidian context, they feel they are a minority. They view the support of the Tamils from India and the world for the Tamils in Sri Lanka as overwhelming. According to them, in comparison, Sri Lanka is the only homeland for the Sinhalese. Thus, they have opposed and rejected the demands of the Tamils for a separate homeland. For the Sinhalese, it was not just the loss of territory occupied by another ethnic group, it was an existential threat. There were strategic reasons for rejecting the Tamil demand, which would have meant the loss

of strategic depth by the armed forces, while being in a state of continued alert at the border. The LTTE also went beyond the use of terrorism to achieve their goals. They built conventional armed forces such as the Sea Tigers, the naval arm of the LTTE. Thus, in the end, the war was no longer just between the armed forces of a nation and a well organised insurgent group. The author has described this war as a "hybrid war". To fight this war, the Sri Lankan armed forces developed and changed their Counter-Insurgency (COIN) policy with strategies befitting their own environment and characteristics.

Victory in counter-insurgency operations is not just about defeating the insurgents' forces and political organisation but also winning the people, who are partners of the insurgency groups. It is assumed that the side that controls the population would be able to win the war. Thus, the COIN concepts that stress on winning the 'hearts and minds of the people'. The Sri Lankan armed forces, in a complete departure from this strategy, concentrated their efforts on destroying the LTTE leadership and cadres in the fourth Eelam War. The strategy was to clear a territory of the LTTE and then continue to hold it. The winning of the hearts and minds would not begin till later—the primary task was to defeat the LTTE, it was a very 'enemy-centric strategy'. The last war also included the extensive use of the services of the Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force. The Sri Lankan Navy played a vital role in destroying the floating arms warehouses of the LTTE as well as the smuggling routes of money and ammunition, crippling the Tamil Tiger's war efforts. The Air Force, in turn, provided support to the Army in destroying strategic land bases and arms depots. This was unlike the armed forces' strategy in the previous three wars, in which the Army (primarily) would defeat the LTTE from a territory and thereafter move on to its next operations. This allowed the LTTE to recapture lost territory and, at times, add to it. The change in strategy took the LTTE completely by surprise and they were unable to change their tactics to effectively deal with it.

There are certain international and national developments that also helped the Sri Lankan forces. The author points to a shift in the international support that the LTTE enjoyed after 9/11. The international community became less tolerant of so-called national liberation movements, imposing pressure on the LTTE to give up violent methods. Domestically, the Sri Lankan government had a consistent strategy towards the LTTE, unlike the the past. It apprised the international community of its efforts but was unwilling to bow down to its pressure to negotiate, which it claimed gave the LTTE time to recuperate from their losses. This allowed the forces the much needed time to continue with their operations with full political backing. The armed forces were also now better equipped and trained unlike in the previous wars with the LTTE. They also had surged in numbers with new recruitments; this larger number of troops was needed to implement the new COIN strategy of holding on to a territory freed from the LTTE.

What further assisted the Sri Lankan government and armed forces was the divide within the LTTE's eastern and northern sections. The eastern section provided a substantial cadre base for the movement. It was a loss from which the LTTE Chief Prabhakaran would not be able to recover. The LTTE also lost substantial international support, most importantly from India, due to its assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the death of soldiers of the IPKF and the assassination of Sri Lankan government officials. The call to boycott the Presidential election by the LTTE ensured that President Rajapakse, with his nationalistic view, would win. Nature also played its part in assisting the Sri Lankan government; the tsunami had a devastating effect on the Tamil Tigers. They lost men, territory and assets in the deluge.

The defeat of the LTTE after thirty years of war in which countless lives were lost is an achievement for Sri Lanka. Nonetheless, the government and the people have to realise that a military victory cannot be sustained unless concrete and sustained political efforts follow. The LTTE

movement was supported as much by the domestic Tamil community as well as the large diaspora. While the Tamils in Sri Lanka are aware of the realities of the LTTE during the last stages of the war, such as forced conscription, the death of innocent people, the diaspora is unaware of these ground realities. They are planning to revitalise the movement. To reduce this possibility, the Sri Lankan government has to engage with the international community, including the West, which has been critical of its methods. The West also has to understand that continuous focus on the war is shifting the spotlight from the reconstruction process. While Sri Lanka has won the war, it has to now shift focus to the other aspect of its COIN strategy: win the hearts and minds of the people.

The author needs to be complimented on his unbiased approach in dealing with the subject. He brings to the reader the grievances and atrocities committed by both parties and recommends that a fresh start should be made. The book provides the much needed understanding of the conflict and Sri Lanka's COIN strategy, especially at a time when Sri Lanka's actions are being questioned and a number of countries are grappling with the issue of insurgency and terrorist attacks. The book's excellent analysis would have been enhanced if the maps had been less crowded in detail. Overall, the book is a valuable addition to understanding the Tamil movement and Sri Lanka's four wars against the LTTE.

Dr **Stuti Banerjee**
Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi.