

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

Muhammad Ali Baig and
Syed Sabir Muhammad***

Abstract

Various terrorist outfits or Actors Other Than States (AOTs) are not only functionally similar in their motivation/objectives but are also driven by strategy which includes the means, ends or tactical and operational manoeuvring. This makes terrorism an extension of military strategy. The article views terrorism through a prism of military tactics and strategy in the historical backdrop of various forms of warfare. Drawing upon comparative analysis of the striking similarities in leading strategies and tactics between military forces of nation states, it argues that AOTs make a conscious and significant use of military strategy in the pursuit of terrorist objectives.

Keywords: Terrorism, Military Strategy, Warfare, Tactics, Actors Other Than States.

* The author is a scholar at the National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan. He has an MPhil in International Relations and Master's degrees in International Relations, Political Science, English (Linguistics and Literature), and History. He also writes for *The Nation*, *Daily Times*, *Pakistan Observer* and *Pakistan Today*. He can be contacted at: mmab11@gmail.com.

** The author is a doctoral candidate at the Department of International Relations, University of Peshawar, Pakistan; and a graduate of National Defence University and Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. He can be contacted at: sabir.muhammad95@yahoo.com.

Introduction

Clausewitz argued that blood is the price of victory.¹ The phenomenon of achieving victory by shedding blood is a persistent and recurrent aspect in international relations. However, this phenomenon of bloodletting or war is incomprehensible without understanding the logic or thought behind it. War, therefore, remains incomplete without a strategy — ways, means and ends.²

No one starts a war — or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so — without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.³

War is a calculated business which McCormick interpreted as ‘calculated course of action’⁴ that is waged by a rational actor or a group of actors — not necessarily a state. Warfare or war have generally been considered under the exclusive domain of the military and its associated affairs. However, Clausewitz established that ‘war is simply the continuation of policy by other means.’⁵ Subsequently, when a rational actor or Actors Other Than States (AOTs), wage war and conduct operations, ‘by other means’ — ostensibly, for the achievement of political, social, religious, economic or cultural objectives, while, acting and operating against the legitimacy of the Weberian state — the activities are labelled as terrorism and the entities and individuals are referred to as ‘terrorist outfits’ and ‘terrorists’ respectively. While reflecting on terrorism, Gray argued that ‘Terrorism is exemplary violence executed primarily for

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Eliot Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 259.

² Arthur F. Lykke Jr., “Defining Military Strategy,” *Military Review* 69, no. 5 (1989): 2-8.

³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 579.

⁴ Gordon H. McCormick, “Terrorist Decision Making,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 473-507 (481), <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085601>.

⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 642.

the purpose of inducing fear among the general public.’⁶ It is violence carried out for specific objectives, directed at the general public aimed at fostering antagonism against an existing order ‘to generate fear.’⁷

Through the procurement of military hardware and use of violence, AOTs, inflict pain and fear in the minds of the opponent. Simultaneously, exploiting the vulnerabilities of the existing order, these actors try to win the hearts of the people by addressing the very cause of hatred in the general public. Supported by a dialectic scheme, these actors eulogise their scheme by labelling the existing order as exploitative, unjust and rotten, legitimise their struggle and present their personal vendetta as the only way out. The article starts with an overview of military strategy and terrorist operations and then explains how violence is used as a tool in terrorist operations. It intends to define terrorism as a combination of different forms and types of warfare, and concludes by finding striking similarities between military strategy and terrorism.

An Overview of Military Strategy and Terrorist Operations

Lykke argued that military strategy is a constituent element of national strategy and maintained that it must be in coherence with the national policy and objectives; and vice versa.⁸ He maintained that a military strategy is a national instrument, which, understandably remains centred in achieving the ends i.e. policy objectives of the state. Conceivably, waging pre-emptive or preventive war remains a pivotal aspect of military strategy. Similarly, in a military strategy, doctrine has a decisive role. For instance, its importance was manifested in German Blitzkrieg of World War II.

Likewise, war waging AOTs or terrorists, being rational and calculative, conduct operations while employing strategy for the attainment of their objectives that is flanked by a certain ideology, or more specifically, a doctrine. For instance, the Afghan Taliban adopted the *Layeha* doctrine that enabled them to secure a strong financial base and organize their

⁶ Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 256.

⁷ Department of the Army, *Opposing Force: Doctrinal Framework and Strategy, FM 7-100* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2003), 3-22, <http://www.iwar.org.uk/military/resources/field-manual/fm-7-100.pdf>.

⁸ Lykke Jr., “Defining Military Strategy,” 3.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

operations. Similarly, the *Takfiri* ideology helped terrorist organisations, such as the Islamic State, to formulate a feasible doctrine for justifying the killings of Yazidi and Shiite people.

Clausewitz argued that ‘war is not waged against an abstract enemy, but against a real one who must always be kept in mind.’⁹ Terrorism exhibits the same tendencies. Terrorist organisations couch a dyadic logic. In search of tacit support, these outfits declare the existing social, political, economic and religious order of a society and state as rigid, unjust, exploitative and sabotaging, thus declaring it illegitimate and liable to be over thrown.¹⁰ Followed by their doctrine, the outfits offer a dialectic worldview that presents a counter social, political, economic and religious order, which primarily ‘speaks to’ the dissatisfied strata of society. The doctrine helps in objectifying the enemy making their struggle real and cause-oriented.

Military forces develop strategy in an objective manner for the achievement of national policy objectives. Therefore, strategy is highly context dependent. It aims to deter potential adversaries by show of force and maintaining operational readiness. However, in times of war, a military strategy focuses on the means, ways and ends, whilst, strengthening the overall war effort to fight and win. Likewise, terrorists strive to achieve the objectives of their movement — using strategy which includes efficient, cost-effective, innovative and adaptive tactics. Their struggle or war-like pursuit, overshadowed by constraints, inspires the movement to adopt

⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 161.

¹⁰ Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) first demanded the Government of Pakistan to declare Shia community as heretics. However, after the Government-imposed ban on SSP, to achieve its objectives, the SSP evolved into Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jammāt (ASWJ); and the second tentacle named itself Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). LeJ eventually took arms against state actors and waged an irregular war. The activities of SSP, ASWJ and LeJ were all aimed to change the religious order. On the other hand, during the Vietnam War, drafting was put into effect in the US to induct soldiers and officers. However, to change the order and unjustified aerial bombing of Cambodia, Kent State University students protested and on May 4, 1970, four unarmed students were shot dead by Ohio National Guard in Kent, Ohio. See, Spencer C. Tucker and Priscilla Mary Roberts, eds., *Cold War: A Student Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007), 2201-2204.

ruthless and deadly means for maximum output from minimum or moderate ways.

How Does Violence-induced Terror Serve as a Form of Warfare?

War, as Clausewitz noted, involved *wunderliche dreifaltigkeit* i.e., a remarkable trinity comprising of primordial violence — hatred, enmity, chance, and rationality.¹¹ It can be argued that violence is an inherent, inseparable and indispensable aspect of war. Likewise, terrorists or war waging AOTs intelligently use violence — ostensibly, driven by hatred and enmity — emanating from deprivation and frustration in number of dimensions including political, social, religious, economic or cultural and irredentist claims charged by nationalism. Terrorists wage war with an envisaged and conceived strategy for the achievement of their ideological objectives and use violence as a means of weapon and warfare, while, reinforcing their course of action with tactics. The emphasis of terrorists on the employment, refinement and deployment of tactics points their confidence towards one direction, so much so, that the actual fighting takes place at the tactical level – a Clausewitzian axiom. Renowned terrorism scholar Alex P. Schmid also noted that:

Both terrorism and the waging of war are part of conflict behaviour and wars and terrorist campaigns are fought for some of the same goals. Since ancient times there has been terrorism in war.¹²

Over the course of history, military forces have employed terror bombing as a part of their strategy to inflict fear on the hearts and minds of people. For instance, during the World War II, the German *Luftwaffe* conducted Blitz air raid operations over England which were interpreted as terror bombings.¹³ Before that, as Folly observed, German *Wehrmacht*

¹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

¹² Alex P. Schmid, “Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2 (2004): 197–221 (202), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550490483134>.

¹³ Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint, and John Pritchard, *Total War: Causes and Courses of the Second World War*, Rev. 2nd ed. (London, England: Penguin Group, 1995), 147.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

terrorised Poles by ‘terror-bombing’ in September 1939, and again in Netherlands in May 1940.¹⁴ Similarly, the early examples of cruise and ballistic missiles i.e. Hitler’s V-1 and V-2 weapons were also aimed to terrorise the Allied military and civilian population.¹⁵ Conversely, in February 1944, Americans and the British used incendiary bombs over Dresden which resulted in the death of 100,000 innocent people, not only to raze the city but also to terrorise the German people.¹⁶ The Doolittle Raid in 1942 over Japan was largely meant to terrorise the Japanese population, and perhaps the use of atomic weapons was also intended for the same purpose.¹⁷ These aerial bombing operations were intended to inflict more terror and psychological damage on the people in relation to physical destruction.

The use of bombing by AOTs or terrorists is an imitated and replicated character of military strategy and operations. The use of bombing through various delivery tactics is intended to terrorise people, while, using the inflicted fear as a part of the strategy to coerce and compel the target audience in achieving the desired strategic objectives.¹⁸ Terrorists compelling the target audience takes its essence from Clausewitz that ‘War is, thus, an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.’¹⁹

This article argues that war waging AOTs and their organisations derive almost everything in their practice from military strategy, especially

¹⁴ Martin H. Folly, *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Second World War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 8 & 14.

¹⁵ Amanda Lomazoff and Aaron Ralby, *The Atlas of Military History: An Around-The-World Survey of Warfare through the Ages* (San Diego, California: Thunder Bay Press, 2012), 118-119.

¹⁶ Charles Phillips and Alan Axelrod, eds., *Encyclopedia of Wars* (New York, NY: Facts on File, Inc., 2005), 1382.

¹⁷ John Andreas Olsen, ed., *Airpower Reborn: The Strategic Concepts of John Warden and John Boyd*, History of Military Aviation Series (Annapolis, Maryland, USA: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 23.

¹⁸ However, the authors are arguing that it is a tactic that can be productive as well as counter-productive. For instance, during the Vietnam War, Operation Linebacker I and II could not significantly destroy the North Vietnamese Forces as the American losses were high.

¹⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

since the number of terrorist organisations have their vanguard comprised of former soldiers of regular military forces. For instance, American terrorist Timothy McVeigh ‘had an excellent record in the army and served in the Gulf War, where he was awarded a Bronze Star.’²⁰

Arguably, the manifesto of war-waging AOTs or terrorists remains a Machiavellian axiom — that it feels great to fool the fool who thinks you are a fool.²¹ Deception, diversionary attacks and the use of decoys, serve as assets in military strategy and are basic tools of the terrorist organisations coupled with speed and surprise. After all, as Sun-Tzu noted ‘all warfare is based on deception.’²² Terrorists exploit cracks within an existing system, against the backdrop of their dialectic worldview. They deceive the custodian of the existing order by keeping their profile low in the beginning, spread their doctrine, demonising and objectifying the enemy by galvanising their atrocities committed and legitimising their struggle. These AOTs voyage for public sympathies. Simultaneously, they deceive the authorities by inflicting massive damage in least expected targets. Thus, then, the angry Weberian state unleashes reprisal and exercises its legitimacy and monopoly over the use of violence which makes them more vulnerable.²³

What makes terrorists strategise, attempt and hit the most valuable targets secured by means of fortifications and many defensive mechanisms? War-waging AOTs or terrorists organise and plan their operations based on military strategy. Gray argued that ‘strategy is, above all else, a

²⁰ Cindy C. Combs and Martin W. Slann, *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, Rev. ed. (New York, NY: Facts on File, Inc., 2007), 208.

²¹ On March 15, 1526, Machiavelli wrote to his friend Francesco Guicciardini and called for military and political support for Lodovico de’ Medici (also known as Giovanni dalle Bande Nere). Machiavelli’s letter called to adopt this axiom. Please see: Maurizio Viroli, *Redeeming the Prince: The Meaning of Machiavelli’s Masterpiece* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 39-43.

²² Sun Tzu, *Sun Tzu on the Art of War: The Oldest Military Treatise in the World*, trans. Lionel Giles (Leicester, England: Allandale Online Publishing, 2000), 3.

²³ Sabir Muhammad, “The Security Dilemma of Iraq and Syria and Regional Politics,” *NUST Journal of International Peace & Stability* 1, no. 1 (2017): 39-52, <https://doi.org/10.37540/njips.v1i1.3>.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

pragmatic subject and activity.’²⁴ The motivation behind the strategy adopted by terrorists, to choose valuable targets, was perhaps best explained by Clausewitz, as he distinguished the logic behind offence and defence. For Clausewitz, offence is weak but positive, and has an ambitious purpose; whereas, defence is strong but negative, and has a passive purpose.²⁵ He maintained that more defences motivate an attacker to find a way and manoeuvre the attack while penetrating the weakest point in the line of defence. This inherent aspect of strategy was best exhibited by German *Wehrmacht* during the Invasion of France and the Low Countries on May 10, 1940, when it managed to circumvent the Maginot Line and entered France through the forest of Ardennes.²⁶ Likewise, using military strategy on December 16, 2014, terrorists attacked the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, Pakistan, and manoeuvred their attack force through the check posts along the way. Later, they penetrated through the weakest point i.e. entered the perimeter by climbing walls and executed the attack.

In order to make a strategy successful, two things are very important. First, keeping in mind the objectives of the campaign; and second, tactical manoeuvring. Terrorism is about the living not dead. Terrorist outfits very rarely have specific targets they want to kill. Those killed are often just ‘people, at the wrong time and at the wrong place.’ Their target is an audience and a large audience. Strategically, terrorist outfits attempt to harm high-value targets that would send a very strong message to those who are on their side and to those who are against them. By targeting economic hubs, institutions like APS, General Headquarters (GHQ), Mehran Base, etc., they sow seeds of disbelief in the minds of the general public about the capabilities of the existing administration (or state) to safeguard against any future threat. Simultaneously, a large terrorist attack explains the governance void within an existing order and strengthens their dialectical vision. Through their strategic manoeuvring, they provide the audience a

²⁴ Colin S. Gray, *The Implications of Pre-emptive and Preventive War Doctrines: A Reconsideration*, report (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007), 4, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2007/ssi_gray.pdf.

²⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 358.

²⁶ Benoît Lemay, *Erich von Manstein: Hitler's Master Strategist*, trans. Pierce Heyward (Havertown, Pennsylvania: Casemate Publishers, 2010), 89-98.

choice — a choice to compare. When the populace compares the two — terrorist outfits start winning. This is what led Kydd and Walter to argue that ‘Terrorism often works.’²⁷

Redefining Terrorism – The Warfare of Many Warfares

Terrorism is among those controversial strategies that does not have a single agreed upon definition. For instance, Schmid employed five lenses in conceptualising terrorism. However, he acknowledged that the frames have had limited applicability.²⁸ But, how do AOTSS or terrorists use terrorism to achieve their manifold objectives, including political (such as that of statehood by the Islamic State or the Kurdistan Workers’ Party)?²⁹

The authors argue that terrorism is conducted purely by devising strategy reminiscent of military strategy. Just as a state adopts a military strategy in times of war, on the same pattern, terrorists employ robust militarised strategies for their objectives. A military strategy prepares for deterrence, but at the same time also considers options for the failure of deterrence by outlining response mechanisms i.e. retaliation in different spectra.

Terrorism, therefore, is very much like a military strategy which employs a combination of warfare methods which can over time be strengthened, improvised and adapted as tactics. This top-down approach yields bottom-up results at geographical, tactical, operational and

²⁷ Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, “The Strategies of Terrorism,” *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 49, <https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/isec.2006.31.1.49>. We argue that terrorism ‘often’ works due to its roots in military strategy; however, some scholars contend the efficacy of terrorism. See: Max Abrahms, “Why Terrorism Does Not Work,” *International Security* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 42-78, https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/is3102_pp042-078_abrahms.pdf; and, Max Abrahms, “What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy,” *International Security* 32, no. 4 (Spring 2008): 78-105, https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Abrahms_What_Terrorists_Really_Want.pdf.

²⁸ Schmid, “Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism,” 212-214.

²⁹ Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 24; John Hutchinson, *Nationalism and War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 14.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

organisational level. These advantages carry spill over effect in terrorist outfits:

Once a new tactic proves successful, the Taliban moves quickly refining it to fit their unique circumstances and then rapidly fielding the tactic at the operational level resulting in an organizational innovation.³⁰

Prevalence of Prussian Military Concepts in Terrorist Organisations

At its simplest, under the Prussian military concept *Auftragstaktik* (mission-type tactics):

Commanders issue subordinate commanders a clearly defined goal, the resources to accomplish the goal, and a timeframe to accomplish the goal. Subordinate commanders are then given the freedom to plan and execute their mission within the higher commander's intent. During execution, *Auftragstaktik* demanded a bias for action within the commander's intent, and it required leaders to adapt to the situation as they personally saw it, even if their decisions violated previous guidance or directives. To operate effectively, under this style of command, requires a common approach to operations, and subordinates who are competent in their profession, and trained in independent decision-making.³¹

Auftragstaktik was codified in the German Drill Regulation of 1888; and various aspects of mission command have been part of the United

³⁰ Thomas H. Johnson, "Taliban Adaptations and Innovations," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 24, no. 1 (2013): 4.

³¹ Headquarters, United States Department of the Army, *ADP 6-0. Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Army, 2019), https://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/adp6_0.pdf

States (US) Army since the Eighteenth Century.³² Understandably, it requires intelligent, psychologically agile and physically strong officers who use intuition and cognition in situations where operations cannot be conducted otherwise.³³ It is possible that Abu Musab al-Suri (considered the main architect of al-Qaeda's post-9/11 structure and strategy) was inspired by *Auftragstaktik* manifested in his 'leaderless struggle' and 'individual terrorism' ideations.³⁴ War-waging AOTSSs and terrorist organisations have quite remarkably resorted to *Auftragstaktik* and have strengthened the most-bottom level tier of their command and control to take the initiative and hold it – by conducting the attack – in a decentralised manner.³⁵

The Afghan Taliban have perhaps best exhibited the characteristics of *Auftragstaktik* in their operations. Johnson noted that the Taliban formulated platoon-sized contingents, comprising of a commander and 20 local fighters to lead a *Mahaz* (a small geographical location), to gather local support for their operations under the doctrine *Layeha*.³⁶ The local commander was guided by the doctrinal strategies, and fulfilled the command's intent, despite minimum communications between the two.

The Germany Navy's Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz devised *Rüdeltaktik* or Wolf Pack tactics during the World War II to target Allied Navy and merchant vessels using its U-boats.³⁷ The German U-boats formed a Wolf Pack and attacked the Allied naval assets, significantly hindering trade and inflicting psychological damage on the Allies. It is also likely that war-waging AOTSSs or terrorists have also learned from such

³² Michael J. Gunther, *Auftragstaktik: The Basis for Modern Military Command?* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: School for Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2012), 1-5.

³³ Robin Schäfer, "The Rise of the Reich," *History of War*, January 1, 2016, 29.

³⁴ Brynjar Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 4 (2008): 518-542 (529), DOI: 10.1080/09546550802257226; and *Made in France*, DVD, directed by Nicolas Boukhrief (France: Radar Films, 2015).

³⁵ Paul Cruickshank and Mohannad Hage Ali, "Abu Musab Al Suri: Architect of the New Al Qaeda," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 1 (2007): 1.

³⁶ Johnson, "Taliban Adaptations and Innovations," 8-9.

³⁷ Antony Preston, *Submarine Warfare: An Illustrated History* (London: Brown Books, 1998), 55.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

Wolf Pack tactics and used similar tactics in high seas such as the operations conducted by Somali pirates.³⁸ While the Germans employed U-boats, pirates utilise nominal and improvised surface vessels. To safeguard international cargo vessels, multinational naval task forces were established to escort and engage such pirate boats.

German General Heinz Guderian argued that ‘Strike concentrated, not dispersed’³⁹ – however, Guderian called for concentration of combined forces at a single point at the front to achieve break through. Vego interpreted the concept as concentration within a concentration.⁴⁰ The concept was outlined by Clausewitz, and later by Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder as *Schwerpunkt*. Terrorists employ this concept in waging defensive as well as offensive attacks. It is ironic that while terrorists aim to stimulate fear; nonetheless, they are also driven by fear which appears to be a fearless act. The fear of being killed without inflicting damage drives terrorists to wage attack in a desperate manner, while, focusing their abilities at a single point i.e., *Schwerpunkt* or what Battistelli interpreted as the ‘key point’.⁴¹ Perhaps, this is the reason why a majority of terrorist attacks are significantly deadly.

Attrition and Manoeuvre Warfare in Terrorist Organisations

Attrition is a form of centralised warfare that aims to inflict maximum physical damage on the enemy by the application of brute force. For instance, during World War I on both sides of the trenches, massive artillery and firepower was employed for annihilation. Likewise, German Stormtroopers, employing the von Hutier tactics, aspired to wage an intense

³⁸ *Captain Phillip*, DVD, directed by Paul Greengrass (USA: Sony Pictures Entertainment and Columbia Pictures Corporation, 2013).

³⁹ Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 2nd ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2002), 105; Pier Paolo Battistelli, *Panzer Divisions: The Blitzkrieg Years 1939–40*, vol. 32, Battle Orders (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2007), 14.

⁴⁰ Milan Vego, “Clausewitz’s Schwerpunkt: Mistranslated from German-Misunderstood in English,” *Military Review* 87, no. 1 (February 2007): 104-105, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20070228_art014.pdf.

⁴¹ Battistelli, *Panzer Divisions*, 12.

war of attrition.⁴² Attrition was the foundation of Second Generation Warfare.⁴³ Wilson and Pack have attested to the IS' battle of attrition for the control of Libyan territories.⁴⁴ On the other hand, manoeuvre warfare involves fighting as little as possible and the swift destruction of key enemy targets. It laid the foundations of Third Generation Warfare. Also known as the indirect approach, it was pioneered during the interwar period and culminated in the creation of Blitzkrieg. Manoeuvre warfare aims at avoiding unnecessary attention and breaking through the weakest point of enemy defences while destroying its centre of gravity — resultantly paralysing the enemy.⁴⁵

While adopting attrition and manoeuvre warfare and tactics, terrorists manoeuvre their main fighting force, e.g. a suicide bomber or a vehicle-borne bomber towards the target, while evading unnecessary targets and destroying the most vulnerable as well as valuable point. War-waging AOTs or terrorists aim to cause maximum damage while planning their operations. For this purpose, they choose and rely on weapons and equipment which yield lethal, deadly and destructive results. In other words, AOTs or terrorists choose firepower and intense attrition against their enemies. For example, on April 19, 1995, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols used ammonium nitrate and nitromethane (ANFO) housed in 55-gallon drums, specifically 'arranged in a conical form inside the truck to generate the maximum amount of blast force' at the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.⁴⁶

⁴² Laszlo M. Alfoldi, "The Hutier Legend," *Parameters* 5, no. 2 (1976): 69-73, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a531980.pdf>.

⁴³ William S. Lind, "Understanding Fourth Generation War," *Military Review* 84, no. 5 (October 2004): 12, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=482203>.

⁴⁴ Lachlan Wilson and Jason Pack, "The Islamic State's Revitalization in Libya and Its Post-2016 War of Attrition," *Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) Sentinel* 12, no. 3 (March 2019): 22-30, <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CTC-SENTINEL-032019.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Muhammad Ali Baig and Hamid Iqbal, "A Comparative Study of Blitzkrieg and Cold Start Doctrine: Lessons and Countermeasures for Pakistan," *IPRI Journal* XVIII, no. 1 (Winter 2018): 15, <https://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/art1jw2018.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Combs and Slann, *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, 207.

Guerrilla Warfare

Guerrilla warfare has been a timeless military strategy. It employs irregular and asymmetric warfare to turn capabilities into vulnerabilities of a symmetrically superior enemy. During the Vietnam War, the Viet Minh, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army waged successful guerrilla war against the Allies or American forces. Guerrilla tactics serve as the foundational strategy for Special Forces units worldwide. During the American War of Independence, Sons of Liberty used guerrilla warfare in their 'Tea Party' raid in Boston. Later, the Continental Army's Major General Francis Marion became famous due to his guerrilla tactics and was called as the 'Swamp Fox'.⁴⁷ Johnson argued that Afghans have historically employed guerrilla warfare at the strategic level.⁴⁸ Likewise, Pakistan initiated Operation Gibraltar in Kashmir in August 1965 by infiltrating trained fighters waging guerrilla warfare against Indian occupation.⁴⁹

Mao, being a disciple of Clausewitz,⁵⁰ put forward the People's War doctrine that comprised mainly of two strategies i.e., War of Resistance and War of Revolution.⁵¹ Both strategies employed guerrilla warfare as a pivotal component. However, Mao being a separatist and terrorist in the eyes of Nationalist General Chiang Kai-shek, incorporated guerrilla warfare into the People's Liberation Army (PLA) that was simultaneously a standing armed force and a terrorist organisation and was fighting a conventional and un-conventional war. Likewise, the Afghan Taliban employed guerrilla warfare, since, they could not afford to fight a conventional war against Soviets nor the US-led Allied Forces.

To project and exhibit the war-waging capabilities of violent AOTs and terrorists, they tend to cause death and destruction on a superior

⁴⁷ Brad D. Lookingbill, *The American Military: A Narrative History* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 44-46.

⁴⁸ Johnson, "Taliban Adaptations and Innovations," 5.

⁴⁹ Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan*, *The Armed Forces of Asia* (Crow's Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 69.

⁵⁰ Handel argued Mao's work to be closely associated with that of Clausewitz. See: Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*, 3rd ed. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), xix.

⁵¹ Tony K. Cho, "Mao's War of Resistance: Framework for China's Grand Strategy," *Parameters* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 6-18.

counterpart; and the dominant objective remains to induce fear, and inflict psychological damage on the adversary and public at-large. Terrorists, being a weaker fighting force resort to guerrilla warfare, since, it provides them with the opportunity to hit targets of their own choosing with the flexibility in terms of weapons choice. It was argued that ‘Guerrilla warfare is the weapon of the weak,’ and maintained that ‘It is never chosen in preference to regular warfare; it is employed only when and where the possibilities of regular warfare have been foreclosed.’⁵² Many violent AOTSS, including the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Zimbabwean African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), Zimbabwean African People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), Hamas, Irish Republican Army (IRA), Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Hezbollah and al-Qaeda used guerrilla warfare.⁵³ Echevarria II noted that al-Qaeda waged Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) on the US military after 9/11.⁵⁴ This attribute of terrorists was best described by Taber who declared it to be the ‘war of the flea.’⁵⁵

False Flag Operations

False flag operations have served as a remarkable military instrument or perhaps a military necessity to rationalise and justify military action. The highly symbolic attack is interpreted and propagated as an assault on the legitimacy and sovereignty of a state and its institutions. For instance, on August 31, 1939, Germany’s Colonel Alfred Naujocks, disguised as Polish soldier, conducted a false flag attack near the Polish-German border and

⁵² Franklin Mark Osanka, ed., *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941-1961* (New York, NY: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), 16.

⁵³ Andrew R. Ballow, “Why Irregulars Win: Asymmetry of Motivations and the Outcomes of Irregular Warfare,” (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2016), https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/51628/16Dec_Ballow_Andrew.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁵⁴ Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Fourth-Generation War and Other Myths*, report (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2005), v.

⁵⁵ Taber used ‘flea’ as a metaphor while describing guerrilla warfare. Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classical Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2002).

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

paved the way for a full-scale invasion the next day on September 1, 1939.⁵⁶ However, this particular form of warfare has been replicated and exploited by AOTSS or terrorists in an innovative yet adaptive manner. Terrorists, while disguised as ordinary citizens, execute speedy and low-intensity yet highly symbolic strikes on enemy facilities, more preferably military, and incite the latter to retaliate using hard means. As a result of the retaliation and subsequent collateral damage, the terrorists demonise the state actors and blame the damage to be purely intentional and deliberate. The IRA quite innovatively used this kind of warfare to demonise the British in Ireland. The Bloody Sunday shooting of 1972 resulted in the deaths of 13 unarmed Irish civilians mistaken as IRA/PIRA members, and paved the way for the unification of IRA and PIRA.⁵⁷ Johnson also noted that this is how the Taliban turn the local population against state actors.⁵⁸

Information Warfare

Cheng noted that information warfare does not require traditional warfighting and allows targets to be taken out regardless of geographical limitations, and maintained that information war supersedes cyber warfare.⁵⁹ Information, flanked by cyber and electronic, warfare comes under the realm of Fifth Generation Warfare that is non-kinetic in nature.⁶⁰ The US Military's Cyber Command and the adoption and inculcation of cyber tactics, as a part of their military strategy around the globe, is a manifestation of their efficacy.⁶¹ Similarly, modern electronic warfare capabilities of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircrafts

⁵⁶ Roderick Stackelberg, *The Routledge Companion to Nazi Germany*, Routledge Companions to History (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 274.

⁵⁷ Ballow, "Why Irregulars Win: Asymmetry of Motivations and the Outcomes of Irregular Warfare," 55-58.

⁵⁸ Johnson, "Taliban Adaptations and Innovations," 5-8.

⁵⁹ Dean Cheng, *Cyber Dragon: Inside China's Information Warfare and Cyber Operations*, The Changing Face of War (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2017), 2, 15.

⁶⁰ T. X. Hammes, "Fourth Generation Warfare Evolves, Fifth Emerges," *Military Review* 87, no. 3 (June 2007): 20-23, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20070630_art006.pdf.

⁶¹ "Mission and Vision," U.S. Cyber Command, accessed April 15, 2020, <https://www.cybercom.mil/About/Mission-and-Vision/>.

and specialised non-kinetic warfare aircrafts are part of modern militaries to control the flow of information to their advantage. The use of information, by means of exploiting cyber and electronic domains, is a part of North Korea's military strategy which culminated in the hack of Sony Corporation.⁶² This remarkable use of information warfare is now duplicated and replicated by terrorists. For instance, the IS (or Daesh) not only recruited an overwhelming majority of its fighters by manipulation and exaggeration of online information, but also used the Internet for the spread of falsified information. They also used the Internet to attract potential donors and extracted money to further their operations. Terrorist strategists, like Abu Musab al Suri and Abu Bakr Naji, propagated their doctrines and military strategies using cyber domain and radicalised and mobilised numerous fighters internationally.⁶³

War Crimes and Crime as Warfare

'To date, the most common approach to defining a war crime has been to identify a war crime as a violation of the law of war that has been 'criminalized''.⁶⁴ Military forces also commit war crimes (such as ethnic cleansing, genocide and massacres) sometimes deliberately and at times, unintentionally. For example, the Yugoslavian Military conducted mass killings and pogroms in Bosnia. Similarly, the Indian Army and Myanmar Army is still committing heinous crimes against humanity in Kashmir and Nagaland, and in Myanmar, respectively. During the Vietnam War, the US Military took part in the My Lai Massacre in March 1968, and used crime

⁶² Scott J. Tosi, "North Korean Cyber Support to Combat Operations," *Military Review* 97, no. 4 (August 2017): 44-50, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20170831_TOSI_North_Korean_Cyber.pdf

⁶³ Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Umma Will Pass*, trans. William McCants (Cambridge, MA: John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University, 2006), http://media.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/2800/Management_of_Savagery.pdf.

⁶⁴ Oona A. Hathaway, Paul K. Strauch, Beatrice A. Walton, and Zoe A. Y. Weinberg, "What is a War Crime?" *Yale Journal of International Law* 44, no.1, (2019): 65, <https://Digitalcommons.Law.Yale.Edu/Cgi/Viewcontent.Cgi?Article=1695&Context=Yjil>.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

as part and parcel of warfare.⁶⁵ Nazi Germany's *SS Totenkopf* was a specialised unit that committed what are now called 'war crimes.' On the other hand, terrorists employ criminal tactics as part of their overall strategy. IS resorted to criminal activities such as extortion, ransom, murder and illicit trade of ancient artefacts and hydrocarbons to extract money and weapons to strengthen its campaigns. Schmid saw almost all terrorist activities as illegal⁶⁶ – illegal activities are crimes as well.

Hybrid Warfare

Military forces neither operate in isolation nor employ and wage a single form of warfare, since battlefields have always been complex. Clausewitz pointed out towards this very basic aspect of war by arguing about unforeseen 'friction' and maintained that 'Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult.'⁶⁷ The friction makes things appear simple — however, they are not. This friction leads militaries to strategise their operations by overlapping the thin lines among many forms of warfare. For instance, while initiating Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001, the US first inserted helicopter-borne troops inside Afghanistan for assisting the strategic bombers in lasing targets and contacting anti-Taliban forces i.e. the Northern Alliance to minimise Clausewitzian friction.⁶⁸ The Russian military's Gerasimov Doctrine acknowledges the use of multiple warfare for the achievement of single military operation.⁶⁹ Likewise, terrorists have incorporated this form of warfare as a part and parcel of their strategy. They employ a mixture of warfare and parallel platforms to wage war. For instance, Allen noted that terrorists often simultaneously employ specific lines of communications;

⁶⁵ Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Social, Political and Military History*, 2nd ed. (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2011), 784-786.

⁶⁶ Schmid, "Frameworks for Conceptualising Terrorism," 197-199.

⁶⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

⁶⁸ *12 Strong*, DVD, directed by Nicolai Fuglsig (USA: Warner Bros. and Lionsgate, 2018).

⁶⁹ Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (February 2016): 23-29, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art008.pdf.

establish support in their favour; wage information warfare; and so, increase their sphere of influence.⁷⁰ Arguably, terrorists are adaptive and carefully follow the changing character of warfare and war.

Suicide Attacks

The use of suicidal attacks as a part of military strategy has a torrential history. During World War II, the Imperial Japanese military employed *kamikaze* pilots as aviator suicide attackers and introduced *kaitens* — a human-borne torpedo.⁷¹ The main role of both *kamikaze* and *kaiten* was to attack enemy naval warships and aircraft carriers. Later, during the Vietnam War, Viet Cong employed improvised boats as suicide boats to attack the US Marine Riverine Force; and the US Air Force utilised Wild Weasel sorties in suicidal missions to help in locating Vietnamese surface to air missile sites.⁷² Similarly, during the Indo-Pak War of 1965, driven by military necessity, Pakistani Forces used to dig holes to blow Indian tanks up, since, the former could not match the armour of the latter, especially numerically. In a similar vein, suicide bombing have now become an efficient and cost-effective instrument for terrorists. On May 21, 1991, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a female suicide bomber belonging to Sri Lanka's LTTE.⁷³ On March 29, 2004, two female suicide bombers conducted Uzbekistan's first suicide attack in response to the establishment of a US airbase.⁷⁴ The efficacy of suicide attacks at tactical, operational and strategic levels greatly motivated terrorists to adopt suicide attacks as a part of their strategy and tactics. Even the Taliban, adhering to the Deobandi school of thought, readily adopted suicide

⁷⁰ Allen B. West, "The Future of Warfare against Islamic Jihadism: Engaging and Defeating Non-state, Non-uniformed, Unlawful Enemy Combatants," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (February 2016): 39-44, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art010.pdf.

⁷¹ Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *The Kamikazes* (Lahore, Pakistan: Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., 1985), 126-141.

⁷² Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War*, 981-984, 1341-1342.

⁷³ Robert A. Pape and James K. Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 293-294.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

bombing as a part of their strategy, mastering it in Iraq and later in Afghanistan against the US-led coalition forces.

The Sri Lankan terrorist outfit LTTE was perhaps the first to use airpower in conducting attacks on the enemy. On March 26, 2007, LTTE's Air Tigers used two aircrafts and bombed the Sri Lankan Air Force Base near Colombo in a purely military style. Later, on October 22, 2007, the LTTE exhibited a Blitzkrieg-style attack while simultaneously conducting an aerial and ground attack on a Sri Lankan Air Force Base at Anuradhapura, in the North Central Province.⁷⁵

Use of Unmanned Robots

Among the very first examples of unmanned robots on the battlefield, was the German *Little Goliath* or *Beetle* — a wire-controlled, 220-pound explosives-packed tank — operated remotely to destroy Allied tanks and disrupt infantry formations during World War II.⁷⁶ Israel extensively used Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for military purposes against its Arab rivals.⁷⁷ Modern military forces including American, Russian and Chinese, maintain mission-specific unmanned vehicles to operate in air, under-sea, surface and on land to combat and gather intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The use of drones and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for automated platforms is the new face of warfare. Likewise, the IS mastered the use of drones for its missions, and released videos of indigenously manufactured aerial drones.⁷⁸ Rassler maintained that the IS remarkably

⁷⁵ Pape and Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse*, 309-311.

⁷⁶ J.R. Wilson, "Robotic Technologies for the Future Land Warrior," *Military and Aerospace Electronics*, June 1, 2016, <https://www.militaryaerospace.com/unmanned/article/16708962/robotic-technologies-for-the-future-land-warrior>.

⁷⁷ Ralph Sanders, "An Israeli Military Innovation: UAVs," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 33 (Winter 2002): 114-118, <https://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/AA/00/06/15/87/00033/Winter-2002.pdf>.

⁷⁸ "Drones: Threat from Above," Group 4 Securicor (G4S) Plc, March 8, 2017, https://www.g4s.com/en-ca/-/media/g4s/canada/files/whitepapers/usa/drones_threat_from_above.ashx?la=en&hash=A5EE00E0402E0CB50FDA127500636B53.

used drones for terrorism, and warned that these drones may fall into the hands of other terrorist organisations.⁷⁹

Exploitation of Opportunities by Counter Terrorists

Johnson argued that during the 1980s, the *Mujahideen*'s 'favourite strategy' was to shell Soviet installations, and then exploit the subsequent reprisal and punitive operations conducted by the Red military – by turning the Afghan people in their favour.⁸⁰ However, the authors contend Johnson's view and argue that it was a tactic rather a strategy. Moreover, this tactic yielded successful results at tactical and operational levels, and ultimately became a part of their strategy. Counter reaction from an established power against AOTs is playing into the hands of these outfits. They expect the bigger power to counter-react as it would further enhance their cause and justify their struggle. The material manifestation of atrocities provides them the opportunity to gain sympathies of the populace. If the major actor reacts, it falls into the trap; if it does not react, it appears weak.

Clausewitzian Hauptschlacht for Terrorists

Clausewitz argued that '...the essence of war is fighting, and since the battle is the fight of the main force, the battle must always be considered as the true centre of gravity of the war.'⁸¹ For Clausewitz, war is lost and won in major battles i.e., *Hauptschlacht*.⁸² Understandably, a major or decisive battle has been a dominant indicator to predict or measure the outcome of war or a campaign. For instance, the decisive Battle of Stalingrad in February 1942 and the Battle of Kursk in July 1943, can both be regarded as major battles or *Hauptschlacht* which helped in determining the outcome of the Eastern Front – especially for the German *Wehrmacht*.⁸³ After

⁷⁹ Ressler drew thought-provoking analysis on drone technology and its utility in terrorism. Don Ressler, *The Islamic State and Drones: Supply, Scale, and Future Threats* (New York: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, United States Military Academy, July 2018), <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Islamic-State-and-Drones-Release-Version.pdf>.

⁸⁰ Johnson, "Taliban Adaptations and Innovations," 6.

⁸¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 248.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸³ Spencer C. Tucker, *Battles That Changed History: An Encyclopedia of World Conflict* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), 496-506.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

Stalingrad and Kursk, Germans remained on the defensive and could not launch a major offensive against the Soviets.

Likewise, the unfortunate events of 9/11 took the lives of 3,190 innocent people and left the American nation in a state of peril.⁸⁴ At the same time, the events manifested the war-waging capabilities of AOTs or terrorists and the innovation in their tactics of using passenger aeroplanes as missiles or perhaps as neo-kamikazes. In retrospect, it can be argued that the attacks on the US being the primary ideological enemy of the perpetrators was perhaps the *Hauptschlacht* for al-Qaeda and its ideologically affiliated groups. Similarly, the creation of the IS in 2014, and the subsequent declaration of caliphate in June the same year, can be cited as an example of a decisive victory for war-waging AOTs or terrorists.⁸⁵

Use of Weapons – Soft and Hard

Military forces give fundamental importance to weapons in strengthening their strategy. Since ancient times, weapons have been researched, designed, developed and deployed to enable war-fighters in overcoming the physical, psychological and mental challenges in relation to adversaries. It would not be wrong to assume that without weapons, no military force can execute its strategy in fighting and winning. However, not every weapon is meant for killing. For instance, radars serve as a vital component in weapon systems; they help in target acquisition and fire control instead of directly destroying enemy units. Similarly, electronic warfare equipment jam, sabotage and even render temporary or permanent damage to an enemy's equipment; however, it doesn't kill – it helps in paralysing. On the same pattern, AOTs or terrorists procure, adapt and improvise when it comes to weapons. The most important characteristic of terrorists is to turn almost everything into a weapon from an ordinary kitchen pressure cooker to a sanitation pipe.

Command and Control Structure and Ranks

Military forces operate under a command and control system and maintain communications to perform in an optimal manner. Due to advancement in

⁸⁴ Phillips and Axelrod, *Encyclopedia of Wars*, 1231.

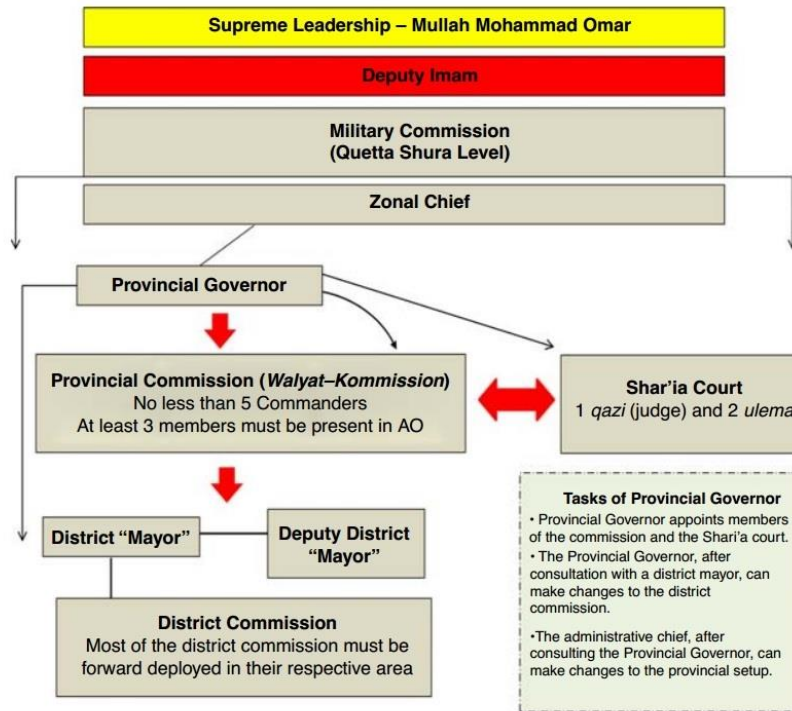
⁸⁵ Hussein Solomon, *Islamic State and the Coming Global Confrontation* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 2-8.

Muhammad Ali Baig & Syed Sabir Muhammad

technology, modern command and control platforms such as C4ISTAR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) help military forces to implement their strategy and fulfil the command's intent.⁸⁶ Similarly, AOTs or terrorists envisage a chain of command and strengthen every tier and level with specific responsibilities with the aim of protecting the command and control system from collapse. Terrorists follow a certain chain of command in decision-making as well.

⁸⁶ Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations*, 241.

Figure-1
Command and Control Structure of Afghan Taliban



Source: Johnson, “Taliban Adaptations and Innovations,” 8.⁸⁷

The authors aver that Clausewitzian Centre of Gravity (CoG) exists in terrorist organisations — just like in an armed force. The CoG in AOTSS lies in all tiers of its command structure. On the other hand, Clausewitzian axiom of a ‘main fighting force’ can also be seen in AOTSS. The main fighting force comprises of such valuable combat units whose ‘destruction’ could result in operational collapse — Clausewitz emphasised such destruction.⁸⁸ For AOTSS and terrorist organisations, the main fighting force remain its human resources. In other words, the number of troops.

⁸⁷ Mullah Omar is no longer the Supreme Leader of the Taliban. The figure is for reference only.

⁸⁸ Clausewitz, *On War*, 529-531.

Essentially, the CoG and main fighting force retain the potential in determining the Culminating Point of Attack (CPA) and Culminating Point of Victory (CPV). However, the decentralised command system i.e. leaderless struggle put forward by al-Suri rendered ‘Cutting the Snake’s Head’ strategy less potent.⁸⁹ The main advantage of this decentralised command and leaderless resistance is that the main fighting force of AOTSS and terrorist organisations can survive and fight even when the CoG is eliminated.

Alliances

The formation of alliances has remained a viable strategy adopted by state actors to achieve common as well as collective security. Off-shore balancing is a viable strategy involving forming of military alliances as well.⁹⁰ Alliances can be the result of bilateral or multilateral pacts and agreements, e.g. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Warsaw Pact. In similar fashion, the strategy of forming alliances against a common enemy is also a characteristic of AOTSS or terrorists. Trager and Zagorcheva argued that:

The application of force, and other aggressive policies, against a set of adversaries can also create powerful common interests, driving them to cooperate.⁹¹

For instance, after the death of Zarqawi in June 2006, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) headed by Abu Hamza al-Mohajir pledged loyalty to the newly formed and perhaps more influential Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) led by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. The persistence of alliances in terrorist organisations was highlighted by Lovelace who cited the same among the followers of

⁸⁹ Paul Joosse, “Leaderless Resistance and the Loneliness of Lone Wolves: Exploring the Rhetorical Dynamics of Lone Actor Violence,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 1 (2017): 52-78; George Michael, “Leaderless Resistance: The New Face of Terrorism,” *Defence Studies* 12, no. 2 (2012): 257-282, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274172371_Leaderless_Resistance_The_New_Face_of_Terrorism.

⁹⁰ Pape and Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse*, 12.

⁹¹ Robert F. Trager and Dessislava P. Zagorcheva, “Deterring Terrorism: It Can Be Done,” *International Security* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005): 87-123.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Sunni tribes, along with the Baathists, after the killing of Zarqawi.⁹² Among many others, the objective to fight the US-led Allied Forces remained common for both organisations. Likewise, IS and Hamas fighters retained an informal alliance in the former's campaign in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt when Hamas' commander Wael Faraj greatly helped wounded IS fighters and provided them with logistical support.⁹³

Intelligence Gathering

Intelligence gathering, using number of platforms, is a pivotal aspect of a military strategy. The intelligence helps in analysing the strengths and weaknesses of opposing forces and enables the strategists and planners to overcome their weaknesses and minimise the strengths of adversaries. It also helps in maximising situational awareness. Modern militaries have incorporated a number of ISR platforms, including drones. IS replicated this particular aspect in their operations in the Levant and used drones for gathering intelligence and enemy troop concentration to design their line of attack.

Indoctrination and Radicalisation

No military force can devise a strategy and prepare for action without a clear image of the enemy. The indoctrination of war-fighters is serious business carried out to produce warriors. This indoctrination was manifested in the creation of *kamikazes* and *kaitens*. The subtle Geisha women also radicalised the Japanese soldiers to carry out suicide attacks.⁹⁴ Similarly, terrorist media cells are comparable to military organisations which maintain public relations. The Taliban used ideology and doctrine i.e. *Takfir* and *Layeha* quite effectively in radicalising suicide bombers and

⁹² Douglas Lovelace, Jr., ed., *Terrorism: Commentary on Security Documents. The Evolution of the Islamic State*, vol. 143 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

⁹³ Solomon, *Islamic State and the Coming Global Confrontation*, 8.

⁹⁴ Yasuo Kuwahara and Gordon T. Allred, *Kamikaze*, 3rd ed. (New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1962), 21, 128-130, https://www.worldhistory.biz/download567/Kamikaze_worldhistory.biz.pdf; Axell and Kase argued that Vice Admiral Takijiro Onishi, the creator of Kamikaze, used to visit Geisha women. Albert Axell and Hideaki Kase, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods* (London: Pearson Education, 2002).

fighters.⁹⁵ Terrorism is about tactics and a specific set of means to achieve an end. It is characterised by both soft and hard core tools. The hard core is preceded by soft core. The doctrine that cements different members of a group, satisfies their demands and justifies their struggle, forms the soft core of different AOTs. The hard core is actual fighting. AOTs use military strategy to launch offensive and defensive strategies in order to out-manoeuvre the enemy, gain advantage and fortify their advantages. They acquire weapons and training; acquire geographical sense of the terrain; gain know-how of the enemy; and devise operational codes. Similarly, the recruitment and training process of any military force is imitated by terrorists. Strategies outlined by al-Suri and Naji are comparable to the US Army Training and Doctrine Command. While the nature of both might be different — the effects produced are similar.

Financial Resources

A military force maintains and operates within the framework of a financial budget and sustains itself to maintain operational readiness. Similarly, a terrorist organisation aspires to collect and extract while protecting its monetary sources. For instance, the IS used to trade oil and unique ancient artefacts to finance its operations.

Conclusion

The article outlines how terrorist organisations exhibit similar aspects of military operations and strategy. Due to adaptation and flexibility in operations, terrorism as a strategy has gained centre-stage importance in academic literature. Terrorist organisations employ every generation of warfare to advance their strategic objectives, and war-waging AOTs or terrorists have greatly refined their operations, while learning from military strategy. While there may be no one definition of terrorism, it may be regarded as a strategy or an operational plan pivoted upon military principles adopted by AOTs or a terrorist organisation that intends to behave like a state — at least in their objectives.

⁹⁵ Thomas H. Johnson and Matthew C. DuPee, “Analysing the New Taliban Code of Conduct (Layeha): An Assessment of Changing Perspectives and Strategies of the Afghan Taliban,” *Central Asian Survey* 31, no. 1 (February 2012): 77-91.

Redefining Terrorism: An Offshoot of Military Strategy

War is military strategy in operation, launched to achieve certain political objectives within allocated means and resources. Terrorism is also politically motivated violence directed to achieve certain objectives within allocated means. Hence, terrorism can be considered an offshoot of military strategy. The article started by establishing a link between military strategy and terrorism by examining the presence of violence in both war and terrorism and the philosophy behind the use of violence. Like any state, AOTSSs also justify the use of violence against the opponent. They delegitimise the existing system and use the gaps to their advantage to seek legitimacy for their version of political order. A trinity exists in terrorism as well when forces fight guided by leadership with the support of the people, believing in their cause.

Furthermore, like every warfare strategy, terrorism includes a code of conduct, indoctrination, command and control structure, training, recruitments, information, financial bases, military hardware and tactical readjustments. At the same time, one can find guerrilla tactics and alliance formation too. The study's findings are strengthened by Johnson's observation who concluded that the Taliban act like a military organisation and their actions overtly exhibit a military strategy. All the tactics employed in terrorism by AOTSSs, in one way or the other, are derived from military strategy and sciences. ■