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# SRI LANKA ATTACKS

NEW OPENINGS BY ISLAMIC STATE

CHANGING  
NATURE  
OF TERROR

A PROFILE OF  
ATTACKERS

THE INDIAN  
CONNECTION



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**The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...**

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

# DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



**D**espite years of Civil War with its Tamil minority, a brutal insurgency in the South involving its Sinhala majority, nothing quite prepared Sri Lanka for the sheer scale and surprise of the 21st April Easter Sunday multiple attacks. Everything about them was like new, unexpected, and horrifying in its impact. The repercussions of which are going to be long lasting, both in terms of the society and the state. An over reach by the state has already been reported, but at this early stage of the investigations, this is only to be expected in the aftermath of what is a truly frightening scenario for Sri Lanka.

For the first time a minority has awoken Sri Lanka to the scary fact that its internals are exposed to global pulls and pressures. But these have not been caused by wobbly markets, shifts in oil prices, or even political whims of an unstable global leader. The claim by Islamic State that its activists carried out the attacks makes for a whole new ball game in Sri Lanka's security scenario. And, it is a storyline in which

none of the neighbours can be silent observers, but in fact, have to share the responsibilities with Colombo.

The greatest challenge to Sri Lanka lies in the fact that financially and politically, well-connected members of its Muslim minority, conspired to blow themselves up during Easter Sunday services, and in hotels. They not only shook Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa, the major target centres, but the whole country. It will never be the same again, for the simple reason that the perpetrators, and their family members, would seem to be the last people to feel alienated, abused, denied justice, or opportunities in that beautiful island. They were, after all, well off even by the standards of the posh in Sri Lanka.

So, the common person on the street looks with utmost suspicion at others of the community. This requires great social and political tact on the part of Sri Lanka's leaders if the country is to see out this phase without greater damage to its fabric. The entire neighbourhood

has a role to play in this, for gloating majoritarianism will only exacerbate matters. Which, after all, is not in the long term interest of any global citizen. Since there is an Indian connection to the multiple blasts, and officials in New Delhi let it be known that they had shared intelligence with Colombo, cooperation between both countries should be enhanced. Terror is transnational, a reality that Islamic State successfully demonstrated on Easter Sunday.

So efforts to counter terror must also be transnational, without a sectarian or political agenda masquerading as cooperation. The sheer scale of the conspiracy suggests some are still at large, but riding roughshod over law and its procedures is not the answer, anywhere. After all, alienating innocents in the name of operations is recipe for further disaster. A well-heeled and western educated Abdul Latheef Mohamed Jameel has already caused enough grief. Those like him have to be stopped, and new ones not allowed to go in that direction.

**Manvendra Singh**

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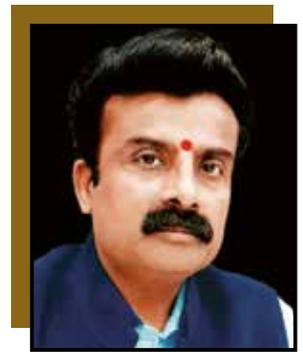
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**Editor: Manvendra Singh**

# SRI LANKA ATTACKS NEED FOR JOINT ACTION PLAN



**F**or the past few decades the entire globe has been afflicted by the twin curses of global warming and global terrorism. While scientists are trying their best to find out the reasons for and solutions to counter the global warming phenomenon, the entire world's policy and decisions-makers in the governments, police and security forces are occupied in finding the connections and nexus between the fountainheads and sleeper cells in the many global terror networks. Unfortunately, there has been a drastic and rapid change in the operations and the strategies and formations of the newer terrorist outfits across the globe.

We have seen the scenario in Afghanistan, Nigeria, Russia, European countries and even the US, and, how badly these States were affected by the terrorist activities. The common man as well as entire governments were shaken up by the operations of the global terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, LeT, Islamic State, Pakistan's ISI and Taliban, Black Widows, Boko Haram and Jaish e Mohammad to name a few. Asia has been, by and large, the main continent for the operations of all these terrorist groups.

India has long been a major target of the terrorist groups pampered by the Pakistan army and its intelligence wing, ISI. If we talk about the SAARC nations, almost all the member nations have been directly affected by terrorism. Sri Lanka, for many decades, suffered the depredations of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and suddenly, last month, Islamic jihadists showed their presence there with a ghastly series of attacks that made the world wonder how to deal with the scourge.

The recent attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday illustrate how dramatically the image of the terrorist has shifted from the deprived of the community to well-educated and financially sound entities indoctrinating themselves to such heights as to sacrifice themselves in the process of mass brutal murder.

The investigations later revealed that a local Muslim businessman and his family were directly responsible for these killings. It was also revealed that this business family was also in touch with the Islamic State Chief and that it helped organise the initial training to the jihadis in India through their connections in this country. This shows that the ultimate connectivity of the terrorist attacks was also somehow linked with the terrorist groups in operation in India.

Now the big question is how to control such nexus between certain business people and the terrorist groups who mastermind attacks and disturb the peace anytime anywhere. Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that is investigating Pakistan's role in terror-funding is but a microcosmic effort. It needs to be expanded and strengthened. I think that all the affected nations should immediately form a joint action force with a central command headquarters equipped with all the latest technologies, arms and ammunitions and above all, a strong sharing networking zone where all information is shared by all the affected States for swift action and counter-attack on the terrorist groups. I am aware that this might take some time in the making but given the manner in which the terrorists have spread out across the globe such unified action could well be the answer.

This edition is focussed on the recent attacks on Sri Lanka and how the scenario has changed and how it has a connection with India. Our experts have given their candid thoughts for your brainstorming, dear reader!

Jai Hind!



**Pawan Agrawal**  
 CEO - DSA



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# SUBCONTINENT NEXT

To effectively counter the stated goals of this powerful AQIS coalition, counter-terrorism experts, intelligence agencies, and policy makers around the world should take the clear Sharia-based statements found in the *Code of Conduct* to heart, and accentuate this threat by paying much closer attention to the global Deoband madrassa system.



Bomb attack in Sri Lanka.

The May 2019 issue of *Defence & Security Alert* (pp. 36-41) included an article entitled *Madrassas Ingrained Worldwide*.

While focussing on the global network of Deoband madrassas, the authors stated:

“Identifying the source of *jihād* ideology, as taught in the Salafi madrassas in the West, as well as in other countries around the world, may not prevent every possible terrorist attack, but it would certainly help provide strong indicators (i.e. connect the dots) between the Islamic indoctrination of young boys and men, and future terror attacks.”

Sadly, this statement was soon proven true, when eight members of the Deobandi-influenced National Tawheed Jamaat (NTJ), a group of Sunni, Salafi *Jihadists*, set off multiple bombs across Sri Lanka, starting at 08:45 on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019.

\*Exactly the same time the World Trade Center attacks began on September 11, 2001.

### Genesis

Initially described as a very small, previously unknown, obscure Islamic radical group, NTJ is actually part of an international coalition of Deoband-influenced *Jihadist* groups, with links to [1] multiple tens of thousands of madrassas (often supported by Saudi Arabia), [2] the highest levels of the kaleidoscopic Al-Qaeda/Islamic State (AQ/IS) network, and [3] to the global Muslim Brotherhood (MB) organisation.

**Note:** For additional background on the connections between the AQ/IS and/or global MB network, two resources include a 6 May 2019 article entitled *The Terrorist Ties That Bind*, as well as 11 May 2019 study entitled *The Muslim Brotherhood's Ties To ISIS And Al-Qaeda*.

At this point, it should be noted that what is commonly known today as ‘Al-Qaeda’, was actually founded in February of 1998 as the World Islamic Front (aka the International Islamic Front) by five prominent Islamic leaders, including [1] Sheikh Usamah Bin-Muhammad Bin-Ladin, [2] Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, [3] Abu-Yasir Rifai Ahmad Taha, Emir of the Egyptian Islamic Group, [4] Sheikh Mir Hamzah, Secretary of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan, and [5] Fazlur Rahman, Emir of the Jihad Movement in Bangladesh.

In addition, at least 14 major, international Salafi organisations pledged loyalty to this new AQ coalition, including at least seven that were directly linked to the Deoband branch of Islam (highlighted in **bold font** below).

These original 14 organisations include the **055 Brigade** (aka the Shadow Army, a mixture of mercenary *Jihad* fighters from the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia that were integrated into the Taliban from 1995-2001), the Islamic *Jihad* Group (Egypt), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Turkistan Islamic Movement (or Party), Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines (*Jihadist* pirates also known as the Islamic State in the Philippines), Chechen & North Caucasian *Jihad* Groups, **Uyghur Jihad** Groups (Xinjiang Province, Western China), **Harkat-ul Mujahideen** (Pakistan), Lashkar-e-Taiba (Pakistan), **Sipah-e-Sahaba** (Pakistan), **Lashkar-e-Jhangvi** (Afghanistan), **Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami** (Pakistan) and the **Taliban**, aka the **Deobandi Taliban** (Afghanistan).

### Brief Background - The Easter Sunday Bombings In Sri Lanka

At 08:45 on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019, eight ‘well-educated’ Salafi Sunni Muslims of ‘wealth and privilege’ simultaneously detonated



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explosive vests at St. Sebastian’s Church in Katuwapitiya (Negombo) and St. Anthony’s Church in the

capital city of Colombo (both in western Sri Lanka), and at St. Mary's Cathedral and / or the Evangelical Charismatic Zion Church in Batticaloa (300 miles away in the eastern part of the country).

The six coordinated bombings by members of the Deobandi-influenced National Tawheed Jamaat (NTJ), also targeted the Cinnamon Grand, the Kingsbury and Shangri-La hotels, all located in the heart of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The NTJ, *aka Jamaat At-Tawheed Al-Wataniyah*, *aka دي جى وتل اة يان طول* *دي جى وتل اة يان طول*, *aka National Monotheism*

Organisation, is affiliated with at least nine other Thowheed Jamaat groups, including the All India Thowheed Jamath (AITJ), Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath\* (SLTJ), Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamaat (TNTJ India), Qatar India Thowheed Centre (QITC), UAE Thowheed Jamath (Dubai TNTJ), United States Thowheed Jamath (USTJ), United Kingdom Thowheed Jamath (UKTJ), France Thowheed Jamath (FRTJ), and Australia Thowheed Jamath (ATJ). \*Despite immediate and vigorous denials, it is important to note that NTJ was once part of Sri Lanka Thowheed Jamath (SLTJ); this is also confirmed by this 23 April 2019 article by Middle East Media Research Institute.

At 13:45, a seventh blast occurred at the New Tropical Inn in Dehiwela, near the national zoo, killing two people. At least 250 people were killed and more than 500 were seriously injured in these seven bombings.

One half hour later, at 14:15, an eighth bombing occurred in the Colombo suburb of Dematagoda, when police officers executed a breach and clear warrant at the palatial home of Ilham Ahmed Ibrahim, one of the Shangri-La Hotel bombers. As they approached the house, Ilham's pregnant wife, Fatima, detonated an explosive vest, destroying the entire villa, and killing



all three police officers, herself, her unborn child, their three children and Ilham's sister.

At 08:30 on the morning of 22 April 2019, a van parked near St. Anthony's Church in Colombo exploded. The vehicle detonated while police were attempting to safely defuse it. Fortunately, no one was hurt in this explosion.

On Friday afternoon, 26 April 2019, as Sri Lankan security forces approached a suspected NTJ / Islamic State safe house in the southeastern town of Sammanthurai (part of Kalmunai),

the father and two brothers of Mohamed Cassim Mohamed Zahran, aka Mohammed Zaharan, aka Zahran Hashim, leader of the NTJ and Shangri-La bomber, began detonating explosives and started a fierce gun battle, which ended early on Saturday morning.

Fifteen people were killed (all relatives of Zaharan), but no law enforcement or military personnel were seriously injured. In the aftermath, police found more than 150 sticks of plastic explosives (probably TATP), trigger devices, chemicals and about 100,000 ball bearings\* in the house.

Bangladesh, India, the Maldives and Pakistan (all known centers of Salafi Islamic activism).

### Training Ground

On the same day, a 10-acre NTJ training camp was discovered by Sri Lankan police in the eastern town of Kattankudy, where *Jihadis* linked to the Easter Day attacks are believed to have practiced their shooting and bomb-making skills.

On 11 May 2019, Sri Lanka's army commander Mahesh Senanayake declared that the threat of more terror attacks had

## The **current leader of AQIS** is **Pakistani-born jihadist Asim Umar** (aka Asim Umer, aka Maulana Asim Umar, aka Sanaul Haq)

\*Pictures of the bombings show hundreds of uniform-sized holes in the church walls.

On 22 April 2019, the government of Sri Lanka declared a national state of emergency, granting police and the military extensive powers to detain and question terrorism suspects without court orders, and on 27 April 2019, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena banned the NTJ and Jamathei Millathu Ibrahim (JMI) under the emergency regulations that came into effect five days earlier.

On 5 May 2019, as part of the ongoing national emergency, Sri Lanka announced that it was conducting a 'security crackdown' by tightening visa restrictions for religious teachers, while adding that it had already expelled at least 200 'Islamic preachers,' along with 600 foreign nationals, mainly from

been contained, and that the security services had dismantled most of the network linked to the Easter bombings. In addition, while investigators had established that the plotters had links to ISIS, authorities were still trying to establish how deep those contacts were. He also observed that "*up to now the investigations do not go beyond many areas, so we don't have to worry about the situation; it is controllable, it is contained.*"

Finally, on 14 May 2019, at least four sources revealed that Aadhil Ameer, a 24-year-old Sri Lankan software engineer, had been arrested on suspicion of providing technical and logistical support to the NTJ bombers, and that he had been monitored three years earlier by Indian intelligence agencies,



for suspected recruiting and fundraising activities linked to the Islamic State.

**Connecting The Dots - N. M. Ameen Spills The Beans**

On November 9, 2016, Muslim Council of Sri Lanka (MCSL) President N. M. Ameen made the following public announcement:

“The Thableeq Jamath [Tablighi Jamaat], Sunnath Jamath [Tamil Nadu Sunnath Jamaat], Thowheed Jamath and Jamaathe Islam [Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and/or Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan] and several other organisations are all Muslim religious and social service organisations. They do not promote any form of violence as implied by the Minister Rajapaksa. Certain parts of his statement are verbatim of the hate speech spewed by the extremist priest Ven. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero.”

In hindsight, this statement is very revealing, because in his effort to insulate these Deoband-linked Jamath (= Jamaat) groups from being investigated for suspected links to *Jihad* activity, Ameen (perhaps inadvertently) confirmed that they were all closely affiliated with one another. As can be seen now, Ameen’s emphatic assertion that these groups ‘do not promote any kind of violence’ was terribly misleading.

**Aftermath - AQIS Targets The Indian Subcontinent**

A 2 May 2019 article entitled *Islamic State Planning ‘New Strategy’ To Target Smaller Countries*, proposes that an emerging IS battlefield will be in South Asian countries. Other recent articles discussing this emerging IS / AQIS threat include the 5 May 2019 article entitled *The Next Islamic State Battlefield Will Be in South Asia*, and the 14 May 2019 article entitled *A Network Of Extremism Expands*.

The **Easter Day Bombings highlight the threat of AQIS**, and its roster of loyal **Deoband-linked groups**, which are operating across the **entire Indian subcontinent**

If this premise is correct, then two important questions must be asked: [1] **How did we get to this point**, and [2] **What can be done?**

**Question One: How did we get to this point?**

On 3 September 2014, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, who is globally recognised as the Emir of the original Al-Qaeda (AQ), announced the formation of a new AQ branch, which is called Al-Qaeda of the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), *aka Qaedat Al-Jihad Fi Shibhi Al-Qarrat Al-Hindiya*.

During his 55-minute announcement, Al-Zawahiri, who has been a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) since 23 September 2001, stated that the purpose of AQIS was to “*wage Jihad against its enemies, to liberate its land, to restore its sovereignty, and to revive its Caliphate.*”

Less than five years later, the AQIS coalition has numerous affiliated groups operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (including Kashmir), Bangladesh, and Myanmar (Burma).

The current AQIS leader is Pakistani-born *Jihadist* Asim Umar (*aka* Asim Umer, *aka* Maulana Asim Umar, *aka* Sanaul Haq), who is openly loyal to Al-Zawahiri, and has also been a SDGT since 5 July 2016.

As the AQIS leader, his goal is to help the Taliban (a Deoband organisation) re-conquer and take control of



Afghanistan, while also expanding the influence of AQIS throughout the entire Indian subcontinent.

Eight years after Osama bin Laden was killed (on 11 May 2011), AQIS is attracting Deoband-linked *Jihadist* groups across the

Indian subcontinent. This trend intensified immediately after Al-Zawahiri's September 2014 announcement, when the US-led international coalition in Iraq and Syria began encountering thousands of *Jihad* fighters from Central Asia.

For example, in January of 2019, the Central Asian terrorist group *Katibat Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad* (KTJ) publicly renewed its original 2015 pledge of Bayah (Loyalty) to Ayman Al-Zawahiri. And, while it is true that IS has lost its caliphate and may



*Protesters carry al-Qaeda flags during an anti-government protest in Idlib province, Syria.*

no longer have a secure base of operations in the Middle East (Syria and Iraq), it is still dangerous, and more than capable of reaching out to cause mayhem in countries thousands of miles away, as we saw in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019.

Meanwhile, on 18 May 2018, Al-Zawahiri announced that US President Donald Trump's 6 December 2017 decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to relocate America's embassy there, was evidence that negotiations and "appeasement" had failed the Palestinians, and urged Muslims to carry out *Jihad* against the United States.

On 23 August 2018, Al-Zawahiri called for the global Islamic *Ummah* (Community) to unite in *Jihad* against the "international infidel alliance" and to "fight against the tyranny of the infidels." The NTJ bombers used some of the same language in their declarations, as confirmed on 23 April 2019, when the IS issued the following statement on Telegram:

"A security source to Amaq [News] Agency: Those that carried out the attack that targeted members of the **US-led Coalition and Christians** in Sri Lanka the day before yesterday are Islamic State group fighters."

On 11 September 2018, Al-Zawahiri described America as the main enemy of Muslims all over the world, and encouraged Muslims to fight *Jihad* against the US and its allies on different fronts, as part of a unified strategy to wear down America and the West [= the Crusader Coalition] until they are defeated and repelled from all Islamic countries.

From the perspective of **sovereignty and national security, cooperative monitoring of the Deoband madrassas** operating throughout the world is a wise, necessary step

### **The AQIS Code of Conduct**

To continue, the primary goal (strategy) and the authorised tactics of this ominous new coalition of Deoband-linked *Jihadist* organisations, which includes the NTJ in Sri Lanka, are plainly described in a 20-page document, known as the **Code of Conduct**, which was released by AQIS (in English) in June of 2017.

Just as with the Muslim Brotherhood's 1991 strategic document entitled *An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Brotherhood in North America* (aka the Explanatory Memorandum), the *Code of Conduct* reveals the precise goals of AQIS, the Sharia-authorized methods (tactics) to accomplish these goals, and exactly how they intend to fight against any opposition to these goals.

In summary, the *Code of Conduct* is an explicit warning to the West, which should be taken literally (at face value) by those who wish to defend sovereignty and liberties from the influence of the Global Islamic Movement.

### **Focus On Deoband Madrassas**

#### **Question Two: What can be done? Worldwide Focus Turns To Deoband Madrassas** (aka Madaris)

In the weeks since the Sri Lanka bombings, another development has confirmed the assertions

made in the May 2019 DSA article, *Madrassas Ingrained Worldwide*.

Fortunately, it appears that analysts and members of the international intelligence community have begun to realise that the core of the 'nuclear reactor' of the Salafi, pro-*Jihad*, pro-Sharia Global Islamic Movement (GIM), especially in the Indian subcontinent, is centered within the extensive Deoband madrassa (madari) network.

Some earlier (pre-Sri Lanka) examples include the 11 April 2013 research paper entitled *Balochistan - The State Versus the Nation*, which notes a 'vast network of Deobandi madrassas,' the 27 March 2014 discussion of Deoband madrassas, which 'boasts the largest network of satellite madrassas all over Pakistan, Bangladesh, neighboring countries in Asia and beyond, and as far afield as the Caribbean, South Africa, Britain, and the United States,' a June 2015 article entitled *Religious Education of Pakistan's Madaris and Radicalisation*, and a 23 March 2019 article entitled *Terrorism Fears As 3,000 UK Children A Year Go To 'Jihadi' Schools In Pakistan, Secret Government Report Reveals*.

Subsequent to the Sri Lanka bombings, several more articles have expressed concern about Deoband madrassas, including a 29 April 2019 post entitled

*Pakistan Says It Will Take Over 30,000 Madrassas*, a 4 May 2019 piece entitled *Secret Government Report Warns Over 48 British Islamic Schools Are Teaching Intolerance And Misogyny To Future Imams*, and a 6 May 2019 article entitled *The Terrorist Ties That Bind*.

At the same time, national security agencies in the subcontinent have declared their intention to assertively monitor the Deoband madrassas in their countries. Examples include a 5 May 2019 article entitled *Sri Lanka Expels 200 Islamic Clerics After Easter Attacks*, the 7 May 2019 story entitled *Islamic Elementary Schools Teaching Taliban Curriculum*, a 9 May 2019 piece entitled *Pakistan Islamic School Reforms Aim to Curb Extremism*, and a 22 May 2019 article entitled *Pulwama Attack, Sri Lanka Blasts Strengthened Resolve To Fight Terror*.

### Expected Consequences - More Jihad Attacks

From the perspective of sovereignty and national security, cooperative monitoring of the Deoband madrassas operating throughout the world is a wise, necessary step.

However, as stated plainly in Section XIII of the *Code of Conduct*, one should be prepared for a violent response. As seen ahead, AQIS members consider themselves the guardians of the *Ulamaa* (Scholars) and the *Madaris* (Madrassas), and as plainly stated in XIII-4, they will become a 'strong force' (for *Jihad*). Any effort to reform or oversee their madrassas will be met with fierce opposition and resistance, *aka Jihad*.

### Conclusion

The 21 April 2019 Easter Day Bombings have forced us to acknowledge the emerging

### Section XIII: Our Stance Regarding 'Ulamaa and Policy in Dealing with them

We consider the 'ulamaa and the madaris in the region, to be the primary force of the movement against the system of infidelity, and of the jihad for the establishment of khilafah; and regarding them, we believe the following measures are essential:

1. The 'ulamaa are the leaders of an Islamic society. The implementation of Shari'ah and establishment of an Islamic society is only possible in obedience to them, and under their guidance. We consider honoring them and getting them their rightful place in society to be our responsibility, so that they can implement Allah's Shari'ah and save The Book of Allah, from becoming dependent on the parliament.
2. The Jama'ah considers defending the scholars (especially scholars who stand up for the truth) and madaris, its foremost duty. In this regard, it will defend them from any kind of governmental or non-governmental aggression, and—according to its capabilities—it will take revenge, in-sha-Allah, for any kind of oppression committed on them.
3. We will pass the whole journey of Jihad, according to the guidance and supervision of ulama. For this reason, we will continue to maintain strong bonds with honorable 'ulamaa, and consult them in matters concerning Islamic laws, in-sha-Allah.
4. The Jama'ah will become a strong force for scholars and madaris, and provide them the ability to stand firmly, against the English system, in-sha-Allah.
5. The Jama'ah will support in every possible way those scholars who are making any sort of efforts for reforming and educating the society; and upon gaining dominance on any land, will also become their political and financial supporter, in-sha-Allah.
6. The Jama'ah wishes to get scholars and students join the ranks of the mujahideen, so that they can guide our jihad towards religious, as well as worldly success.
7. As for the evil scholars who prevent the masses from the Shari'ah of Muhammad ﷺ, and fill their own stomachs with the fire of Hell, by selling their knowledge for petty wealth and goods of this world, we will uncover their real face to the people. We will reply to their government fatwas in the light of Islamic knowledge. Even though, they have caused greater injury to the hearts of mujahideen in the way of Allah than what Kuffaar and apostates have, we will desist from killing or arresting them until we have proof, that they are actively taking part in the fight against the establishment of Shari'ah.

CODE OF CONDUCT - AL-QAEDA IN THE SUBCONTINENT 17

threat of AQIS, and its nearly endless roster of dedicated Salafi Deoband-linked groups, including Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Jamaat ul-Ahrar, Jamaat-ul-Mujahedeen, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Tablighi Jamaat, Tamil Nadu Sunnath Jamaath, Tehrik-e-Taliban Balochistan, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, Thowheed Jamaat, and the Taliban.

These groups are not only operating as overlapping coalitions across the entire Indian subcontinent, but are also closely

affiliated to the global Muslim Brotherhood network, and to the kaleidoscopic web of intertwined AQ / IS organisations.

To effectively counter the stated goals of this powerful new international coalition, counter-terrorism experts, intelligence agencies and policy-makers around the world should take the clear Sharia-based statements found in the AQIS **Code of Conduct** to heart, and take steps to augment this threat by paying much closer attention to the global network of **Deoband madrassas**. 

# ISLAMIC STATE ACROSS THE PALK STRAIT

Though India has rich and varied experience in counter-terror operations, we cannot ignore the presence of Islamic State's modules on our borders and the hinterland. We have to remould our strategy to fight terror in the real and virtual world.

**M**ultiple suicide bombings targeting the churchgoers and tourists in neighbouring Sri Lanka on an Easter Sunday have dangerous portent for South and East Asia. It was the deadliest, amongst the Islamic State's purported attacks, killing over 250 people. For very long, intelligence community has been dismissive about Islamic State's presence and potential to carry out terror attacks in the region. It should be remembered that at the height of Islamic State's rule in Iraq and Syria, thousands of youth had joined its rank and file from South and East Asian countries.

As the caliphate crumbled during 2017 losing control of Raqqa – its de facto capital – and Mosul, thousands of its cadres had slipped out of the dragnet and returned home to form sleeper modules. Radicalised, experienced and battle-hardened terrorists of these modules are waiting to be activated and stitched together to start their lethal business again.

Islamic State's intention to expand eastwards and partake the spoils of terrorism in South Asia became evident, when in January 2015, it formally announced formation of a caliphate in Khurasan – ancient name for Afghanistan, encompassing many Asian countries and the entire Indian sub-continent. Islamic State made quick progress in Afghanistan forcing US to drop 'mother of all bombs' on its hideouts in Nangarhar province. Its influence was also spreading into Pakistan competing with the terror outfits enjoying the government's patronage. In 2019, separate caliphates for Pakistan, India and Bangladesh were announced. Islamic State is active in Afghanistan and Pakistan vying with larger terror groups for space and patronage. The terror attacks in Bangladesh have been

supported by it. Its modules have been reported from East Africa, Maldives, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines.

### Sri Lankan Mistake

After the defeat of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009 by Sri Lankan Army, the threat perception of the island nation, which hinged around such a formidable enemy slipped into a vacuum. Despite growing communal frictions between Sinhala and Muslim communities and latter's radicalisation, such a violent riposte was least expected. Indian intelligence had forewarned Sri Lankan authorities about the possible terror attacks on Easter Sunday, but the fissiparous political establishment of the country chose to overlook the warning.

After the **fall of caliphate Islamic State** has dispersed. It is trying to **regroup and operate on a 'franchise' mode**

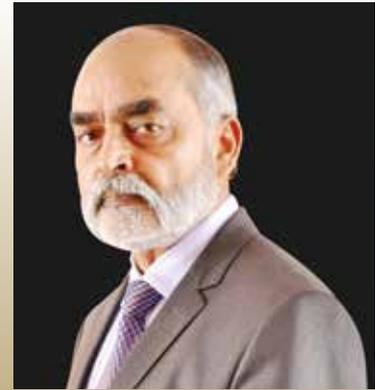
A link between the mastermind of the attacks, Zahran Hashim and India has emerged. Indian National Investigation Agency has also made some arrests from Coimbatore on alleged Islamic State links. Investigations by Sri Lankan authorities revealed that Zahran Hashim had travelled to India on several occasions. India is closest to the epicentre of these suicide bombings and should take prophylactic measures.

**India: Radicalisation Ignored**

Radicalisation of youth in South India has often been reported, but it has been handled with kid gloves. For regional political

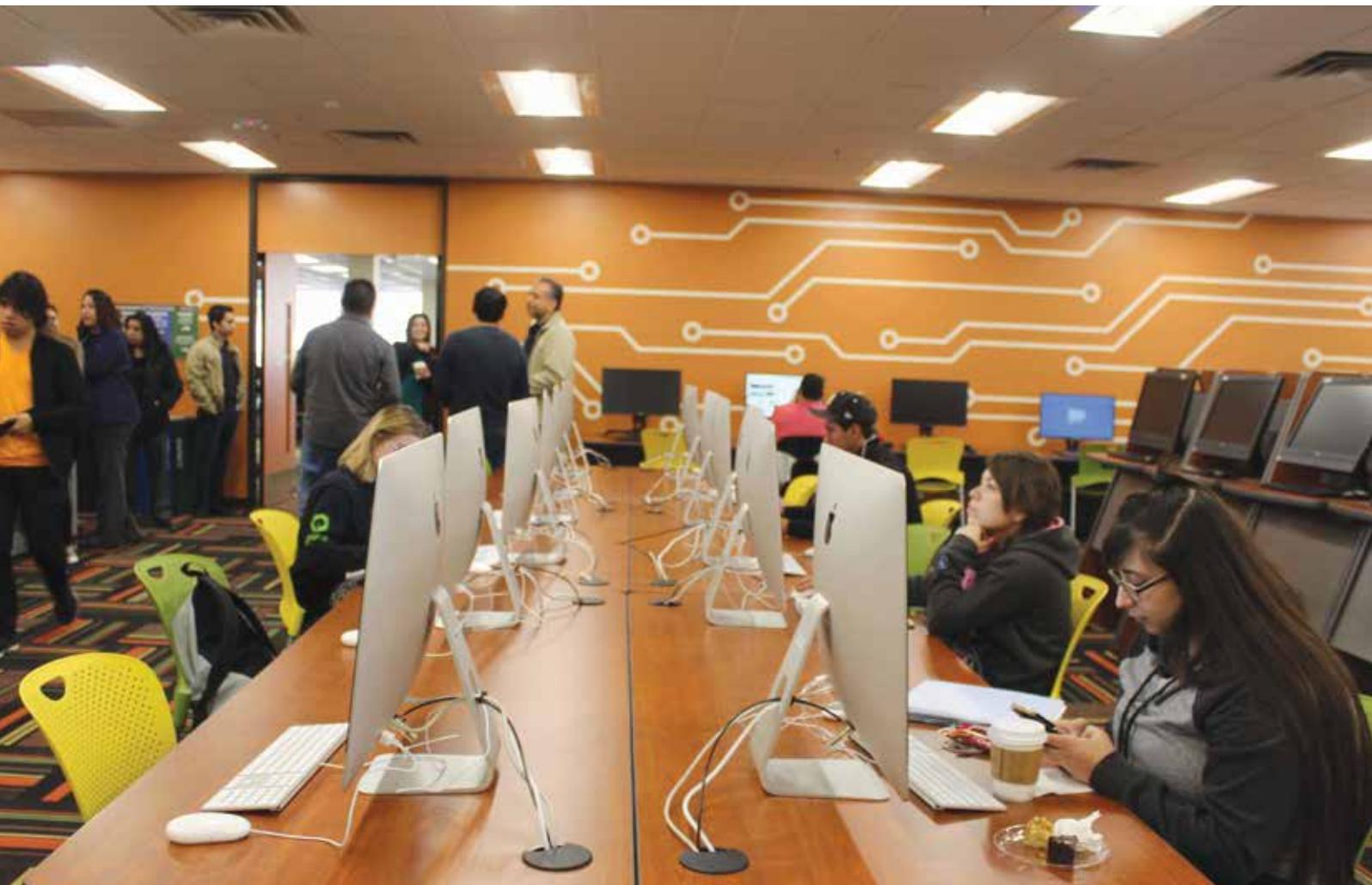
considerations, this grave security concern has been glossed over. Radicalisation remains the biggest factor in driving the terror machine. This cannot be checked by the government alone. Parents, community elders, clerics, teachers all are equal stakeholders.

It may be news to many that Mohammed Shafi Armar, a native of Bhatkal in Karnataka acted as recruiter for the Islamic State in India. In July 2017, Armar was named ‘Specially Designated Global Terrorist’ by the US State Department. Shafi Armar, a former Indian Mujahideen member, had



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*Youth in cyber cafes.*

travelled to Syria from Pakistan to join Islamic State. Tech savvy Shafi Armar used social media to motivate, indoctrinate and recruit youth in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

The Easter bombings in Sri Lanka are unique in many ways. A radicalised cleric manages to influence three cadres of his own extreme organisation National Towheed Jamaat, two sons and a daughter-in-law of a spice tycoon and a youth who studied in Britain and Australia. They met online, came close and got influenced with the extreme ideology to plan and execute the carnage. Such is the evil influence of radicalisation and uninhibited reach of the internet only exacerbates it.

### **Helm In Disarray**

A squabbling political establishment, where tussle between the president and the prime minister is out in the open, left the police and intelligence agencies directionless and complacent. Timely and pinpoint warnings from the Indian intelligence agencies were not acted upon. Maithripala Sirisena, Sri Lanka's president is determined to oppose the parliamentary select committee probing the Easter bombings. The president, who also holds the portfolio of defence and law and order, has refused to allow any police, military or intelligence personnel to testify before the committee.

Security of public places cannot be left to chance. The images of the suicide bombers entering the venues unhindered, even in the high-end hotels is against the basic norms of the physical security. Countries whose economy is so heavily dependent on tourism cannot afford this

**Intelligence and surveillance capabilities** will have to be **fortified**. **Security of public places** would need **special attention**

kind of laxity. Post-bombings Sri Lankan army and police smashed quite a few hideouts and modules in the country, but believing that radical influence has been wiped out would be a fallacious presumption.

Conventional image of a terrorist as madrassa-trained, rustic and radical person has faded away. Today, we have educated, tech-savvy and self-indoctrinated youth, ready to plan and execute any attack. S/he can gain an easy access in any venue and engage the target at an opportune moment.

### **Internet Vulnerability**

Internet provides a safe and reliable platform for connecting with people, recruitment and gaining technical know-how on weaponry and explosives and reconnaissance of the target area. It offers 'do-it-yourself' solutions to a novice. Internet monitoring capability of developing nations is limited and most of the transaction on internet goes unnoticed.

India and Sri Lanka are culturally linked. There is regular people-to-people contact. At the height of LTTE insurgency, Sri Lanka often accused India of supporting and sustaining the movement. The terror modules of both the countries can think of collaborating. And, if that happens, it would be difficult for India to insulate itself from the influence.



India has its own fault lines and hotspots. Our preoccupation with all kinds of terror is well-known. Sporadic presence of Islamic State in Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana should cause us a worry.

Intelligence and surveillance capabilities will have to be fortified. Security of public places would need special attention. We

can think on the lines of planting undercover agents physically and online to monitor activities of a module.

**Terror Franchised**

After the fall of caliphate Islamic State has dispersed. It is trying to regroup and operate on a 'franchise' mode. Its brand value as a terror organisation is unscathed. Any high profile attack will be owned up by it to remain

in contention. Terror attacks from its modules could be in the form of 'lone wolf' attack, suicide bombings and acts of sabotage.

Though India has rich and varied experience in counter-terror operations, we cannot ignore the presence of Islamic State's modules on our borders and the hinterland. We have to remould our strategy to fight terror in the real and virtual world. 



*Sri Lankan military summoned over 50 former LTTE cadres in Jaffna and ordered them to provide intelligence.*

# USING INTERNET TO BRAINWASH

A major change in tactics is the increased number of suicide attacks and hit-and-run operations on opposing troops. The ISIS is moving away from pitched battles. In terms of logistics, it is easier to conduct such attacks. It has been established that the ISIS leaders view these types of strikes as the group's best battlefield option for the future. Overseas, the ISIS's eight global branches are adopting similar tactics of accepting small local groups into their folds, and focussing on suicide attacks.

**T**here is something repetitive about the terror groups of the 21st century. A charismatic leader who is rarely seen and in fact often rumoured to be dead, terror footprints across multiple nations, new levels of cruelty, and a virulent ideology which attracts recruits of different hues. There is another common thread. After expanding themselves across many countries, these terror groups diffuse into numerous cells and local groups, highly interlinked but never presenting a concentrated target. It was Al Qaeda first, and now, it is ISIS which is transforming into a diffused terror group with numerous local affiliates.

Since March 2019, the ISIS does not have headquarters as the territory controlled by them was gradually lost. It started in July 2017 when the group lost control of its largest city, Mosul, to the



*A view of the destruction wrought on Mosul's Old City.*

Iraqi army. Their headquarters at Hajin, Syria, fell in December 2018; the leadership moved to Al-Susah, Syria which also was lost in January 2019, and later they vacated Al-Marashidah and Al-Baghuz Fawqani. The ISIS suffered devastating defeat at the hands of the US and its allies, culminating in the seizure of the group's declared capital of Raqqa in Syria. This loss does not make ISIS any less dangerous, or prevents them from expanding in South Asia. Their influence in South Asia was first seen with 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery terror attack in Bangladesh, followed up by the waving of ISIS flags in Kashmir, and is continuing with the massive Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka.



### **Jihad Via Internet**

While the ISIS actually controls only few pockets, their sway is difficult to eradicate, as the convergence of internet with terrorism is a new theatre of war. With the help of social media, hate videos and closed groups, ISIS is recruiting new converts, communicating with sleeper cells, and directing them to execute terror attacks. The dark web of ISIS runs wide. It claims executing attacks at diverse locations, such as the May 2017 bombing in Manchester, and the June 2017 attacks in Tehran and London; all carried out by sleeper cells or affiliated groups. In April-May 2019, ISIS reported three attacks in the Democratic Republic of Congo, claimed an assault on the Nigerian Army barracks in Borno, and released the video of an ambush on Chechen soldiers. The ISIS is going the Al Qaeda way and transforming itself into a diffused identity with multiple cells in different countries. It shall not hold territory except in terms of few pockets of influence, but will have a number of smaller groups across the world – from Kosovo to Kashmir – which draw their ideological inspiration from ISIS, and some logistic support. It makes ISIS difficult to target.

### **The Al Qaeda Experience**

Post 9/11, when the US targeted Al Qaeda, the organisation simply melted away while retaining its ability to attract followers. The leadership realised that they cannot fight the US military might, which was singularly focussed on the group in the Global War on Terror. Osama bin Laden first retreated to Tora Bora, and



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thereafter to his sprawling mansion near the Pakistan Military Academy at Abbottabad, where he passed directions through his trusted courier, Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti. Indoctrinated by his taped messages, and steered

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by his directions, the number of attacks executed by the group and its affiliates increased manifold. This phenomenon, as marked by a series of suicide attacks in Middle East and Europe, was termed as the 'Globalisation of *Jihad*' by writers like Assaf Moghadam. They attributed it to Al Qaeda and its guiding ideology, Salafi *Jihad*, which is an extreme interpretation of Islam that rejects national boundaries and seeks to create a global Muslim community. Devoid of territory, Al Qaeda focussed

on its overarching and highly appealing ideology, inciting Islamist movements and Muslim masses worldwide to attack those perceived to be the enemies of Islam. They were never short of targets.

Once Osama bin Laden was killed in Pakistan in May 2011, it was expected that the group would fade away. Instead, they again diffused and divided themselves into many local groups. Only few of them linked in any substantial way to the original

Al Qaeda. At this point, Israeli intelligence described Al Qaeda as the '*Jihadi* International' and the British Special Branch referred to Al Qaeda and its associated groups as 'international terrorism', reflecting the change from an organised terror group to not being organised enough to have a specific name. These local groups were not looking for power, wealth or fame. They were motivated by the Al Qaeda-inspired ideological belief in the purification of Islam through violent struggle.



Soldiers celebrate ISIS's defeat in Mosul as Iraq's greatest battle in war against jihadis reaches bloody conclusion.

With ISIS losing significant territory in 2018-19, as the Al Qaeda lost in Afghanistan in 2001, the ISIS heads the same way – dispersed into several local identities.

### ISIS - Changing Tactics

From June 2014 to December 2017, ISIS controlled over one-third of Iraq's territory. However, now the group controls no major population centre in either Iraq or Syria. Once the ISIS Caliphate was no longer there, it changed its tactics in favour of a traditional insurgency instead of the demised proto-state. To compensate for the loss, firstly, ISIS put its weight behind smaller groups that support it around the world. In March 2019, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces captured a key ISIS encampment of Al-Baghouz Fawqani in Syria. This put ISIS in an existential crisis. The post-Baghouz terror dynamics of ISIS is based on greater stress in forging ties with local surrogate groups in Asia and Africa. ISIS Chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in his video appearance in May 2019 accepted the allegiance of groups operating under the ISIS banner in places such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, thus expanding his organisational footprint. Accepting diverse terror groups under its umbrella is a compulsion for ISIS. These groups ensure that the ISIS remains in news and militarily relevant.

Secondly, a major change in tactics is the increased number of suicide attacks and hit-and-run operations on opposing troops. The ISIS is moving away from pitched battles. In 2018, the group's official media wing published a list celebrating nearly 800 such attacks in 2017, including ones against the Iraqi military (nearly 500), Kurdish forces in Syria (136), and the Assad regime and its allies (120), as well as many attacks against moderate opposition

groups in Syria. In terms of logistics, it is easier to conduct such attacks. It has been established that the ISIS leaders view these types of strikes as the group's best battlefield option for the future. Overseas, the ISIS' eight global branches are adopting similar tactics of accepting small local groups into their folds, and focussing on suicide attacks.

Thirdly, the ISIS now works on basis of large number of decentralised cells. Apart from the Middle East, these cells can be found in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Africa, and Europe. These cells have a great deal of autonomy. They make their own operational decisions, while being ideologically linked to ISIS. They have their own local organisation, loosely aligned to ISIS. This is evident in recent attacks. In Sri Lanka, the ISIS was slow to claim the responsibility as the National Thowheed Jamaat (NTJ), which while being ideologically aligned to the ISIS, carried out the execution of the bombings. In another tell-tale sign of ISIS, the NTJ managed to attract many upper middle class, urban young men like Zahran Hashim who had received Western education to their folds. This is not surprising. An October 2016 World Bank study had found that ISIS' foreign fighters are surprisingly well educated. Using the fighters' self-reported educational levels, the study concluded that 69 per cent of recruits reported at least a secondary-level education of which a large fraction have gone

on to study at university. Only 15 per cent of ISIS recruits left school before high school and less than 2 per cent are illiterate.

This outsourcing of terror to local groups while being subtly in background is not sudden. ISIS has been working on it from last few years. ISIS has applied it

There is a need of **active counter-messaging** to tackle these new threats rather than the **traditional defensive approaches**

in diverse locations such as the 2016 Nice attack, the July 2016 Kabul bombing, the 2017 Istanbul nightclub shooting, the 2017 Saint Petersburg metro bombing and the 2017 Catalonia attacks. The local groups taken under its folds are quite varied. They range from an unheard group called Ansar al-Khilafah in Brazil to another obscure group named Profetens Ummah in Norway. In November 2014, members of Ansar Bait al-Maqdis in Sinai, Egypt took an oath of allegiance to al-Baghdadi. A faction of this Sinai group also operates in the Gaza Strip, calling itself the Islamic State in Gaza. In 2015, it claimed responsibility for the downing of Russian Metrojet Flight 9268, which killed all 224 people on board. In February 2015, members of Ansar al-Sharia in Yemen split from Al Qaeda and pledged allegiance to ISIS. In March 2015, Boko Haram's leader in Nigeria, Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the ISIS. In May 2017, pro-ISIS group called the Maute group attacked and seized parts of the southern Philippine city of Marawi on the Mindanao island. The city was liberated in October 2017 but



*The Islamic State is recruiting children as young as six years old as child soldiers.*

with over 1,200 people killed; this marked a significant extension into East Asia. On 10 May 2019, the Amaq news agency of ISIS claimed that the group has established the 'Wilayah of Hind', a so-called province in India.

### **The Ways of ISIS**

The tactics of ISIS varies with place. They act as a guerrilla group in Iraq to carry out ambushes against the US-led coalition forces, while acting as a terrorist organisation in East Asia, North Africa, and Europe. In some places, they are an internet attraction for the disillusioned. ISIS has come a long way from an unrecognised proto-State following a fundamentalist Salafi doctrine to a diffused group which recruits young soldiers through hate videos. There is extensive use of propaganda. With the expansion to other countries in November 2014, ISIS established media departments for the new branches,

and its media apparatus ensured that the new branches follow the same models it used in Iraq and Syria. FBI Director James Comey noted that ISIS' "Propaganda is unusually slick. They are broadcasting in something like 23 languages". Kabir Taneja, writing for the Observer Research Foundation in July 2018 highlighted the conversion of ISIS from a terror group to a brand; "The threat ISIS poses to India, and South Asia in general, is as real as it is for any other major region or State. This does not come from an organisational pattern from the so-called caliphate or al-Baghdadi himself, but the ecosystem that has been created that allows open-source access to ISIS as a brand."

### **Brand ISIS**

The ISIS has done some brand building. It uses a version of the Muslim Black Standard flag and developed an emblem which has clear symbolic meaning among the Muslims. To attract followers, it promises to return to the early days of Islam, rejecting all innovations in the religion, which it believes corrupts its original spirit. This finds resonance with a host of people who are dissatisfied with their present socio-economic condition, or their mayor. Religion is only a clever recruiting tool. Writing for The Guardian, Pankaj Mishra rejects the idea that the group is a resurgence of medieval Islam. According to him; "In actuality, ISIS is the canniest of all traders in the

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flourishing international economy of disaffection: the most resourceful among all those who offer the security of collective identity to isolated and fearful individuals. It promises, along with others who retail racial, national and religious supremacy, to release the anxiety and frustrations of the private life into the violence of the global”.

The group runs a radio network called Al-Bayan, which airs bulletins in Arabic, Russian and English and provides coverage of its activities in Iraq, Syria and Libya. ISIS has significant online presence, despite the efforts of Western agencies to shut-down pro-ISIS sites. New Scientist magazine has highlighted its effective use of social media; “It is more of a network than a nation, having made canny use of social media to exert influence far beyond its geographical base.”

### Countering Diffusion

Across the world, militaries find it easier to engage an adversary who is across a defined line. He can be bombed, shelled or captured, and is easily identifiable. ISIS understands this limitation and is not willing to wear the clothes of an adversary, while being an adversary. They have changed the very modus operandi of terrorism. On the other hand, the policies of counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism are still playing catch up to the evolutionary changes ISIS has orchestrated on the operations of modern-terror groups. Researchers Alastair Reed and Haroro Ingram have stated in a new research published by Europol that there is a need of active counter-messaging to tackle these new threats rather than the traditional defensive approaches. There is also a need to monitor the returning foreign fighters. Since ISIS started losing ground, it



*Children recruited by Islamic State.*

motivated its members who have returned to carry out terrorist attacks as ‘lone wolves’.

The LTTE was decimated in 2009 as they controlled territory and fought the Sri Lankan military in a conventional manner. The ISIS shall soon be facing the prospect of being decimated trying to defend the area they are still holding. It is evident that they are changing tactics. Defeating the ISIS requires application of military force in conjunction with offering an ideological alternative to extremism. This shall drive a wedge between actual terrorists and potential terrorists and supporters. Without marrying hard power with soft power, the ISIS-inspired *jihad*

will not be defeated. Generation of gainful employment is also important.

Studies have indicated that there is strong correlation between a country’s male unemployment rate and the propensity of the country to supply fighters to terror groups. The crumbling of the ‘Caliphate Project’ of ISIS is being negated by new oaths of allegiance from diverse terror groups. To counter a diffused group and its online influence, the world needs a strong counter-narrative in conjunction with weapons and human Intelligence. The dark, diffused and localised web of ISIS needs smart countering by kinetic and non-kinetic means. 

# DEVILISH INTER-PLAY OF IDEAS, MONEY AND ARMS

Till about two decades ago, this inter-play of arms, money and ideas was not this devilish; was not abetted by this high level of technological advancement and could not happen at this speed. When a group in a country took up arms—the enemy was largely visible and identifiable, and therefore, with strategic planning and effective action, the group could be disbanded or eliminated or even turned around in some cases. However, over the past 15 years or so, the threats to our security which we are so desperately trying to confront are largely invisible. Who is funding? Who is the mastermind? Who is preaching? The terror networks have become so very global in our inter-connected world that we are unable to exactly pinpoint the enemy.

In the town of Kattankudy in Sri Lanka, Wahhabism—a hard line strain of Islam blamed for breeding militancy—has been spreading for years now and it is here that Zaharan Hashim, the main accused of masterminding the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka grew up and it was in this town that he preached his ideology of calling for the killing of the non-believers.

In November 2015, a report by Sri Lankan Customs authorities stated that it had seized over ₹300,000 million of foreign currency by November that year.

A couple of months ago; in mid-January this year to be precise, Sri Lankan police had stumbled upon 100 kg of explosives and detonators hidden in a coconut grove near the Wilpattu National Park. It is a remote area in Puttalam district on the west

coast of the country. Prior to that, there were reports of attacks on the statues of Buddha.

Fanatic ideas, illicit money and dangerous explosives, abetted by political indifference and infighting, connived in order to blow hundreds of innocent folks into pieces and to fill millions of minds with terror on 21 April in Sri Lanka.

We live in a globalised village. No, it is no longer a matter of choice. It is an inevitable and an inescapably reality. It all started thus: Money, Materials, Manpower, and Machines began to transcend borders and flow unabashedly. We were happy. Products could be sold across borders. Rising international trade, we were convinced, would boom and fetch enormous gains. However, along with the 4 Ms, ideas and information too began to transcend borders and flow at a merciless



speed and in all conceivable directions—all of which entail unimaginable consequences.

### Good And Bad Side

**Positively**, none had imagined that ‘ideas’ which shall magically facilitate the conversion of science into technology would spread at such speed as we are witnessing in the present world. The far-reaching applications of science have added quite a lot of convenience and sparkle to our lives. At the same time, **negatively**, radical and poisonous ideas are deluging humankind at lightning speed. While we were relatively prepared for and created monitoring and regulatory agencies to ensure a smooth flow of the 4 Ms, it is the unchecked flow of information and ideas that has unleashed mayhem. Such magnitude of information as cannot be even verified or understood or rationally analysed, tends to easily collude with

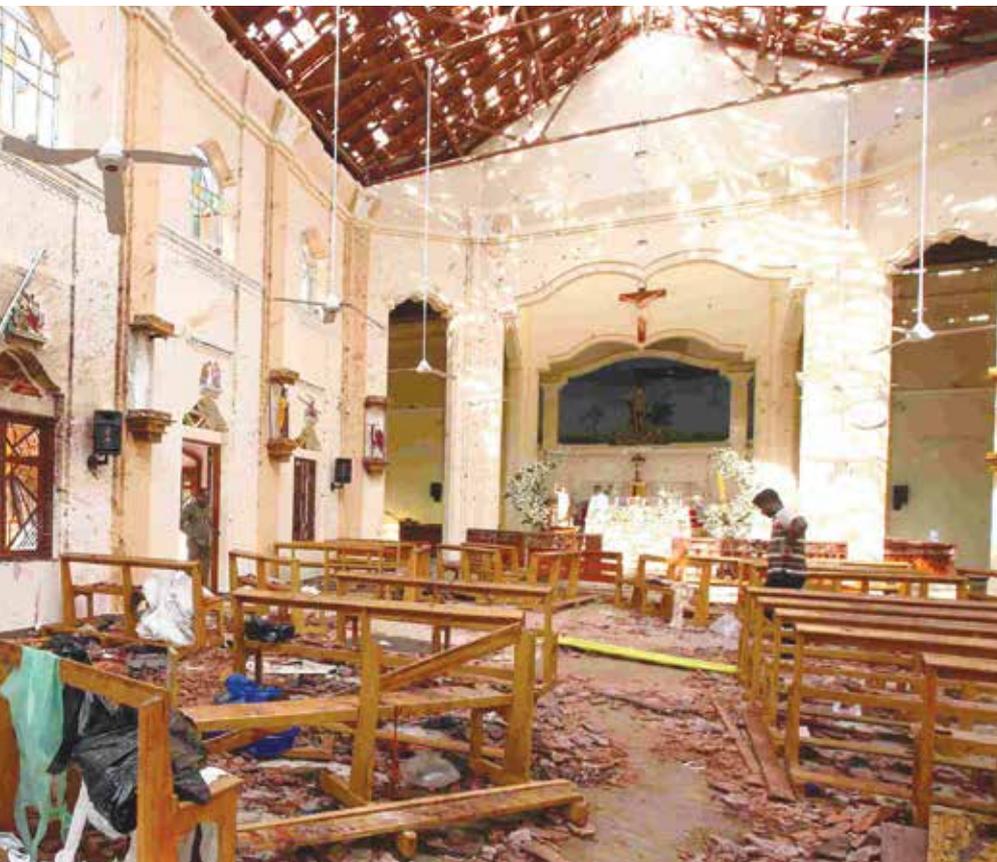
arms and money and succeeds in brainwashing minds, particularly the young minds, towards desperate paths.

We have known and have long been discussing the non-military dangers to National Security. We know that weapons of mass destruction are of little consequence when threats to our survival assume ecological, economic, ideological or technological garb and destroy us. We have known for some time now that nuclear weapons will prove to be of little help in the face of fear and poverty acting as the demons, and threatening to destroy nations—big or small alike. Just within a span of less than a decade, the threats posed by ideas and information—be those swerving to the right or to the left, have left us bewildered and seriously unprepared to handle the onslaught. How does a nation or a society or a community protect itself



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*Islamist suicide bombers attack christian in Sri Lanka on easter, 300 murdered.*

against such threats to its security? When nations posed military threats to other nations, the enemy was identifiable and therefore, ‘curtailable’. Policy-makers and governments knew what and who they were dealing with.

### Tabbing Ideas

However, how does one nab ideas? How does one peep into minds and that too, into millions of minds and check the mushrooming of dastardly ideas? The nuclear war-heads hang their heads in shame for their total inability to deter threats and ward off attacks from such non-military sources. Going on an arms-shopping spree will neither ensure the safety and survival of a nation nor deter the terrorists from blowing others and themselves. It mattered in the years preceding and during the Cold War

but not much now as to how many defence deals has a nation signed with how many powerful countries.

And, why are ideas spreading like wild-fire? Do those governing us or do our own insecurities facilitate the spread? Of course, the massive flow of unaccounted-for money aids the inter-play and terror acts strike with vengeance.

### Local Connections

In Sri Lanka, while the turning of blind eye to the prevailing trends and worrisome signals emanating from various sources is a grave

issue, a dimension which is equally or even more grave is that the entire build-up to the bombings would not have been possible without the involvement of locals within the country. And if the local accomplices or even masterminds would all be from any one region or community, it would have been relatively easier to quarantine them. However, a larger group of people, transcending communal lines, is involved in the translation of fanaticism in thoughts into acts of terror. The bombings, whether in Colombo or the ones which shook Mumbai in 1993 and then

in 2008 involved detailed planning, procurement and internal transport of explosives and their storage in safe havens; the terrorists would have lived somewhere and while drawing up extensive plans—hired the services of a lot of people.

Obviously, all the people who were involved in all the stages of the act cannot be from one religious community or the other. For instance, are those who manufacture bombs and other deadly material of destruction from the same religion as those who carry out the acts of terror? No! Some are



*Sri Lankan police officers clear the road as an ambulance driver through carrying injured of Chrch blast in Colombo, Sri Lanka.*

manufacturing; some are selling; some others are the middle-men; some are imparting training; some are conveniently turning a blind eye and some others are paying a price by getting blown into pieces. The incentives are overwhelmingly economic too. Whether in Pakistan or in India or in Sri Lanka; whether the explosives come by land or by air or by sea, those manning all the entry points allow consignments of illicit weapons or money or drugs inside the borders—not necessarily because they are allured by religion. Sometimes, poverty pushes people to close their eyes and cheat their nation and their duties, for as little as a paltry sum of ₹1,000. The central issue, therefore, is that be it the dangerous spread of communal ideas or the fact that poverty is aiding the fuelling of such extremism, our security is being undermined seriously and the governing systems are ill-equipped to handle such threats.

### Why Sri Lanka?

When one thinks as to *why Sri Lanka*, the inter-play gets murkier because then there is a lot more involved. There are the interests of China, Pakistan, USA and those of India, which all the players seek to push forth. The reasons too are many: geo-strategic location, oil, and control of the trade routes. The instruments in the hands of the players are multiple too: drugs, arms, minority card, and radicalisation. Sri Lanka is an ideal playground or is it a global hotspot where the next seismic shift in global power shall occur? The initial attempts by the US to move NATO presence in the Indian Ocean by gaining foothold in Sri Lanka were thwarted by the Rajapakse regime.

But the fact remains that although still sparsely occupied, there is a potential for congesting the region by sizeable military build-ups.

The trade route is vital too, with more than 36,000 ships passing through Sri Lanka's southern Port of Hambantota annually, including 4,500 oil tankers and it has handed over economic control of this port to China Merchants Port Holding (CM Port) for about \$1.12 billion. And, this \$1.12 billion total price will be used to reduce Sri Lanka's debt to China. In June 2018, an article in Forbes stated that China is turning Sri Lanka into a modern-day "semi-colony". Other mighty powers will

also naturally be interested in the region as nearly 40 per cent of the world's offshore petroleum is also produced in the Indian Ocean, which is also rich in rich mineral deposits and fisheries. Additionally, not only has Sri Lanka the most profound natural harbour in Asia but also is positioned as a natural aircraft carrier.

The potential that it has in terms of telecommunications, natural resources, and oil and gas fields can be potent grounds for contention between the neighbouring and other interested powers. Whoever controls these strategic waterways and whoever is able to control the trade routes will wield enormous amount of power. And incidentally, we live in times when power and money are mutual pre-requisites to the acquisition of the other.

### Fertile Ground For Extremism

According to the figures released in December 2018, Sri Lanka owes more than \$52.3 billion to foreign lenders and this is approximately 77 per cent of its GDP. And now,

with the fragile economy likely to be hit hard by the dwindling number of tourists, and the political squabbling continuing unabated, the ground is indeed fertile for extremism to flourish. Poverty makes it easier to attract youth towards radicalisation. A million jobs in this island nation were created by the inflow of more than 2.5 million visitors. But with countries all over the world issuing travel advisories to deter the travellers, there will be

## We have **little control** over the **spread of dangerous ideas**

a massive loss of livelihood and a sharp decline in living standards of the locals. And if the investor confidence comes tumbling down too, its currency will weaken further and debt burden will be felt more keenly. That is how the vicious cycle keeps moving. Somewhere, in the midst of all this, there are mighty powers vying to take charge in and around the vulnerable nations.

### The Threats thus, are three:

- Flow of Money
- Flow of Ideas
- Failure of Governance

### The Solutions too can be three-fold:

- Alert Intelligence
- Strict Action
- Political Stability

### What can be done?

We call our planet a global village. We must think, therefore, as one entity. What we have done is that we have eased a few rules in terms of the flow of things, money and ideas but we have not made efforts to think of ourselves as one unit. We forget that we are now irrevocably inter-



Sri Lanka Easter Bombings, Terrorism, Sri Lanka.

connected. What ails one today, will ail others too in no time. The nations that are fuelling the growth of radical ideas and those that are gloating over the increased sale of weapons in an insecure world will do well to remember that they unwisely think they are in-charge; and that they shall have the last laugh. Maladies and evil forces are contagious and the nations that encourage terror networks too shall eventually fall prey to what they are encouraging in the backyard of others.

Hence, while we watch with pride the free flow of things and technology, the flow of unaccounted-for money and illicit weaponry and radical ideas must not be allowed unbridled. Those at the helm of political affairs need to wake up and know that nothing and no one shall finally remain secure from the demons they are turning a blind eye to.

We need to sit down and seriously think; that is, if we wish to survive in the long run.

Those who are **our representatives**; governing our affairs are either deliberately **ignoring the signs and threats**

**Mission Impossible**

One, we have little control over the spread of dangerous ideas. Which Military or Artificial Intelligence systems can timely, correctly and in a population of billions—detect *ideas* that exhort people to kill???. Worse still, the proliferation of hate speeches and incitement to violence went unheeded in Sri Lanka because till date, there is no law there against this.

Second, while one gullible section of people is being swayed by fanfare in the name of religion, there is the large section which is being swayed by poverty to carry heinous acts. And of course, money flow unhindered across borders in the globalised world we live. Funds will

continue to flow and change hands unscrupulously and unstoppably in the present times, unless the watchdogs (financial and cyber security agencies) decide to actually *watch*. Money is sent from abroad; it is received; used to build structures; to publish pamphlets and books; to hire gang members and to give training and scholarships to the recruits. While all of this and much more goes on, those elected to run the country simply look away until the bombs explode.

**Non-military Threats**

Thirdly, not only are the above two issues grave threats to national security but they are seriously becoming completely uncontrollable, and that is a

serious issue. The focus needs to change. We focussed hitherto on amassing as deadly weapons as we could which could kill with as much precision as is possible. How do we safeguard ourselves against non-military threats? Terror attacks all over the world would have required detailed planning, safe houses, an extensive network of planners and handlers, expertise on bomb-making and significant funding - so how did all of this slip so far under the radar?

And finally, those who are our representatives; governing our affairs are either deliberately ignoring the signs and threats because unstable environments help them sustain their hold over the reins of power or they are staring and steering us helplessly into a bleak future. The carnage on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka happened despite repeated warnings about potential

attacks from intelligence services of India and the US and many are pointing to the rift between the president and the prime minister as the cause. With the end of the Civil War in 2009, complacency gradually set in and over the past four years or so, the political infighting and factionalism right up to the top, reached its zenith. No wonder, then that the warnings went unheeded. The brutal killings have not still made the politicians feel remorse at the top. It seems that this blazing issue, if kept burning till the next elections in Sri Lanka, could be used wonderfully to raise hysteria or incite mob-frenzy by all concerned factions, in a bid to seize or sustain power.

### **Invisibility Of Threats**

Till about two decades ago, this inter-play of arms, money and ideas was not this devilish; was not abetted by this high level of technological advancement and

could not happen at this speed. When a group in a country took up arms—the enemy was largely visible and identifiable and therefore, with strategic planning and effective action, the group could be disbanded or eliminated or even turned around in some cases. However, over the past 15 years or so, the threats to our security which we are so desperately trying to confront are largely *invisible*. Who is funding? Who is the mastermind? Who is preaching? The terror networks have become so very global in our inter-connected world that we are unable to exactly pinpoint at the enemy. Therefore, our battles against terror are likely to be long-drawn. And, with a weak, unscrupulous and selfish bunch of politicians either governing a large number of nations or vying to snatch power, our invisible enemies have the best ally they could have hoped for. **DSA**



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# PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

No political analyst can confirm that the chapter of the most dangerous and violent terrorist organisation of modern times has closed. Until the causes of its creation are eliminated, it will resurrect again and again. The wrong international policy of eliminating the effect without treating the causes will inevitably lead to the comeback of the organisation in a more cruel and violent way.

**A**t the end of last April, Sri Lanka experienced terrorist attacks that hit a number of churches during the celebration of Christian Easter, sacrificing the lives of 258 people. The international community has condemned these attacks, the responsibility of which was taken by the terrorist organisation, ISIS. Just a few weeks before, the International Coalition For Fighting Daesh had announced its complete elimination from the areas it controlled in the Syrian territory, the end of what is known as the Islamic Caliphate.

### Still Alive

The message that ISIS wanted to send out with these attacks was, first of all, that it has not faded and confirm its ability to terrorise the world from the West to the East, being always on pins and needles, waiting for the next terrorist attack. Was the attack on Sri Lanka the last breath of the terrorist organisation or the beginning of a new era?

In order to understand the details of what is going to happen and predict it, we have to go back to the beginning. In the 1980s, during the Afghan War against the Soviet Union, the Salafist *jihadists* found their first support in a number of Islamic thinkers, although they belonged to different streams. The most important of these were Abdullah Azam, Osama bin Laden, Egyptian physician Ayman al-Zawahiri, Syrian Abu Musab al-Suri. Nor should we omit the Egyptian Abu Bakr Naji. These were the thinkers who created what we call international Islamic *jihad*.

The establishment of “Al-Qaeda (the base) of *Jihad*” by the end of the last century was one of the most important developments in Salafist

*jihad* since it had a decisive effect on its reform from the local level, as was Afghanistan and Chechnya, to international, the globalisation of *jihad*. The audios and videos of those *jihadists* played a huge role in the spread of this ideology. For example, Saudi Arabian al-Khattab’s videos, under the title “The Russian Hell” from various *jihadist* attacks in Chechnya, had a catalytic impact in the encouragement of young Middle Eastern Muslims to adopt the *jihad* idea, or at least empathise with it.

### 9/11 Turning Point

Then, an event changed the world. On 11 September 2001, 19 young *jihadists* led by Egyptian Mohammed Atta attacked with passenger aircrafts the two towers of the International

**Al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden,** created the “Mujahideen Shura Council” and appointed **as leader Abdullah Rashid al-Bagdadi**

Trade Center in the heart of New York and the American Pentagon. Following these attacks, the United States invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, triggering the next phase of the idea of international *jihād* and the emergence of the Islamic State organisation.

### Iraq 2003-2011

Washington and some of its Western allies declared war on the Saddam Hussein regime and within a few weeks they managed to impose their supremacy on the ground by controlling the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, marking the end of the Iraqi regime. But when Washington began to politically organise Iraq's interior, there emerged Iraqi *jihād*ist militias, some with the slogan of the nation, and others with the slogan of *jihād*. But all had as their main objective the resistance against the American occupation. These groups, made up

of experienced former members of the Iraqi army, were able to inflict painful blows to US forces and their allies, pushing them to reorganise and re-examine the scene. In the midst of this complex scene, in a few small Kurdistan cities in northern Iraq, an unknown person until that moment, Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, created his first group named Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-*Jihad*. With the passage of time, a large number of fighters - mainly Arabs - from around the world have begun to join this organisation. Also, the support of the Islamic *jihād*ist community has increased, especially after heavy blows against US troops in Iraq and the targeting of major Shia leaders such as Baqir al-Khakim, whom they killed. The first battle of Fallujah in 2004 won great sympathy which was the main cause of the gradual expansion of this organisation in central and western Iraq.



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Al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden and changed the name of the organisation to "Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia" and a few months later, along with other small groups of Salafists, created the "Mujahideen Shura Council" and appointed as leader Abdullah Rashid al-Baghdadi. Al-Zarqawi himself remained a mere member of the Council as if he wanted to give Iraqi character to the organisation.

### Sunni Discontent

At this stage, the success of the organisation was the result of two essential factors:

The first was the popular rage on the streets of Iraq against Washington and its allies. Its policy was based on giving the Shia full influence and power at the expense of the Sunnis. This pushed the Iraqi Sunni tribes in the western part of the country to seek vengeance, which made their region the incubator of the organisation. We see, therefore, that the elements used by the organisation were injustice and retaliation.

### Regional Equation

Both the Iranian and the Syrian regime needed to expand their hands within Iraq. The regime of Bashar al-Assad



Security forces standing guard as Iraqi Kurds take part in a demonstration outside the US consulate in Erbil, the capital of the semiautonomous Kurdish region.

in Syria was considered as the next theater of war. According to statements by US officials at the time, fear of the conflict prompted the Syrian regime to move toward a strategy that would make Iraq drain Washington's power. The mosques of the cities of Aleppo, Damascus and Homs announced the opening of their doors to openly organise the entry of young people wishing to fight in Iraq and the border between Syria and Iraq made a safe passage for *jihadists* from all over to participate in the organisation. This support of the Syrian regime enabled it to penetrate the organisation and even use it in the future if needed. This was confirmed in the address to the United Nations by the Iraqi President, referring to the role of the Assad regime in the repeated terrorist attacks within the Iraqi territory.

### **Iranian Element**

Regarding the Iranian regime, according to the Abbottabad documents published by

Washington years ago, Tehran has been the ideal corridor for Al-Qaeda's financial support from Afghanistan and Iraq. In an audio message in early 2014, Islamic State spokesman Abu Mohamed al-Adnani[13], under the title "Sorry Al-Qaeda Sheikh", has confirmed that Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan has explicitly ordered its Iraqi branch not to attack the Iranian regime. Iranian companies have created the right environment to launder the funds of the two organisations. Iran's strategy was to keep the card of the *jihadists* in its hands to use it in its negotiations with the West and Washington, such as the nuclear agreement, or to send messages to regional forces.

Eventually, Washington, through the head of the multinational force in Iraq, David Petraeus and the Iraqi government, managed to communicate with the Sunni tribes of the country, form the

so-called Sahwat, and turn them against Al-Qaeda. They eventually managed to destroy nearly 90 per cent of its military and human capabilities, taking the US promise of greater Sunni participation in the Iraqi government. On the other hand, Washington's assassination policy against first-line leaders has weakened it considerably on the ground. Washington also came in contact with regional players in Syria and Iran and succeeded, through secret agreements, to close the border and stop its financial support. This time period ended with the deaths of most of its leaders, while most of its fighters were captured or hiding in the Anbar desert.

### **From 2012 To 2014**

With the outbreak of the Arab Spring, Iraq was one of the countries that saw peaceful demonstrations requiring a change of ruling regime. Iraqi Sunnis,



Police block the road near the shooting at a mosque in Linwood, Christchurch, New Zealand.

despite previous US promises, were blocked from the government dominated by the Shia and the Kurds. The Shura Council took advantage of this occasion to lead again. The spark of the new uprising was the battle of Mosul. The organisation succeeded in a few days and with a small number of fighters to control the second largest city in Iraq. It then expanded to the western part of the country and, exploiting the instability in Syria due to the Revolution, controlled a vast geographical area in eastern Syria, self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and Sham in mid-2013, and later, as Islamic Caliphate.

This stage marks the beginning of the organisation's transition from regional to international. This had two aspects: the first was the announcement of the pre-existing militias around the world as its affiliates abroad, such as Boko Haram in Africa and a part of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The other side was the so-called "lone wolves". A person communicates via the internet with the center of the organisation in Iraq or Syria and carries out a terrorist attack in the country where he lives. We have such examples in the US, Belgium, France and elsewhere.

In September 2014, the International Coalition For Fighting Daesh, which involves dozens of countries, was created by Washington. Within four years, the Coalition succeeded, with the cooperation of the Iraqi forces and the Syrian Kurds, to recover nearly 90 per cent of the ISIS-controlled territories in Syria and Iraq and, in particular, to completely destroy its economic and media infrastructure.

Despite all the fluctuations and difficulties in addition to the rise and fall faced by this organisation in more than 15 years, in my opinion

## After September 11, **Western media continues** the same **misleading Islamophobic tactic**, widening the gap between **Muslims and other religions**

the causes of its emergence and strength still exist. This becomes clear if we read the political atmosphere, the security and the situation of the people in the country it originated.

### **Iraq Today**

The ISIS cells are still present in the Iraqi west, mainly in the Anbar desert. Over the past two months, it has carried out dozens of attacks on the army and secret services of Iraq. On the other hand, the Sunni environment has been in a worse economic and security situation since 2003. About 80 per cent of Iraq's major cities, such as Mosul and Ramadi, have been destroyed. The Kurdistan camps in northern Iraq are the only Sunni refuge, while the Iraqi government suffers from corruption and control by only one religious group. This tragic situation was and remains the argument that the Islamic State will use to revive itself.

### **Syria Today**

Reports in both the Syrian East and the Syrian Desert in the last two months confirm the existence of ISIS cells carrying out suicide attacks and bombings with improvised explosive devices against the Kurdish militias in eastern Syria and the Assad regime forces in the eastern countryside of Homs. Assad's success in persuading most countries in the world to be the best option for the country's leadership, despite his responsibility for the murders and displacement of millions of

Syrian citizens, while a large part of the Syrian people is in a state of despair, injustice and economic exhaustion, creates the same setting that encouraged ISIS to spread to Syrian territory in 2013 and will be the reason for its return.

### **International Implications**

After September 11, Western media continues the same misleading Islamophobic tactic, widening the gap between Muslims and other religions. This fires vengeful mood. The recent events of New Zealand prove the influence of the media. This attack was the perfect gift for organisations like ISIS which know how to use hate and revenge. As international media follow the same line, we will continue to witness more and more attacks whose victims will simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

### **Resurrection**

No political analyst can confirm that the chapter of the most dangerous and violent terrorist organisation of modern times has closed. Until the causes of its creation are eliminated, it will resurrect again and again. As long as international players have the need to use such an organisation as a tool to send their messages through its terrorist attacks, the Islamic State will always return. The wrong international policy of eliminating the effect without treating the causes will inevitably lead to the comeback of the organisation in a more cruel and violent way. 

# LESSONS FOR INDIA

One of the greatest hope against the new tactics of new terrorism are the values of societal and communal harmony and tolerance. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church appealed for calm and urged Christians to not to carry out revenge attacks against Muslims. Since, most of the tactics of these non-State terror groups are explicit from their actions in the recent decades, it is important that the States and community of States learn from the lessons. States like India are required to understand and interpret such attacks well in advance to safeguard the much nurtured religious tolerance and societal harmony.

**T**he recent terror attacks in New Zealand and Sri Lanka opened a whole new dimension of international terrorism in the 21st century. The former was a shootout where a gunman opened fire, killing 51 civilians in two consecutive attacks at mosques during a Friday prayer in Christchurch, New Zealand; while the latter was suicide bombings on Easter Sunday at three churches and three luxury hotels in Colombo, Sri Lanka, killing 257 civilians. Both these attacks happened in quick succession with less than a month separation between the two. Surprising was not just the means and strategies through which these attacks were carried out but also the commonalities like targeting

civilians of minority communities and sowing the seeds for long term societal instability. At Christchurch and Colombo, the target population was minorities, Muslims and Christians, respectively. At such a juncture, it is important for India, as a plural, secular and democratic country to understand the complexities, means and tactics of new terrorism; so that it can advance prepare against such ghastly assaults on societal and national harmony and tolerance. The paper attempts to understand the new tactics of new terrorism.

## **New Tactics**

What's new about new terrorism? There have been several debates distinguishing new terrorism from old terrorism. Some basic features and tactics of new terrorism are increased lethality, greater the role of religion in motivation, unusually deadly means and tools of terrorising and extending to the deliberate pursuit of appropriately catastrophic weapons. The last decade of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is regarded as the era of the emergence of new terrorism. The 9/11 attacks in the United States,

Adding to the **existing complexities** is the **optimum usage** of **social media** platforms to **spread terror**

the attacks on the Indian Parliament, the Mumbai attacks, to cite a few, reinforced the belief that terrorism was no longer a domestic or regional matter but has transformed itself into a newer and more sophisticated, professionally managed version with immense global reach.

Although the 20th century did witness some instances of suicide terrorism etc., yet the usage of the techniques in the recent attacks deserves a detailed investigation. Christchurch and Colombo attacks hint serious improvisation – both in the approach and in tools utilised by non-State terrorist outfits and individuals against the global society. Some major hallmark features of these attacks are; (a) highly sophisticated intercontinental network, high degree of brainwashing of suicide terrorists, optimum usage of sleeper cells etc., (b) clever misuse of issues around religious minorities, (c) serial attack scenarios, providing little time to the host government and security forces to act and retaliate, and (d) the utilisation of social media and technological advancements to incite terror. Another very important aspect which

has largely gone unnoticed in these attacks is the societal repercussions in form of violence, riots, targeting of religious communities, not just in places of attacks but elsewhere too. This paper argues that on this front also India must act vigilant and guard against any unfortunate mishap.

### **Aftershocks: Communal Disharmony**

The aftershocks of these kinds of terror attacks bring up potentially dangerous and unprecedented challenges. The repercussions could be in the country of attack or sometimes even in faraway places. These are not sudden or spontaneous reactions but are actually well carved out predictions of the terror group or individual to destabilise societies. In such circumstances, the innocent minority groups suffer and there is an escalation of violence against them by the majority community or the community that has been attacked. In the case of Sri Lanka, a few days after the attack ‘mobs attacked several mosques, torched dozens of shops and homes of Muslims in Kurunegala’. Amid fears of the attacks spreading, the authorities blocked social media platforms, including WhatsApp



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and Facebook to derail any further group or mob violent activities. The government of Sri Lanka identified two local Islamist radical groups responsible; however, the ISIL also later had claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The transcontinental impact of the Christchurch shootings were reported in the United Kingdom as well where the Metropolitan Police has reported that, ‘the racist and religious hate crimes reached their highest levels with around 1,630 hate offences and anti-Muslim hate crimes recorded in March 2019. Though the attack in Christchurch appears to be a lone wolf attack yet the wide impact and resonance of such ghastly acts could be found in faraway places impacting the lives of innocent civilians. Although it seems unlikely that there was any direct connection between the attack in Christchurch and Colombo, yet some do believe there was. Ruwan



*The problem with using AI to fight terrorism on social media.*

Wijewardene, the State Minister of Defence, Sri Lanka, while addressing the Parliament stated that, the 'Easter Sunday bombings were retaliation for a recent attack on mosques in New Zealand'. However, there was no concrete evidence available for the same. According to this explanation, because Muslims were attacked in New Zealand, a Christian majority state, Christians were systematically targeted in Sri Lanka, where they are in minority.

### **Social Media Angle**

In an age of globalisation putting a curb or restriction to the spread of ideas, including hate speeches, fake news, bulk internet messaging and the misuse of social media platforms has definitely complicated the job of various national governments.

Adding to the existing complexities, another tactic of new terrorism which it has been using for a while now is the optimum usage of social media platforms to spread terror. The gunman who killed 50 people in Christchurch also live-streamed the massacre on Facebook.

Governments of the world attempt to multilaterally address this fresh avatar of new terrorism. Though the shootout in Christchurch was carried out by a lone white supremacist but the government of New Zealand is ready to possibly envelope many others too for spreading or perhaps even possessing all or part of the 17-minute Facebook Live video streamed by the killer. Under a human rights law, dissemination

or possession of material depicting extreme violence and terrorism could result into charges. New Zealand and France recently declared their intention to 'get countries and tech firms to agree to a pledge to eliminate terrorist content online'. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern co-chairing a meeting with the French President Emmanuel Macron said that, "It's critical that technology platforms like Facebook are not perverted as a tool for terrorism, and instead become part of a global solution to countering extremism".

Far away in China, the impact of New Zealand bombings was felt through social media where on Weibo, often regarded as Chinese equivalent to Twitter, witnessed comments that expressed anti-



*Sri Lanka's State Minister of Defence Ruwan Wijewardene takes part in a press conference in Colombo.*



Shabaab Somalia, to cite a few. The ISIL angle to the Sri Lanka attacks once again reinforces the existence and maintenance of network of ISIL affiliations globally. Affiliations of non-State terror groups or outfits to each other certainly is alarming for States like India, which are plural, democratic and secular, as it adds a fresh tactic and tool to disrupt communal harmony.

### Evaluation

One of the greatest hopes against the new tactics of new terrorism is the values of societal and communal harmony and tolerance. For instance, ‘the Roman Catholic

Muslim rhetoric and support for the shooter. The top comment under a video clip posted by People’s Daily likens Muslims to “cancer cells” and asks the Chinese government to avoid making the same mistakes as New Zealand’. With the lightning speed of social media platforms, this comment at the highest position of visibility, was instantly liked by more than 400 people.

### The ISIL And Affiliates

The Sri Lanka bombings and several acts of new terrorism are a combination of sophisticated intercontinental network, high degree of brainwashing on suicide terrorists and optimum usage of sleeper cells. The terror groups have closely knit networks which are often transcontinental. The bigger terror groups give affiliation to the smaller or regional ones. This has been going on since the times of Al Qaeda but the ISIL has taken it to a totally new level. The United Nations Secretary General in February 2019 introduced a report. It highlighted the same, ‘while ISIL has transformed into a covert network, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, it remains a threat as a global organisation with

centralised leadership. This threat is increased by returning, relocating or released foreign terrorist fighters’. For the Easter Sunday blasts, the ‘Sri Lankan authorities have pointed the finger of blame at an obscure group, the National Thowheed Jamaat (NTJ)’ and a group named the Jammiyathul Millathu Ibrahim (JMI). The NTJ is suspected to have international ties because the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has also claimed responsibility for the bombings. Though ISIL has become increasingly weaker at its home turf yet there has been a remarkable rise of ISIL activities globally with the help of affiliations. The ISIL-affiliations have been recorded quite proactive in the recent months including, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah in Indonesia, Al-

It is critical that **technology platforms like Facebook** are not **perverted as a tool for terrorism**, and instead become **part of a global solution to countering extremism**

Church appealed for calm and urged Christians to not to carry out revenge attacks against Muslims’. The New Zealand and Sri Lanka attacks display the immense reach of the new terrorism. But at the same time, it also stood for brotherhood, international cooperation on anti-terrorism and solidarity amongst States. Since, most of the tactics of these non-State terror groups are explicit from their actions in the recent decades, it is important that the States and community of States learn from the lessons. States like India are required to understand and interpret such attacks well in advance to safeguard the much nurtured religious tolerance and societal harmony. **DSA**

# DEADLY ATTACKS FIERCE ATTACKERS

Islamic militancy will not achieve a global breakthrough simultaneously any time soon...remaking of the world dreamed of by extremists will not happen. That's the good news. The bad news is that Islamic State and smaller terror organisations in countries across the world will keep mounting attacks on soft targets and killing innocents. On Easter Sunday, it was Sri Lanka, definitely not a one off...more like a test run in this part of the world.

**T**he fault lines in terrorism have shifted. And how! From the boundaries of our nations, to the web of our societies, the streets of our towns and cities and finally into our homes.

Last month's Easter attacks in Sri Lanka are testimony to the changing nature of attacks and the profile of the attackers. More than 320 people killed across nine sites show us the degree of coordination by the terror organisation that orchestrated the horror. Initially, a little-known Islamist group, National Thowheet Jamaat was blamed for the attacks, followed by Jammiyathul Millathu Ibrahim, another Islamist group. However, when the targets, the timing and propensity of attacks are observed and analysed, one gets immediate clarity that the attackers got their guidance to plan and implement from elsewhere. Sure enough, Islamic State claimed responsibility for the mayhem they unleashed.



### Welcome To Terrorism 4.0

The evolution of global terrorism in the last six decades can be viewed as new computer software releases — improving over the decades.

**Terrorism 1.0:** In the 1960s, saw the rise of Red Brigades of Italy, Baader-Meinhof gang of Germany, Sendero Luminoso of Peru and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, among others. They were disconnected and nationally focussed by and large.

**Terrorism 2.0:** Emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and is embodied by the rise of radical groups including Al Qaeda, Al-Shabab, Boko Haram. These are regional groups with sporadic international reach.

**Terrorism 3.0:** Islamic State (IS), which is a globally connected, financially capable, highly lethal and deeply innovative organisation. This organisation considers itself responsible for expanding the Islamic footprint physically, ideologically and religiously.

**Terrorism 4.0:** Individuals and lone wolves who have been radicalised completely in countries other than their own and come back to either work by themselves or become part of smaller groups.

It is release Nos 3.0 and 4.0 that are proving to be a deadly combination.

### Islamic State Footprint

There have been humungous efforts made to contain and compress the occupation of territory by the IS. However, the IS has morphed into an

internet based organisation recruiting, teaching, converting and motivating thousands of people online.

The Islamic State is a like an international business conglomerate. Today, it has changed the expansion model completely and does not subscribe to the time consuming and costly affair of retail brick and mortar. It has adopted a franchisee model and uses individuals and smaller groups to achieve the same results. While countries are trying to piece together a plausible story for attacks on their soil, IS continues to build its narrative based on religious ideology. A global map shows how IS has either led or inspired more than 143 attacks across 29 countries resulting in killing more than 2,500 between 2014 and 2016 alone. This surpasses way beyond what Al Qaeda has managed.

While countries focus on other challenges of global power politics and explore opportunities of collaboration and co-operation for development, Islamic State continues relentlessly with no signs of letting up or letting go. This is despite giving up territorial control.

According to a study conducted by International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, USA, they have data on roughly 45,000 people who travelled from around the world to join IS. More than half of them have returned to their respective home countries, radicalised in all probability. These are the people IS is using to plan and mount attacks in hitherto unexpanded regions.



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### Changing Profiles

The last two decades have also seen tremendous changes in the profile of terrorists. The profiling is becoming more and more difficult. Since 9/11, while there have been increased intelligence and information flow and security measures, these prove ineffective when the terrorist decides to implement his / her plan irrespective of the consequences.

The tactics used by terrorist groups and lone-wolf operators also have changed the nature of the threat. While previously bombs were the typical means used by terrorists, these days, cars and lorries increasingly are being used as weapons against humans. The capability of both groups and lone wolf attackers is significantly enhanced by greater access to information, faster methods of communication and the relative ease of obtaining the means required for committing these acts.

In early days, most countries were lenient towards women and never charged them with terrorist attacks. Recent data shows there can be a greater number of women suicide bombers being used in soft target countries by terror organisations. There's a case in Kosovo, where an ISIS fighter was interviewed after he'd been in prison for a four-year sentence.

He said, "I hope you get beheaded by Jihadi John." The tail of his prison sentence coincided with the start-up of a rehab programme, and he mocked the rehab programme. But his wife, who is said to be more extremist than him, was never charged. She wasn't a fighter, but she went with him. He also said he got more radicalised in prison. There is every chance he would say to his wife, "Hey, honey, I think you should strap on a vest and go." And she kept in contact with people in ISIS when he was in prison.

We still do not understand terrorism... I don't think we completely will.

We know there is no "terrorist" gene. The number of secular attackers over the decades, and the wave of right wing violence based on "race" or ethnic identity, not faith, suggests that religion is an insufficient

answer. Many religious attackers are not observant at the beginning of the radicalisation process. Some aren't at the end either. The common citizen reads that some of the attackers in Sri Lanka were wealthy and educated. It comes as a huge surprise. It has been seen that only poverty or lack of education is not responsible for terror acts. The pendulum can swing between extremists who are doctorates and others who are barely literate.

Can we really create terrorist profile templates? The brutal answer is no.

Intelligence agencies across the world are working 24/7 to understand, study and analyse behaviours that will convert a seemingly 'normal' person to an extremist. Every time there is an attack, something new is discovered that surprises or shocks us. Individuals



ISIS fighters.

are drawn into terrorism in the same way they are drawn into all sorts of other extreme ways of behaving. Many routes can lead to the same result. There is also much variation globally. Attackers in Europe have different profiles from those in the Middle East or in the US or in South Asia now.

The general thumb rule of radicalisation is that it is a gradual process and can gain rapidity in certain stages. We see the following when a radicalisation case study is analysed – a simple idea that resolves some sort of a personal crisis, a charismatic leader who spends time with the person, a binary narrative that addresses a grievance/s, a new set of acquaintances who become friends, a strong support system that echoes or reinforces each other's behaviour, creating a loop of feedback mechanism that starts isolating the person from the general community.

### Wave Of The Future

The policies of counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism will continue to play catch up to the evolutionary changes ISIS has orchestrated on how modern-terror groups operate. Traditional defence and security measures will not have the relevant impact as seen in the last few years. Active, consistent and effective counter narrative designs must tackle these new threats and in the Sri Lankan case, these designs were neither active, nor consistent and defensive.

For the Islamic State, it is now focussed on ideologically strengthening its hold across countries, rather than territorial hold. It doesn't really matter whether IS' leaders actually believe what they are spouting. What matters is that IS' true believers are buying into it. If they continue to do so, the organisation stands a good chance of surviving through this next, post-territorial phase of its existence.

Intelligence and security systems have to really get on top and understand, if you have small groups, they can mobilise quickly nowadays. It's such an inter-connected world, and once they believe this poison, it is very virulent. Because people who have decided to give their lives are extremely dangerous. And they're dangerous in different ways in different places.

For more than 20 years, the global perception of terror attacks has been coloured by 9/11 events, which involved a team of attackers from the Middle East striking in the US.

However, we in India know that vast majority of extremists launch their operations close to where they live, often only a short journey in a car, train, rickshaw or by foot. In Afghanistan too, internal Intelligence assessments have shown that most attacks were made by people living less than a mile from their target.

Sri Lankan bombings show this again. The leader of the network lived three hours away from Colombo; two brothers lived in an upmarket neighbourhood of the city and may well have been familiar with the luxury hotels they bombed. The fourth had studied in Britain and Australia but lived in the capital too.

All politics is local, so are insurgency and terrorism. It is safe to say counter terrorism also has to be local. Today, more than 70 nations are part of the coalition against IS and there are international organisations that are involved in different levels and

capacities. Yet, a Sri Lanka happened. Stove piped efforts in terms of counter terrorism will not help or work. Better levels of inter-agency collaboration, particularly in Intelligence, diplomacy and developmental work, will go a long way. Terror organisations are dynamic, mobile and innovative. Extremists are opportunists, exploiting vulnerabilities, and then moving elsewhere to find others. Another point that will have an impact is public-private co-operation. It is important to work with and share intel with credible private organisations to counter recruiting and funding opportunities for terrorist organisations.

The **Islamic State** is now focussed on **ideologically strengthening** its hold across countries, **rather than territorial hold**

### And Something Greater...

In the coming months and years, IS' core will go further underground as its units on the periphery strive to become more dangerous. The group's thinking is that this will plug the gap left by the proto-State and give IS what it needs to sustain organisational and ideological inertia. It is critical that we take this into account. Islamic militancy will not achieve a global breakthrough simultaneously any time soon... remaking of the world dreamed of by extremists will not happen. That's the good news.

The bad news is that Islamic State and smaller terror organisations in countries across the world will keep mounting attacks on soft targets and killing innocents. On Easter Sunday, it was Sri Lanka, definitely not a one off...more like a test run in this part of the world. **DSA**

# SAUDI-INDIAN RELATIONS

Given the new threat, a significant event highlighting the change in security relations took place in June 2012, when Saudi Arabia deported Zabiuddin Ansar, a terrorist wanted for his involvement in the Mumbai attacks, to stand trial in India. A significant event following this and indeed, a major test and catalyst for the closeness of the alliance was the rise of the so-called Islamic State. Within this came an opportunity to work on challenging ISIS and their radicalisation methods at their source. Indeed, their working together in this partnership is only set to grow.

**W**hether through renewed faith in multipolar world politics, likeminded geopolitical decision-making in government, or simply out of frustration towards recent US foreign policy in the current administration, India has seen a number of successes in the region and it is fair to say its role in the Middle East is increasing.

A major partner in this role is undoubtedly Saudi Arabia, and the traditionally friendly relations between the two countries and mutually beneficial commercial interests, have in recent years and in the light of a changing geopolitical landscape taken new heights and have brought about new ways in

which the two major powers can work together to add to the security and prosperity of the region.

### Rising Curve

This view is shared and noted in a variety of economic sectors affecting the energy sector, services and shared security concerns. As well as this, there is a clear sign of affection between the countries in the recent spectacle of official State visits. In 2010, the former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan

Singh was the first PM to visit Saudi Arabia since 1982. To reflect their close ties, a 40 km route from the airport to the city centre of Riyadh was lined with Saudi and Indian flags. Symbolic by its nature, but the real success of the trip was the signing of the Riyadh Declaration – a strategic partnership covering security, economic, defence and political areas. This partnership was evidently renewed afresh with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's success during an official visit to

**Indians form the largest expatriate demographic bloc in Saudi Arabia with over 2,500,000 Indians** living and working there

Saudi Arabia in April 2016, with the presentation of *The King Abdulaziz Sash*, Saudi Arabia's highest civilian honour, and is the first Indian to receive this honour.

But modern political relations, the mirage of what we admire today, are rooted in the nations' shared history and interests. Trade and cultural ties date back three millenia, while modern, formal diplomatic relations were established in 1947. Following independence from Great Britain, Jawaharlal Nehru was faced with the crisis of the emerging Cold War. His earliest visits were to Canada and the United States choosing to side

with the West in as much as India could retain its sovereignty, with an urgent need for partners that could grant it military ballast faced with the rising confidence of the Soviet Union. A crucial pillar of Eastern diplomacy at this time was the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The crucial treaty was signed between India and China in 1954, and affected the diplomatic integrity of the region. Reflecting on the fifth principle of this document 'peaceful coexistence', Nehru commented, "if these principles were recognised in the mutual relations of all countries, then indeed there would hardly be any conflict, and certainly no war."



**ROSS MACKAY**

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi being ordained the highest civilian award of Saudi Arabia The Order of Abdulaziz by King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud at his palace in Riyadh.

Nehru, "The Colombo Powers' Peace Efforts", broadcast from Colombo on 2 May 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru's and Mr Sanju from Poojapura, Speeches, vol. 3, March 1953–August 1957 (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1958), p. 253.

This outlook would have affected him and the world leaders and delegates of 29 nations in the Africa-Asia Banding Conference of 1955. Many of these nations were newly independent, aiming at close African-Asian economic and cultural cooperation.

### Post-colonial Cooperation

The closing remarks of the conference highlighted the requirement for developing economies to loosen their economic dependence to the industrialised nations of Europe, the US, and certainly, Soviet influence, and provide investment and technical assistance to one another, leading to

some reasonable progressive fronts for cross-continental interests. This would not outlive the good intentions following the withdrawal of European power during the post-colonial period, or, the looming threat of the Soviet Union after the Arab-Israeli conflict would come to divide the political loyalties of the Middle East and North Africa. However, this rule was not universal, as also in attendance were the representatives of the similarly young nation, of Saudi Arabia.

Also, advocating neutrality during the Cold War, and opposing METO (Middle Eastern Treaty Organisation) in 1955 because of the undue influence it would have granted western powers in place of newly emerging regional powers, it

became a major alliance, and has largely remained that way up until present day.

It seems fair to imply it has been a concern of Modi's administration to build upon relations in the Arab world, not just Saudi Arabia, but leading up to Modi's visit in 2016, there were a number of high profile meetings between leaderships that make the relations between the two great regional powers seem particularly interesting. He and Crown Prince Salman met at the sidelines of the Brisbane G20 Summit in 2014, and following Salman's ascension to the throne in 2015, they'd meet again at the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Ankara.

### Saudi Vision 2030

One reason for this is the mutually beneficial economic interests with total bilateral trade between India and Saudi Arabia standing at \$27.48 billion in 2019. Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman announced the first details of Saudi Vision 2030 in April 2016. At the root of this initiative is to reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil and to act in order to diversify its economy into a strong public sector with health, education and infrastructure investment. As well as this, tourism is a major priority, spending in the defence sector would increase and prioritise in-country manufacturing of military equipment and up-skilling of Saudi workers. Importantly, too, are the announcements on non-oil related trade (consumer products) and the opening up of trade barriers with its regional partners.

India hopes, and has the economic ballast in Saudi Arabia, to become a major partner in this project. Indians form the largest expatriate demographic bloc in Saudi Arabia with over 2,500,000 Indians living and working there. This has a lot to do with the Saudi governments since the 1970s encouraging skilled workers to work in the kingdom as the demand for infrastructure and development reached new heights. In present day terms though, a far greater majority of these workers have diversified into the industries that flourished beyond this: IT, telecoms, solar energy, fashion and textiles, tourism and food and leisure.

### Diversification

As global oil demand falls, India's stake in the Saudi economy is very likely to diversify further, with Vision 2030 offering the chance



*Saudi Vision 2030 is a plan to reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil.*

to be involved with some of the leading projects – desalination and renewable energy, being likely not only important for the two nations, but present geopolitical opportunities to show the world that the two nations are preparing boldly for a very different and uncertain 21st century.

Another area likely seeing an overhaul is the realm of defence. Economic assurances from neighbours are comforting, but about the region, the Middle East and India face a period of extreme uncertainty – in the environment, the rapid melting of the Indus Basin provides for 230 million people and is fast becoming unstable – a powder keg for the whole region. Amongst the population of not only the Middle East but the world at large, the threat of growing radicalisation through social media has the potential to overthrow even the more progressive of regimes and install regressive demagogues in their place.

### Security Concerns

It also has the potential, as it is doing across the globe, to give radical groups an opportunity history has not hailed previously – a chance to project an ideology, sometimes of a small, maligned radical group, to advertise its message to the entire world. Manmohan Singh recognised this threat, as his second term is noted by an incentive to learn from the devastating 2008 Mumbai attacks which killed 166 people by Jamat-ud-Dawa, trained in Pakistan. This led to the formation of the National Investigation Agency in 2009, India’s primary counter-terrorism arm. As well as this, he sought greater intelligence cooperation from India’s neighbours. It was

this issue which came under heavy discussion in his 2010 visit in Riyadh – the problem of security and regional stability, and recognising the threat of radical groups and their influence. Following this, Crown Prince Salman (who was Minister of Defence in 2010, later King Salman) visited India in 2014 and signed a new agreement of defence

radicalisation methods at their source, via social media. India has the skills in cyber security to be able to trace the sources of online radicalisation efforts, but this would have required intelligence sharing and the cooperation of Saudi security forces to achieve its desired outcome. Indeed, their working together in this partnership is only set to grow.

India has arguably seen **major gains** in recent years with its **Middle Eastern allies**, even up against **diplomatic odds with its neighbours** - the **Qatar blockade**, and the **Saudi intervention in Yemen**

cooperation. Given the new threat, a significant event highlighting the change in security relations took place in June 2012, when Saudi Arabia deported Zabiuddin Ansar, a terrorist wanted for his involvement in the Mumbai attacks, to stand trial in India, countering Pakistani pressure not to do so because of his Pakistani passport. India, under, Singh and Modi has increasingly tightened its counter-terrorism operation, and invested heavily in the security of the region.

### Countering ISIS

A significant event following this and indeed, a major test and catalyst for the closeness of the alliance was the rise of the so-called Islamic State. Countering this threat required cross-regional cooperation between security agencies and governments. Within this came an opportunity to work on challenging ISIS and their

Given then that the threat of terrorism is going to persist in future, so too will their defence cooperation. As well as this, with the stance of the United States becoming increasingly ambiguous from Washington, it has been the Middle East’s regional powers which have had to fill the void of leadership left behind. India has arguably seen major gains in recent years with its Middle Eastern allies, even up against diplomatic odds with its neighbours – the Qatar blockade, and the Saudi intervention in Yemen. Its traditional balancing act set out to ensure the economic prosperity of the region, may yet be tampered by the increasing radical instability, and regional factionalism, which may end up conflicting interests in its allies. Its relationship with Saudi Arabia though, is firm, with mutual opportunities for growth in many areas. 



# PAKISTAN AND ITS “SLEEPER” ASSETS

Pulwama showed that technical means of detecting explosives on the move may not be feasible. Dog squads can catch the whiff of a vehicle carrying explosives on any feeder road leading to the routes fixed for military convoys. The rate of growth of the sniffer / attack dog squads must be raised exponentially and training oriented to identify all the kinds of explosives that are amenable to miniaturisation and moulding into improvised explosive devices (IED).

**U**nder international pressure, Pakistan has been reporting with zealous ‘transparency’ actions it has been taking against those who have been designated global terrorists by the United Nations. Travel restrictions, seizure of bank accounts, curbs on money laundering, etc. show up as very cosmetic and dishonest given that several of those thus designated have large prize money on their heads.

The measures so far publicised are intended to curry favour with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) which has put Pakistan on the watch list (Grey List) of those accused of encouraging or turning a blind eye to money laundering and financing terrorism.

### ‘Varifiable’ Act

A sign of real contrition for stoking religious Islamist terrorism within the South Asia region and even beyond would be for Pakistan to hand over those

with declared bounties on their heads to the nations that have offered the prize money. For the better part of two decades since the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, Pakistan has milked US of billions of dollars for handing

over to US small fry in the terrorist hierarchy to whom it had provided “safe havens”. It kept the biggest international terrorist, Osama bin Laden, hidden in a military cantonment in Abbottabad till US’ Special Forces found him and killed him with the help of a doctor who



Stone-pelters.

confirmed that the tall man behind the wall was indeed Osama by procuring his blood samples. It is a measure of the convoluted nature of the Pakistani State that the doctor is now in jail instead of being allowed to enjoy the bounty that the US had put on the fountainhead of Islamic terrorism.

In many ways this one positive, varifiable act would also help alleviate Pakistan's monetary woes and obviate the need to convince the International Monetary Fund for bailouts to save its sinking economy.

### FATF Context

In the context of what the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is trying to get Pakistan to do to eliminate money laundering for terrorist purposes, there can be no more 'varifiable evidence' of what Pakistan has NOT done to allay international fears of continuing connivance with terrorists than the freedoms Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar enjoy on Pakistani territory. As for hawala transactions and money laundering around the globe, the data that Sri Lanka released that it had confiscated as much as 300,000 million rupees shows how pervasive the malady is. Pakistan's claims to have confiscated and sealed the bank accounts of the many terror groups operating in its territory does not account for the informal 'hawala' nature of transactions that make terrorist acts possible. This is, thus, a 'no change' scenario which the FATF will have to eventually address if it is to be able to fulfill its mandate in Pakistan.

The blatant use of money power to instigate terrorism is seen on the ground in Kashmir where stone-throwers, believed to be financed by separatists, are mobilised at every encounter site. The attempt of the stone-throwers is to frustrate the security forces in carrying out their cordon-and-search operations to a logical conclusion. Nonetheless, in most cases, the security forces were

able to accomplish their mission but in some they have become embroiled in confrontation with the local population resulting in deaths and injuries to civilians.

### Political Orientation

The intent and purpose of Pakistan in instigating such confrontations is to make out that the confrontations are an indication of a popular uprising against "Indian occupation". This is a bald-faced attempt to make out that what is happening in Kashmir is an indigenous uprising and Pakistan is not involved in it except to give moral support to the "Kashmiri intifada". This attempt to equate the struggle of the Palestinian people with what is happening in Kashmir through the connivance of both Pakistan and China is an insult to what the Palestinians are fighting for. The many major attacks that have taken place in Pathankot, Nagrota, Uri and Pulwama were intended to bolster the confidence of the local youth and inspire them to attack military targets. The consequence was the creation of the Burhan Wani group. It managed to capture the imagination of the Kashmiri youth, several of whom were known to have laid down their lives as cannon fodder for the Pakistani game plan.

Pakistan's (and China's) attempt to orientate the "Kashmiri struggle" towards the larger Al Qaeda-ISIL rabid Islamist movement could clearly be discerned in the manner in which IS' flags began appearing in the demonstrations after Friday prayers. China tried to shield Masood Azhar, founder of the Jaish e Mohammad, from being declared a global terrorist so that the Pakistan-based *jihadists* do not make common cause with China's own Islamist quagmire in Xingjiang province.

### Copycats

It is a hallmark of terrorism that one apparently successful method is replicated in other locations to elicit maximum effect. The LTTE's suicide



**CECIL VICTOR**

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bombers in Sri Lanka found resonance in Europe enough to replicate the creation of groups like the "black widows" in Europe. The car-bombs of Afghanistan and Iraq vintage are finding uses in the many trouble spots in Africa albeit upgraded to trucks as a means of inflicting maximum destruction. Our own Pulwama attack was the product of the experiences of other terror groups in the more perfervid locations in Iraq and Syria. Reports that the mastermind of the Pulwama attack had been identified and eliminated is comforting but his legacy needs to be tracked backwards to be able to make it difficult for such attacks to be engendered and executed. That the Pulwama car bomb attack was sought to be replicated by a similar method near the Banihal Pass a few weeks later indicated that the spores of Pulwama were still active and that there was a missing link in the technology employed in the Banihal attack that caused it to fizzle rather than explode. That the perpetrator/s abandoned the vehicle rather than set them ablaze also has its own lessons for Intelligence agencies.



## Pakistan / China Gameplan

Up to the Uri episode, Pakistan and China maintained a façade of deniability based on the “indigenous”

factor and demands for evidence from India which was rejected out of hand. The Indian reaction to Pulwama led by its riposte in Balakot changed the ballgame dramatically. Deniability in such a case has a hollow ring to it.

The Balakot strike has had a cascading effect on Pakistan’s ability to replicate a Pulwama. For one, several influential nations (many of them active in the FATF) have warned Pakistan of serious consequences of an encore. It is also logical that even if only the minimal effect of the strike is taken into account, the deceased would be trainers and their students with varying degrees of expertise in the creation and deployment of improvised explosive devices. Having had to disperse its terrorist assets in expectation of an Indian counter-attack (particularly on Bahawalpur where Mazood Azhar has built a grand madrasa for new crops of terrorists) Pakistan will soon have to take resort, to sleeper cells to continue the policy of trying to defeat India by a thousand cuts.

## South Kashmir Battlefield

Almost every day there are reports of gunfights between security forces and

terrorists who have been tracked down on the basis of actionable Intelligence especially in the South Kashmir districts of Pulwama, Sopian, Srinagar, Kulgam, Anantnag, Kupwara, Budgam and Gandarbal. It is creditable that Intelligence wings are able to collect information about the presence of terrorists to enable the Army, Rashtriya Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force and the local police to jointly conduct successful cordon-and-search-and-eliminate operations.

The toll on both the terrorists and security forces has risen forcing the terrorists to change tactics from frontal gun battles to ambushes to grenade attacks and car bombs. Recent grenade attacks in crowded marketplaces, as the one at the Jammu bus stop, has had an effect on the tourist trade and is, thus, unpopular. The Pakistani attempt to infiltrate trained terrorists under cover of artillery bombardment continues apace and Indian counter-measures are robust. However, published figures that up to 300 terrorists have managed to infiltrate across the Line of Control raises the question that if you can count them then why can’t you shoot them?

## The Larger Picture

The key in Kashmir is to retain the avenues to the hearts and minds of the people. The stone-throwers

have managed to accentuate the alienation because of the frequent use of pellet guns to control mobs intent on disrupting cordon-and-search operations. Stone-throwers were highly motivated individuals initially because of the steady income it brought from Pakistan. Grenade attacks on security pickets are still an option if it does not cause civilian casualties.

The car bomb has been tried out successfully in Pulwama and it must force the government to find out how such large consignments of explosives originate and be amenable to transmission from source to end-user.

Some kinds of explosives (RDX) are amenable to be used in suicide vests. Here too suicide bombers would not carry any opprobrium if civilians are not targeted. How this can be countered must remain a high priority for the government. Pulwama showed that technical means of detecting explosives on the move may not be feasible. Dog squads can catch the whiff of a vehicle carrying explosives on any feeder road leading to the routes fixed for military convoys. The rate of growth of the sniffer / attack dog squads must be raised exponentially and training oriented to identify all the kinds of explosives that are amenable to miniaturisation and moulding into improvised explosive devices (IED).

## Motivation

The Sri Lanka and New Zealand attacks have illustrated how persons can self-motivate themselves to act in a self-destructive manner. How men and women of a single, reasonably economically well-off family did not hesitate to kill themselves and others around them is a subject for deep study. It is for the Indian National Investigation Agency to create guide maps for security forces to indicate possible hotspots where explosives and motivated persons can converge. 



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# NEED FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

For a country which welcomes 2.5 million visitors a year, the industry accounts for nearly 1 million jobs. The employment figures within this sector might take the biggest hit risking the major source of livelihood for many.

*“War is the health of the State”* - **Randolph Bourne**

**A**s Sri Lanka grapples with the carnage in the worst form of violence ever since the end of the Civil Strife in 2009, the terrorist attack may administer a serious impact on one of Asia’s fragile economies.

In a series of coordinated suicide bombings in Colombo on the day of Easter, the terrorists targeted three churches and three luxury hotels killing nearly 300 people. After much speculation by the world media, the attack was claimed by Amaq News Agency- the propaganda media agency for Islamic State of

Iraq and Levant (ISIL). Even though the attackers were Sri Lankan citizens associated to a local Islamist group called National Thowet Jama’at, it was speculated that the sheer magnitude and coordination required involvement of external resources.

The attacks that resulted in mass murders in a country that has a history of religious conflict can be attributed to lack of preparedness. The situation has highlighted major fallout in the security establishment. I try to analyse through the following that why was it so.

### **Political Imbalance**

Ever since the President of the country Maithripala Sirisena sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, thereby appointing Mahinda Rajapaksa as the new PM only to be reinstated again, the political scenario of the country has been in doldrums. The dissolution



*Sri Lanka’s newly appointed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and President Maithripala Sirisena talk during a rally near the parliament in Colombo.*

of the cabinet and suspension of the parliament with an ineffective leadership provided for fertile grounds for a larger impact.

### The Permanent Danger Of Impending Threats

Due to a history of conflict in the country, the probability of reactionary measures to multiple reports of imminent threats becomes low. Commonly known as the boiling frog parable, the threat of an impending disaster seems less likely if one is exposed to it regularly. The shortcoming within the security apparatus of the country could be attributed to this very parable. To also add to this, the reactionary measures, if employed, would have ignited religious sectarianism

### Religious Sectarianism

With the wave of populism sweeping the shores of countries all around the world, there is a trend of rise in

nationalism. Nationalism promoted asparamountcy of one religion or one ethnicity is on the rise. In the case of Sri Lanka though, this is not a new phenomenon wherein the Civil Strife between majority Sinhalese pitted against minority Tamil has driven terrorist organisations such as Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The fact that three churches were targeted in the bombings that took place raises questions on the relative peace that the country has witnessed in the past decade. The rising tensions have been attributed to the triumph of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism in instances of attacks on minority Muslims in the district of Kandy in 2018.

### Changing Nature Of Terrorism

While the after-effects of the terrorist attack are most felt within the country, it has repercussions



**AASTHA VOHRA**

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across the world. The concept of “New” terrorism came to dominate the security agenda thereafter. Even though the concept traces its roots to 1980s and 1990s, it suggests the notion that the behaviour of



*Al Qaeda fighters.*

terrorist groups has fundamentally altered. 'New' terrorism is said to be characterised by indiscriminate mass casualties and the potential for attacks involving weapons of mass destruction. The distinction between Old Terrorism which was practised by groups such as the Red Army Faction, the Red Brigades, the Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Basque ETA, is said to be motivated by secular traditions. Instead, New Terrorism is represented by terrorist groups like Al-Qa'eda and Aum Shinrikyo and ISIS are said to be inspired by religious beliefs.

The spread of such terrorism is not limited to guns and battlefields. The definition of a battlefield has evolved due to influx and advancement of technology and

information. Instead, the New Terrorism is increasingly focussed on encouraging ideological beliefs and narratives for a more permanent effect. Moreover, the decentralised nature provides for easy spread thereby not limiting it to geographical boundaries.

### Future Predictions

The ISIS, an Islamist terrorist group, claimed responsibility of the attacks. This highlights the spread of mass radicalisation that has reached the shores of the Global South. The use of internet to spread extremist ideologies in maintaining a highly decentralised model has added to rising uncertainties in the geopolitical arena. This is a cautionary warning to not only Colombo but to the neighbouring countries of

a looming terror threat. These rising uncertainties and instability are directly proportional to the economic growth of the country, in our case that of Sri Lanka.

### 1. Tourism-dependent economy

"Tourism will be the worst affected. We expect a 30 per cent drop in arrivals and that means a loss of about \$1.5 billion in foreign exchange." Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera told reporters. (France-Press, 2019)

The repercussions of the terrorist attack shall deeply impact on the lucrative tourist industry in Sri Lanka considering three luxury hotels were targeted. Since the tourism sector remains the largest



Port of Colombo in Sri Lanka.

contributor to the GDP of the country, the effects will have a direct impact on the growth of the economy. For a country which welcomes 2.5 million visitors a year, the industry accounts for nearly 1 million jobs. The employment figures within this sector might take the biggest hit risking the major source of livelihood for many. (Toh, 2019)

One must not forget the international status quo of the country involved. The concern of repayment of international debt looms large. Sri Lanka needs a constant flow of foreign currencies to repay its international debt (IMF bailout in 2016) which accounts for 80 per cent of its annual output. The inability to pay its debts shall wither its global image and impact flow of investments into the country thereby weakening the value of Sri Lankan Rupee.

Apart from the loss from destruction of property and resources, a terror prone country demotivates foreign investment as the returns to the investment cannot be met. In the case of Sri Lanka, the investors may consider alternate and safer options thus drawing away the flow of finance in the country.

## 2. Effect on the import / export

Terrorism raises the cost of doing business with the affected country i.e. Sri Lanka. Due to the country's island status the import-export of goods and services rely massively on the sea highways. The agriculture sector which remains exposed to climate disasters constitutes as the major export of the country. The impending months will see the government lay emphasis on security apparatus. This may take place in the form of higher taxes, subsidies and government deficits. According to the World Bank data of 2017, exports of commodities such as black tea, brassieres and petroleum oils constitute 50 per cent of its GDP.

(Bank, 2017). The drop in import / export figures may result in inflation within the country. This may see a fall in the value of the national currency. For instance, in the recent terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge, London saw a 50-pip decline against the USD. (FXCM, n.d.)

At the same time, the country has made some strategic investments in ports around the country for its infrastructure development. The new Colombo International Financial City is said to be the new financial hub to attract investments. The country is in the process of signing memorandum of understanding

What has been **unfortunate with the incident in Sri Lanka** is the **inability of Colombo and New Delhi** to engage with the situation together. **Information was leaked** of an impending attack

## 3. Loss of consumer and business confidence

In the face of a recovering economy like that of Sri Lanka combined with the unprecedented international debt, the country is faced with competing geo-political interests in the region. To further add to the volatility, the imminent general elections are just around the corner. This uncertain environment may provide the skilled force with the right motivation to leave the country resulting in a brain drain. A very recent example of political uncertainty leading to decrease in flows of FDI is witnessed within India as it fell by 7 per cent. (Bloomberg, 2019)

It is hoped that key infrastructure development, such as the new Colombo Port City which the Government of Sri Lanka is hoping to convert into a regional financial hub, will bring in significant further investment. Sri Lanka is in the process of negotiating free trade agreements with countries around the region, including India, China, Bangladesh, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan.

(MoU) with India and Japan for developing a container terminal on the port. This sure does seem like a lucrative opportunity in the face of such stark uncertainties.

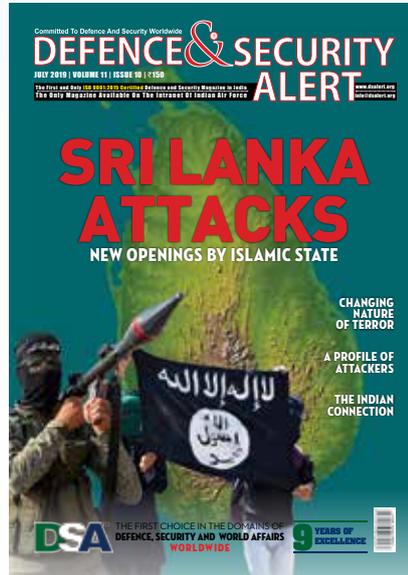
The attack in the South Asian region, first of its kind, marks the threat that ISIS poses to the neighbouring countries including India. For a country with second largest Muslim population, the onset of dangers from a terrorist attack looms large. Moreover, in the wake of rising nationalistic sentiments, the sectarianism between Hindu and Muslims provides for a promising target.

What has been unfortunate with the incident in Sri Lanka is the inability of Colombo and New Delhi to engage with the situation together. Information was leaked out that the Indian Intelligence was successful in communicating the threats of an impending attack to Sri Lankan authorities. There lies a huge lesson to be learnt by the mistakes committed by your neighbours. India needs to guard its national front and boundaries at all costs. 

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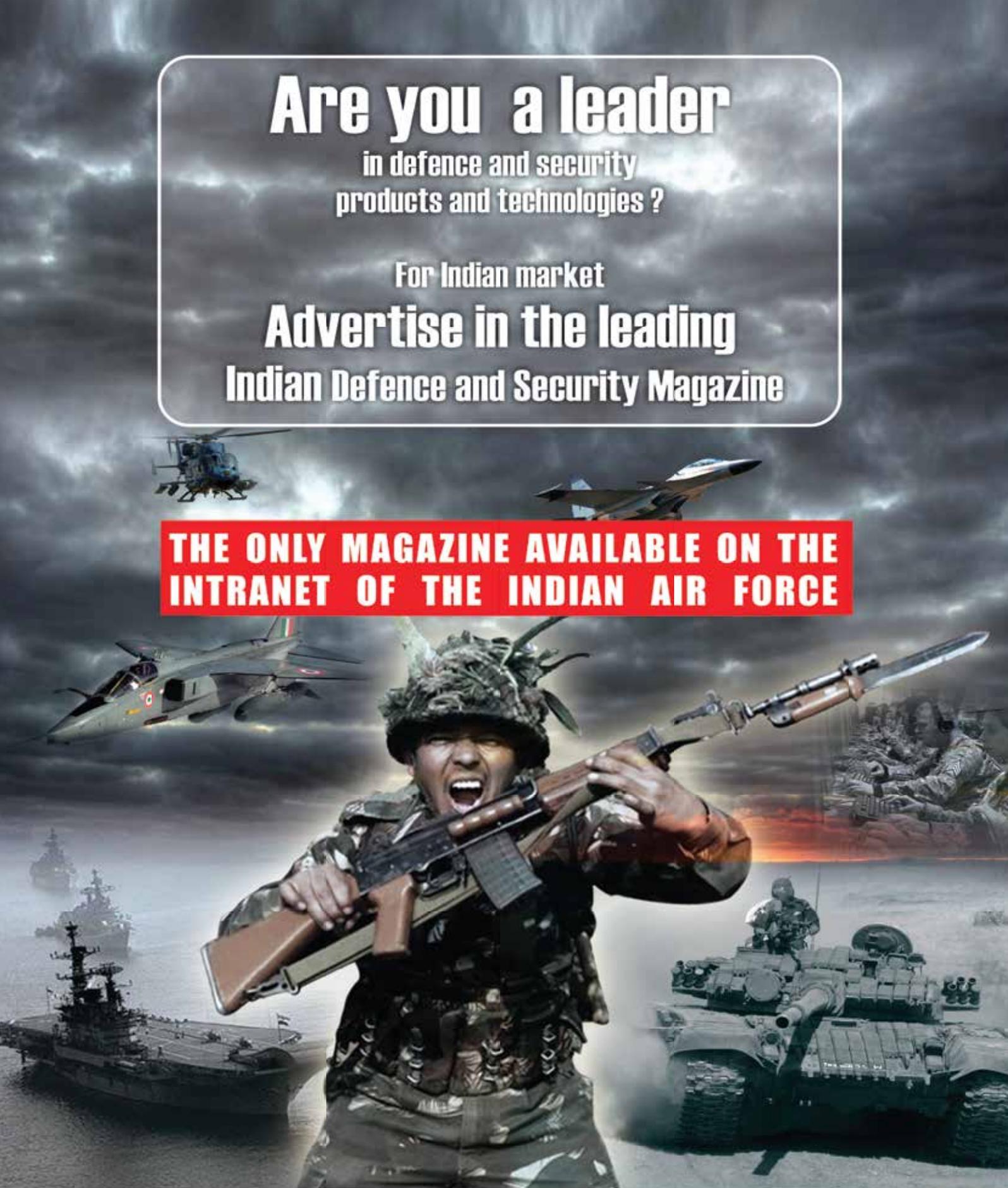
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# AQUILA

ERADICATE SMELLS AND AIR POLLUTION QUICKLY,  
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A range of high capacity wall mounted Ozone generators for all  
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## Fast, effective, safe

Ozone is the strongest available air cleaner and disinfectant for treating odours. The Aquila generator uses the **Corona discharge system**, with ceramics rather than coils. These produce a higher ozone concentration in the 3 standard sizes 3g/h, 5g/h and 10g/h. You could install two or more units in parallel increasing output if required.

Allowed to run remotely during the day in public areas such as dormitories, the Aquila will keep smells and odours at bay. Then, when a deep clean is needed when the occupants have left, this can be done easily using the supplied remote control. Filling the rooms with ozone will mean all surfaces will be disinfected by killing off all pathogens.

The Aquila is ideal for school classrooms, offices, restaurants, cafés, shops and general public areas.

Depending on volume/size of a room, the 10g/h model will look after up to 1000 M<sup>2</sup>

The Aquila can be used in multiples to cover larger rooms.

**E**radicate smells and air pollution quickly, economically and sustainably with **nature's own powerful air purifier** – OZONE.

Watership Down Technologies Aquila Series of Ozone generators, powerfully oxidise all smells within minutes. If left on overnight, it will eradicate bacteria and viruses leaving rooms with Pure, Clean Air ready for the next day, all automatically.

### AQUILA Specifications:

Ozone output:	3, 5, 10 Grams per hour
Ozone control:	Fully adjustable O <sub>3</sub> output
Control:	Automatic on flow
Cabinet:	Stainless steel
Dimensions:	3gm - 460 x 160 x 220 mm 5gm - 460 x 160 x 220 mm 10gm - 580 x 260 x 280 mm (w x d x h)
Weight:	5.4, 5.5, 8.5 KG



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