With a Helmet or a Badge: Is the Counter-Terrorism Effort More Effectively Undertaken by the Military or the Police?

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Abstract:

While some countries attempt to resolve the terrorist problem with police power, others rely on military might. This essay seeks to unpack the complex phenomenon of counter-terrorism and explore whether the police or the army is more effective in the fight against terror. Social support for the counter-terrorism effort denies terrorists both legitimacy and recruitment opportunities. This in turn limits the ability of terrorist organisations to carry out attacks and to regenerate losses, reducing the overall terrorist threat. A police force that works closely with society is well-poised to lead the fight against terror, though we must not discount the capabilities of the military in supporting this herculean effort.

Keywords: Counter-Terrorism; Minimum Force; Liberal Values; Measure of Effectiveness Framework

INTRODUCTION

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks (9/11) captured the world's attention, the burning twin towers a stark reminder of terrorism's horrors. Yet terrorism is not new to modern history—the British faced "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland and the Israelis are still struggling with Palestinian terrorists. Some countries resolve the terrorist problem with police power while others rely on military might. Who is right and who is wrong? Is there ever a right answer at all? In the fight against terror, should we use a helmet or a badge? We will attempt to answer this question by unpacking the complex phenomenon of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

In May 2007, the Singapore Parliament passed the Singapore Armed Forces (Amendment) Bill, giving the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) enhanced powers to assist the Singapore Police Force (SPF) in domestic security operations.[1] This begs the following questions—will the SAF be assuming a greater role in Singapore's fight against terror? Can we measure effectiveness in the fight against terror? Is there a framework to determine whether the military or police will do a better job? What can history tell us? This essay argues that police leadership, with the military playing a supporting role, is more effective in countering terrorism.

SHOULD THE POLICE BE IN CHARGE?

What is the Nature of the Threat?

Terrorism, according to Bruce Hoffman, is the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or threat of violence in the pursuit of political change.[2] The end goal is political change and the means to achieve it is fear through violence. Fear within the population, generated by violence from the terrorists, causes panic and an expectation that the authorities will alleviate that fear. If this expectation cannot be adequately met, the population will lose confidence in their government's ability to protect them. Conversely, if the response is too drastic and counter-terrorist measures are draconian, such that personal privacy and civil liberties are severely infringed or restricted, society will be paralysed. Either way, this breakdown in social order is the ingredient for political change that terrorists aim to achieve. Terrorism is a tactic with political objectives at its core. Maintaining the support of the people is vital as terrorism is political in nature— terrorists cannot effect political change without any support from the populace. Understanding the political nature of terrorism is crucial to assessing its effectiveness and the choice of instruments available to the state in countering this threat.

The Military's Role in Countering Terrorism

The traditional role of the military has been to repel external threats, usually from another state, thus preserving the geographical integrity and political sovereignty of the state and protecting the lives of its people.[3] In the case of countering terrorism, the enemy could be anyone living in our midst. The traditional approach of winning battles—through the concentration of superior force at a decisive point—suddenly appears useless.[4] With no familiar doctrine to refer to, the military frequently resorts to extreme measures to seek a return to order. In an effort to limit the operational freedom of terrorists, drastic measures like curfews and door-to-door searches may be carried out by soldiers who have no training in legal procedures and sensitivity to civilian privacy or liberty. The mission-oriented mindset of soldiers may cause them to execute their tasks without due consideration of the impact on the surrounding population. Thus while some terrorists are caught or killed, this comes at a significant cost to the people living in the area, especially when innocent civilians are killed or injured in the process. This translates into loss of support for the counter-terrorist cause amongst the population and may even push the disaffected into the arms of terrorist recruiters. To a large extent, operating amongst the people to ensure order, security and the apprehension of terrorists is constabulary work that requires different skill sets not usually found among soldiers. Police are trained to de-escalate situations, use minimum force at all times and draw their weapons only as a last resort. Military doctrine and training, on the other hand, favours the decisive use of maximum force against an identified enemy.[5] As such, overreliance on the military in countering

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cyberpioneer

A Police Coast Guard Vessel and an Anti-Submarine Patrol Vessel Intercepting a Suspicious Small Boat in an Exercise

Picture: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Medical_Response_Force_of_the_Chemical,_Biological,_Radiological_and_Ex-plosive_Defence_Group_Singapore_Armed_Forces_during_an_exercise.jpg

Medical Response Force Soldiers from the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosive Defence Group Await the Arrival of Casualties in a Simulated Exercise

terrorism frequently runs the risk of alienating the populace, especially when the terrorist organisation has already established a foothold and gained some popular support. There can be no purely military solution to a problem that is essentially political.[6]

Is the Military Irrelevant in Countering Terrorism?

Is the military irrelevant then, given the host of problems and limitations associated with it in the fight against terror? Far from being irrelevant, the military possesses qualities and resources that constitute one of the more important, if not the most important, sources of state power.[7] For a start, the military possesses sophisticated hardware and reconnaissance capabilities not available to civilian agencies. It has competent personnel who are used to contingency planning and speedy deployment of force and has experience in establishing control of an area quickly to monitor the movement of people and equipment.[8] Various arms of the military like the Air Force and Navy provide capabilities such as airborne

surveillance and precision strikes and can secure vital economic arteries like Sea Lines of Communication. Similarly, as observed by Jeffrey H. Norwitz, "only the military can truly deal with catastrophic events such as biological and chemical attack(s) as well as radiological release and consequence management." He adds that "the organic capability for superb military investigation, intelligence analysis and fact finding can be an invaluable augmentation of state and local authority during a calamity."[9] The inherent qualities and capabilities highlighted above make the military an important asset to consider when planning or dealing with national emergencies, including counter-terrorism.

The Silver Bullet?

What makes the police the most suitable instrument of the state in dealing with terrorism? Essentially, the superiority of a police-dominant approach, as compared to one led by the military, rests upon two pillars: minimum force and liberal values. Minimum force, as observed by Thomas Mockaitis, is

the key principle in winning the hearts and minds of the people. Force remains of limited use in any internal conflict as the real objective is the loyalty of disaffected people.[10] This is also the most important difference between soldiers and police officers in approaching a conflict. Police officers are trained to respond to violence with the minimum force necessary to accomplish the task. This principle of minimum force is alien to a soldier.[11] Paul Wilkinson observed that "as a cardinal principle of liberal democracy, one must never be tempted, however serious the situation may be, to use methods that are incompatible with the liberal values of humanity, liberty and justice."[12] The police, by virtue of their commission to enforce law and order in peacetime as well as their training to meet this calling, are most suitable as guardians of liberal values. To substantiate this claim, objective criteria will be used to measure the effectiveness of the police *vis-à-vis* the military in countering the terrorism threat. The following chapter proposes a framework for measuring the effectiveness of the counter-terrorism effort, which can help evaluate whether the police or the military is more effective in countering terrorism.

Measures of Effectiveness in Countering Terrorism

Daniel Byman argued that successful counter-terrorism is notoriously difficult to measure. He added that while it is appealing to use "body counts" or numbers of arrests as a measure of success, this is a deeply flawed approach because the size of the terrorist structure and its ability to regenerate is not taken into account. More importantly, he contends that a "body count" approach fails to reflect the impact of counter-terrorism measures on the adversary's morale, recruitment, fundraising and residual ability to conduct sophisticated attacks. Byman suggested five measures of success in countering terrorism: 1) Restricting terrorist freedom of operation; 2) Removing terrorist leadership and command structures; 3) Maintaining high levels of domestic support; 4) Disrupting terrorist recruitment; and 5) Reducing terrorist attacks.[13] Understanding these metrics of effectiveness against terrorism is essential in evaluating whether the police or the military is more effective in dealing with the threat.

Restricting Terrorist Freedom of Operation

This measure entails removing secure areas or sanctuaries from which terrorists can plan and organise their strikes with little fear. Keeping up the pressure on the terrorists and denying them respite prevents them from orchestrating elaborate plots and restricts their ability to coordinate successful attacks.

Removing Terrorist Leadership and Command Structures

Success in this regard is predicated on understanding the command structure and organisation of terrorist networks. In a sense, it is a measure of the state's intelligence processing and execution cycle to discover the enemy and target their leadership. Successful human intelligence and acute understanding of networked organisations are critical to linking up the nodes and targeting the hub where the terrorist leadership resides. Targeting this leadership is critical to weakening terrorist organisations. Arrests and interrogations may yield valuable insights into the workings of a terrorist organisation and information to facilitate future arrests.

Maintaining High Levels of Domestic Support

In addition to tacitly supporting the counter-terrorism effort, ordinary citizens must be encouraged to actively help prevent terrorist operations and attacks. The fight should not be restricted to police, soldiers and government officials—the public must be made to feel that they are part of the fight against terror. The long-term nature of terrorist threats justifies this investment. Additionally, successfully encouraging the public to support unpopular policies (such as those which encroach on freedoms) will yield long-term dividends. By enlisting domestic support and internalising a "look-out and play your part" mentality, states can draw upon the public to enhance their sensing capabilities and intelligence sources. This will also prevent terrorists from operating freely.

Disrupting Terrorist Recruitment

Terrorist networks are by nature resilient and can easily regenerate when individual cells and even hubs are eliminated. Disrupting recruitment to prevent recovery is therefore a vital measure of success.[14] Physically shutting down terrorist recruitment centres

is one means of accomplishing this but terrorists have other means of enlisting new members. Winning in the ideological arena is therefore critical to disrupting a terrorist network's ability to influence, radicalise and recruit new members. The ideological battle is a social one and the tools to wage it are also likely be found within society. Social communities and institutions can play a major role in shaping perceptions, values and norms, all crucial ingredients for winning hearts and minds. However, should winning support prove too difficult because of an entrenched ideological stranglehold on the population, then measures to convince would-be followers of the high cost of pursuing violent political change must be firmly implemented.

Reducing Terrorist Attacks

The fifth and final measure of effectiveness is whether terrorists are still succeeding in their attacks despite the implementation of countermeasures. This measure reflects the severity of the overall terrorist threat and the success of terrorist groups in continuing to attract recruits and raise funds. Terrorist organisations must demonstrate their continued relevance by mounting successful attacks—if their plans are thwarted for a prolonged period, potential supporters will turn elsewhere.[15]

The factors discussed above are very much interrelated and will reinforce or impact each other. The overall Measure of Effectiveness framework will be used to gauge the level of success in countering terrorism, be it undertaken by the police or military, using historical case studies involving Britain in Northern Ireland and the Israeli experience with Palestinian terrorists. A third case study involves a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of Singapore's counter-terrorist effort that is dominated by the police force and augmented by the military.

BRITISH EXPERIENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Irish terrorist threat can be traced back to the struggle against British rule after the Anglo-Irish War of Independence, which ended in 1921 with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The Free States of Ireland, composed of 26 mainly Catholic

SeanMack, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mural_-_Battle_of_the_bogside_2004_SMC.jpg.

Mural of "The Battle of Bogside" Depicting a Boy in a Gas Mask Holding a Petrol Bomb

southern counties, became independent while the six predominantly Protestant northern counties chose to remain with Britain. Years of grievances suffered by the minority Catholics in Northern Ireland as well as their desire to unify Ireland led to the formation of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA or IRA).[16] The British struggle against PIRA, a terrorist organisation, from 1970 to 1998 when the Good Friday Agreement ended the fighting, is known as "The Troubles." PIRA's aim was to defend the Catholic enclave in Northern Ireland against Protestant loyalist attacks and to unify Ireland in the long term. PIRA's strategy was to mobilise and recruit Catholics and make Northern Ireland as ungovernable as possible through violence to break the unionist government at Stormont and force the British to interfere by sending troops. Terrorist attacks would then provoke a hard-line British response that would turn the Catholic population against them.[17] Initially the British did respond forcefully with a massive deployment of Army troops to quell the violence, alienating the people and aggravating the situation. It was not until a policy of police primacy was instituted in 1976 that the terrorist problem slowly came under control.[18]

Effectiveness of the British Counter-Terrorism Effort

Restricting Terrorist Freedom of Operation. PIRA's aim of provoking overreaction by the British Army culminated in "The Battle of Bogside" where Britain mobilised troops to quell sectarian fighting and rioting in Northern Ireland. "Operation Motorman," a massive deployment of 28,000 military troops including 5,300 Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers supported by armoured vehicles, heavy weapons and some local police was initiated.[19] The overwhelming force was tactically successful in breaking up the barricaded area, driving PIRA rebels into the countryside and restricting PIRA's ability to operate freely.[20] However, the large army footprint played into the hands of PIRA propaganda that portrayed the British as foreign invaders.

Removing Terrorist Leadership and Command Structures. In an attempt to target PIRA's leadership and organisational structure, the British Army invoked the 1922 Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act to arrest, detain and intern anyone suspected of acting or having acted or being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the preservation of peace and maintenance of order in Northern Ireland.[21] Curfews, door-to-door searches and detentions without trial were the order of the day. This alienated the Catholic population and increased PIRA's popularity in Northern Ireland.[22]

Maintaining High Levels of Domestic Support. The initial high-handed British response included torture.[23] To paraphrase James Rudolph, if the British had pulled their troops out and handled Northern Ireland with normal laws and policing methods instead, much of the support for the IRA would probably have disappeared.[24] The military is a very blunt instrument when deployed in a civilian context, and this is true even for an impeccable and well-trained outfit like the British Army.

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In the late 1970s, the British changed strategies from a counter-insurgency approach to one undertaken by the local police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), which acted in accordance with the law. The army played a supporting role and acted like a security blanket to quell violence when it was beyond the control of the police. With emphasis on minimal use of force, this move was well received by the British public and perceived as more appropriate and effective.[25]

Disrupting Terrorist Recruitment. During the initial military phase, PIRA enjoyed widespread support from Catholic nationalists. Recruitment was never a problem for the terrorist organisation because new volunteers were readily available.[26] Ambush killings undertaken by the Special Air Service (SAS), especially when they involved innocent civilians, provided excellent anti-British Army propaganda.

As Britain changed her policy to place a greater emphasis on law and order, the criminal prosecution approach undertaken by the RUC and the political involvement of Sinn Fein within the political arena led to increased domestic support for the RUC. There was also a reduction in the attractiveness of political violence due to the availability of an alternate path for PIRA to meet its political aspirations. A policy of police primacy to win support from the domestic population paved the way for a peaceful political process which starved PIRA of new terrorist recruits.

Reducing Terrorist Attacks. According to statistical evidence, the highest levels of violence were experienced during the initial years.[27] Shootings and bombings reached a height in 1972 and remained high until 1976.[28] The implementation of police primacy and criminalisation resulted in the reduction of PIRA terrorist attacks.[29] According Lloyd George, "the Irish job ... was a policeman's job supported by the military and not vice versa."[30] British troops eventually left Northern Ireland on 31 July 2007, ending decades of counter-terrorist operations against PIRA.[31]

ISRAELI EXPERIENCE AGAINST PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE

After World War II, the United Nations (UN) proposed the partitioning of Palestine into two independent states, one Palestinian and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem internationalised. The Jewish state proclaimed independence in 1948 as the state of Israel. During the Six Day War in 1967, Israel occupied Palestine and many Palestinians fled or were expelled. In December 1987, a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation began—this is known as the First Intifada.[32] Palestinian demonstrators used household tools to attack soldiers from the Israel Defence Force (IDF).[33] Massive numbers were arrested by the IDF and special camps had to be built to contain them. Israeli methods resulted in heavy casualties amongst Palestinian civilians. Various peace talks broke down due to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) terrorist activities and harsh reprisals from the IDF. The Second Intifada broke out in 2000. This time, the uprisings were even more violent as the Palestinians, frustrated with Arafat and the Palestinian leadership and fuelled by the extremist Hamas jihadi movement, were convinced that violence was the only way to remove the Jews from their land. The Israel-Palestine issue remains unresolved and prospects for a long-term peace are bleak.

Effectiveness of the Israeli Counter-Terrorism Effort

Restricting Terrorist Freedom of Operation. The IDF has been extremely successful in limiting Palestinian terrorist movement both within Israel-occupied territory as well as in neighbouring states. In an effort to contain the terrorist threat, large areas were sealed off and road access was blocked. Walls were also built to cordon off the problematic Gaza Strip and West Bank and numerous checkpoints were set up to screen travellers. These measures have worked well and terrorist attacks originating from the cordoned-off areas were significantly reduced from 2002 onwards.[34]

Removing Terrorist Leadership and Command Structures. The IDF has been able to utilise its intelligence service to single out key terrorists for arrest or assassination. In the two years of the Second Intifada, there were reportedly at least eighty cases of Israeli forces gunning down or blowing up Palestinian militants involved in the planning and execution of terror attacks. Such measures drew violent protests from the Palestinians and heavy criticism from the international community.[35] With their leaders dead or in jail, many terrorist cells were left directionless and demoralised.[36] Nonetheless, key terrorist losses were often quickly replaced.[37] Therefore, while IDF punitive actions against individual terrorists were successful, the overall impact on the Palestinian terrorist leadership and command structure was limited.

Maintaining High Levels of Domestic Support. As the IDF's use of force increased, resentment from the Palestinians, Israeli civilians and even within the IDF increased as well. There were accusations that the IDF had conducted indiscriminate and even deliberate strikes against non-combatants, resulting in public and international political backlash.[38] The perceived excessive use of force by the IDF against Palestinian civilians has had a negative impact on domestic support, as seen in the high number of conscripts evading combat service.[39]

Disrupting Terrorist Recruitment. During the First Intifada, massive arrests were made by the IDF, including those made by "Arabist" infiltrators that looked and spoke Arabic. In terms of numbers of arrests ("body counts") and the frequency of IDF strikes against the terrorists, the results were impressive and tactically brilliant. However, all this was mitigated by rapid replenishment of terrorist losses, frequently by the relatives of those who were killed or imprisoned.[40] As there remains no shortage of terrorist volunteers ready to die for their cause, it is apparent that the Israeli counter-terrorism effort has not significantly reduced terrorist recruitment. If anything, the perceived excessive use of force by the IDF may even have helped the extremists justify their violent tactics.

Reducing Terrorist Attacks. Israeli counter-terrorism measures, particularly the building of walls and fences along Gaza Strip and the West Bank towards the end of 2002, were effective in reducing the number of terrorist attacks from the cordoned area. Over a period of three and a half years from 2002, only two out of 125 attacks originated from the Gaza Strip. Similarly, the killing of terrorists by IDF strikes across neighbouring states has also weakened Palestinian

terrorist organisations. In this area at least, it would appear that the terrorist threat has been somewhat contained.

While tactically successful in targeting terrorists and reducing their operating freedom, the hard-line and military-intensive counter-terrorist approach adopted by the Israelis against the Palestinians cannot completely remove the terrorist leadership and organisational structure due to their ability to regenerate. Similarly, IDF actions have neither significantly deterred nor blunted Palestinian terrorist recruitment of suicide bombers. In the process, the Israeli military has built a reputation for using excessive force against a weak but determined Palestinian people and has had to withdraw time and again when faced with mounting domestic and international discontent. It would appear that the IDF may be too blunt and powerful a weapon against terror, resulting in much collateral damage that has alienated both domestic and international opinion. The IDF has not been very successful at winning the support of the public, as evidenced by the high percentage of conscripts who have refused to report for duty.[42] This has in turn made collection of intelligence on terrorist activities difficult. While the building of the security wall has reduced terrorist attacks, most Israelis remain convinced that no amount of countermeasures will bring Palestinian resistance to an end.[43] Thus, the IDF's counter-terrorism measures have not been very effective based on the Measure of Effectiveness framework.

SINGAPORE'S COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORT

Singapore's counter-terrorism effort is the responsibility of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and is executed by the SPF. The SAF, under the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), has been enlisted to assist the civil authorities in its counter-terrorism duties. The SAF's involvement includes surveillance and interception of suspicious aircraft headed towards Singapore, surveillance and interception of vessels within Singapore's territorial waters and protection of critical installations on land. Overall, Singapore's counter-terrorism effort has been primarily led by the police and augmented by the military in areas of expertise beyond traditional police capabilities.

As a last resort and when resources are stretched, the SAF can be activated to assist the police in a domestic security role.

Effectiveness of Singapore's Counter-Terrorism Effort

Restricting Terrorist Freedom of Operation. Singapore's effort to restrict terrorist movement seems to have worked well, an excellent example being the arrest of a Singaporean member of the Jemaah Islamiya (JI), jihadist Abdul Basheer, in an undisclosed location in Middle East.[44] This may be attributed to the integrated intelligence network and robust legislation in the powerful Internal Security Act that empowers law enforcement agencies, particularly the police, to act swiftly and decisively against potential terrorists, forcing them to shift their operations overseas. The military also plays a significant role in tracking suspicious movements, with the Air Force monitoring our skies and intercepting unidentified aircraft straying into Singapore.[45] The Navy also patrols Singapore's coastal waters, boarding and inspecting vessels. Similarly, Army troops conduct joint patrols with the police at critical installations such as Changi Airport and Jurong Island Petrol Chemical Hub to deter and intercept infiltrators. The specialised equipment and skills required to restrict terrorist movement in the various domains would not have been available if either the SPF or the SAF had undertaken the task alone.

Removing Terrorist Leadership and Command Structures. The 2001 arrests of 31 members of the JI network in Singapore exposed a plot to carry out various terrorist acts on the US and Israeli Embassies as well as train stations and other targets in Singapore.[46] Subsequent arrests included that of Rijal Yadri Jumari, earmarked as a future JI leader, in 2008. This is indicative of constant effort to pressure and weaken the JI network and leadership, particularly that of its Singapore branch.[47] In this aspect, inter-agency intelligence sharing and effective police work has been crucial in the pre-emptive arrests of terrorist leadership and members. The intimate link between criminal activities, such as illegal trespassing, and terrorist activities means that the SPF is better able to draw connections that may lead to uncovering terrorist activities.

Maintaining High Levels of Domestic Support. According to the 2003 JI White Paper, the initial police arrest of JI terrorists in Singapore was a direct result of information supplied by a fellow Singaporean. This indicates a positive relationship between the police and the public that produces timely and accurate intelligence. To further engage the public, the Traffic Police Department distributed pamphlets on spotting suspicious behaviour to all registered taxi drivers in Singapore.[48] Similarly, when Mas Selamat, a JI terrorist, escaped from police custody in February 2008, private telecommunication companies in Singapore pitched in to send out the fugitive's photograph, released by the SPF with an accompanying security message, to over 5 million mobile phone subscribers.[49] All these efforts involve reaching out to different communities within society, a task for which the SPF is the obvious choice. The evident positive support of the public demonstrates that the SPF has been successful in gaining high levels of domestic support in the counter-terrorism effort.

Disrupting Terrorist Recruitment. Recognising that prison is fertile ground for recruiting and radicalising JI members and sympathisers, the detainee rehabilitation program was initiated to keep detained JI members from being further radicalised and help them re-integrate into society. Since its inception in 2003, many have undergone the Religious Rehabilitation Program and according to MHA, detainees who have been released on Restriction Orders have responded well to counselling.[50] Apart from targeting terrorist recruitment in prisons, the SPF, in cooperation with Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, launched an effort to reach out to the population on the cyber front by setting up internet websites to amplify correct Islamic messages and debunk the deviant teachings found online on thousands of extremist sites.[51] The SPF and Prison Service have thus played an important role in disrupting terrorist recruitment.

Reducing Terrorist Attacks. There has not been a successful terrorist attack in Singapore since members of the Pakistan Peoples Party hijacked SQ117 in March 1991. In the view of Dr John Harrison of Nanyang Technological University, "[t]he fact that the attacks didn't happen shows that the security apparatus in Singapore is very good."[52] However,

we must be wary of using the absence of terrorist attacks in Singapore thus far to conclude that the counter-terrorism effort has been effective as there is no point of reference for comparison, at least in recent times. In Singapore's case, it may be better to gauge effectiveness by measuring the confidence of the population to deal with a terrorist attack and the ability of society to stay united and resilient in the aftermath. This includes saving lives and mitigating the effects of any incident. In this regard, specific plans and exercises involving both the SPF and the SAF have been developed and practised to address conventional attacks like bombing and hijacking and non-conventional ones such as chemical, biological and radiological attacks.[53] In an independent 2005 Forbes research survey of 519 Singaporeans, more than 80% of those surveyed were confident that security measures taken to prevent terrorist attacks and to recover from an attack were sufficient. Sociologist Alexius Pereira attributed this confidence to increased police patrols and constant reiteration of the national security effort.[54] The integrated approach by the police and the SAF seems to have worked well to deter and prevent terrorist attacks. It has augmented the defence of key installations and established a system to contain and mitigate the effects of a successful attack.

The Singapore counter-terrorism experience is very much led by the SPF. The police have been effective in arresting terrorist leadership, both locally as well as in collaboration with its international and regional counterparts. The positive relationship that the SPF has established with the local communities while fighting crime and drugs over the years has built trust and support that can be useful and effective in providing intelligence on terrorists. Focusing its effort in rehabilitation within prisons has also been effective in preventing further radicalisation and terrorist recruitment. The spontaneous provision of public information that resulted in the arrest of JI terrorists and the contribution by taxi drivers and telecommunication companies suggests that the SPF has garnered significant public support in their efforts against terrorism. Nonetheless, the SPF recognises the important role of the SAF in limiting terrorist movement in areas beyond the capabilities of the police, as well as in handling chemical, biological,

radiological and explosive (CBRE) threats. It is clear that the SPF takes the lead in Singapore's counter-terrorist effort, utilising the SAF's capabilities and resources when necessary. While it is too early to laud this approach as a success story, it remains promising.

COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

We have used the Measure of Effectiveness framework to assess the British, Israeli and Singaporean experience in countering terrorism. The British and Israeli armies probably stand among the best military outfits in the world. Similarly, the SAF was rated by Tim Huxley as the most advanced military in South East Asia.[55] However, both the British Army and IDF experiences indicate that the military has not been effective in dealing with terrorism. In the case of Israel, the hard-line and military-intensive counter-terrorist approach against the Palestinians, while tactically successful in targeting terrorist organisations and reducing their strength, has not brought enduring peace to the country. For Britain, the tide turned only after the policies of police primacy and criminalisation were implemented, slowly winning over the population. Similarly, while recognised as an important national resource, the SAF acts only in a supporting role to the SPF. The analysis thus far demonstrates the benefits of strong police dominance in countering terrorism. In assessing whether counter-terrorism efforts are more effectively undertaken by the police or the military, it would be tempting to simply conclude that the police are more effective than the military. However, while the military is insufficient when engaging terrorism on its own, it possesses inherent capabilities and resources that should not be disregarded.

An Integrated Approach

The aim of terrorism is to induce fear, in particular an irrational anxiety that incapacitates people to the point of breakdown in social order.[56] When this happens, cracks along racial, religious or economic lines may develop. Terrorist organisations can exploit and capitalise upon such schisms to bring down the government and assert their own brand of politics. The violent and destructive terrorist threat is, however, too catastrophic for the police to handle alone. Where the effort required is beyond police capabilities, the military can be activated, as a last resort.[57] The police can then act as a guardian to balance force and liberal

values, with the safety and security of the people constantly in mind. As such, while the police on its own is not the "silver bullet" for countering the terrorist threat, it is in the best position, when supported by the military, to provide safety and security for the public. Using the Measure of Effectiveness framework, the following section will explore how an integrated approach with police leadership supported by the military can be effective in countering the terrorism threat.

Effectiveness of the Integrated Approach

Restricting Terrorist Freedom of Operation. Recognising the need to deny sanctuary and space for terrorists to plan, operate and strike, the integrated approach adopts a complete view of the problem and utilises the capabilities and resources of both the police and military to pressure terrorist groups and restrict their operating freedom. Sophisticated military surveillance technology and command and control infrastructure can be utilised to monitor terrorist activities. Intelligence gathering capabilities, including military signal intelligence for intercepting radio transmissions, can be combined with police intelligence to piece together a more comprehensive picture of terrorist operations. Utilising military aerial and naval platforms, the police can extend its reach to enhance perimeter protection beyond what was traditionally available to the police, much like in the Singapore case study. It is important to note that methods to restrict terrorist freedom of operation must not impinge too much on civil liberties, personal freedom and privacy or it may draw a negative response from the very population that the counter-terrorism effort aims to protect.

While the police on its own is not the "silver bullet" for countering the terrorist threat, it is in the best position, when supported by the military, to provide safety and security for the public.

Removing Terrorist Leadership and Command Structures. An integrated approach leverages on resources beyond those of the police to target terrorist leadership and command structures.

Sophisticated military satellite and precision tracking systems developed for warfare may be exploited during peacetime to maintain persistent surveillance and real-time situational awareness on the precise location and movement of terrorists so that the police may execute search and arrest operations with pin-point accuracy. Terrorist operations exploit bureaucratic organisational stove-pipes by cutting across ministerial jurisdictions. The integrated approach overcomes this by merging intelligence across all government agencies to keep track of leadership movements within terrorist organisations. Apart from technology, a positive relationship with local communities established over time can potentially yield valuable human intelligence information to help target terrorist organisations. Nonetheless, lessons from historic case studies caution that terrorist targeting is a delicate task that requires precise intelligence and more importantly, careful execution to avoid collateral damage. A legitimate judicial process to arrest and extradite terrorist leadership for criminal trial is much more palatable to the population and international community. As the integrated approach is likely to provide increased intelligence on terrorists and their movements, it will facilitate effective arrests and the removal of their leadership and command structures.

Maintaining High Levels of Domestic Support. In-depth analysis and historical case studies of the terrorist threat show that police primacy in counter-terrorism achieves high levels of support from the domestic population. The superiority of a police-dominant approach in generating high levels of domestic support, as compared to one led by the military, rests upon the two pillars of minimum force and liberal values. Police officers are trained to respond to violence with the least amount of force necessary to accomplish the task—a practice usually alien to a soldier.[58] The police are again most suitable in guarding liberal values while maintaining law and order. In both the British and Israeli experiences, we have seen how the military's excessive use of force and disregard for civil liberties alienated the population and lost their support. Since the nature of terrorism is political, support of the population is the key to effective counter-terrorism.

An integrated approach with the police leading and the military playing a supporting role will be restrained in the use of force when conducting operations. With the military in the backseat, the population will not be unnecessarily alarmed, knowing that the police will administer justice in a restrained manner with due consideration to civil liberties.[59] The police are the most visible arm of the state and their attitudes and behaviour will have a great impact on public sentiment.[60] Therefore, the police should always be the ones directly interacting with the people and the military should only be activated as a last resort. Even military operations in support of civil authority should be overseen by the police to balance force with liberal values.

It is important to point out that the police—as the guardians of the people—must be seen to uphold justice without fear or favour and with respect for civil liberties. Only when this principle is carefully observed will the people support the police counter-terrorism effort wholeheartedly without fear of unjust reprisal or marginalisation. In other words, if the police acted contrary to the principle stated above, popular support will not be forthcoming—it will not matter whether they wear a badge or a helmet.

An integrated approach led by an impartial police, accountable to the rule of law at all times and supported by the military, probably offers the best chance to secure high levels of domestic support from the population when fighting terrorism.

Disrupting Terrorist Recruitment. The police are well-positioned to lead the effort in disrupting terrorist recruitment because of the huge repository of personal information in their criminal databases and the links between terrorist recruitment and criminal organisations. The police are better able to undertake this task because they are perceived to have a legitimate need for accessing personal information and cross-checking criminal activities for possible leads on terrorist recruitment. The military's role should be to provide surveillance and tracking of suspected terrorist meetings or transmissions to assist the police in targeting and eliminating the core of terrorist recruitment. Once terrorist activity is detected, the military can provide the resources for contact tracing. This is similar to how the SAF's

partnership with the Defence Science Technology Agency helped Singapore establish contact tracing in the nation's fight against SARS in 2003.[61] This is because terrorist recruitment requires communication and contact with the recruiter, either virtually or physically. The integrated approach hence provides the police with military resources to disrupt terrorist recruitment.

Nevertheless, terrorism's political nature means that intelligence gathering alone is insufficient when targeting terrorist recruitment. The unwavering support of the people is crucial for inoculating the population against terrorist propaganda and ideology. As demonstrated by the eventual success in Northern Ireland, alternative avenues must be made available for political expression through non-violent means in order to effectively disrupt terrorist recruitment. The challenge of an integrated approach is for the police, assisted by the military, to convince the population that they will be impartial and maintain law and order while allowing greater diversity in political representation within society. Without this assurance, violence offered by radical extremists may be the only political option available to disaffected communities.

Reducing Terrorist Attacks. An awareness that the terrorist threat can never be completely eliminated is the first step towards sustainable peace in an integrated counter-terrorism approach. Countermeasures shield the society from catastrophic terrorist attacks, but it is the population's resilience that will ensure that society continues to function. An umbrella in the rain cannot completely prevent you from getting wet, but can shelter the most critical parts of your body. Likewise, an understanding that one cannot avoid getting hit but can mitigate the consequences and carry on is the mindset that should shape the fight on terror. An effective integrated approach led by the police, supplemented by the capabilities of the military, will reduce terrorist attacks to a minimum and build resilience within society. This will allow us to weather the occasional setback.

CONCLUSION

The police are probably more effective than the military in fighting terrorism because they work with the populace to ensure domestic safety and security.

Over time, a positive relationship can be nurtured with the people to garner their trust and support. This relationship creates a resource pool of human intelligence that can be used to restrict terrorist freedom of operation and target their leadership and command structures. The police operating environment and thus their training is orientated towards minimum use of force, only escalating if necessary. When their functions are carried out in a just and fair manner with respect to civil liberties and the rule of law, popular support will be forthcoming. This support for the counter-terrorism effort denies the terrorists legitimacy and opportunities to recruit new members. The impact on terrorist recruitment also limits their ability to carry out attacks and to regenerate losses. However, disregarding the military and its capabilities will reduce the overall effectiveness of the counter-terrorism initiative. Therefore, while the police are best positioned to lead the fight against terror, they must be supported by the military—especially when the immediate threat is beyond their capabilities.

In the summary of his book *Inside Terrorism*, Bruce Hoffman comments that the most sobering realisation about the fight against terrorism is that it can never be completely eradicated. The fact that there is no "magic bullet" or single solution,[62] underscores the complexity of counter-terrorism. As such, neither the police force nor the military can be completely effective on its own—the counter-terrorism effort requires both helmets and badges. ☯

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