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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure and delight that I present Volume 4 of the *Defence and Security Journal* of the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC). The journal was launched with a view to provide a platform for young military leaders who are groomed at DSCSC to analyse and present key issues confronting Defence and Security Studies with special emphasis on Sri Lanka's national security. The mix of diverse articles submitted by other scholars too add glamor to the journal's content.

Despite growing interest and impressive advancements in the field of security worldwide, gaps continue to remain at the national level in understanding and applying vital aspects of security from a variety of perspectives. Thus, Volume 4 of the journal covers a wide range of studies on the present security landscape. DSCSC students have paid attention to the overall perspective of the need to improve cyber security in the contemporary security environment. Further other articles cover the role and tasks in post-conflict reconciliation, strategic power vacuum in the Indo-Pacific, the life cycle of terrorism, the future of China's relations in the South Asian region and Sri Lanka's Right to Information Act. In doing so, the current issue of the journal features an array of studies ranging from cyber security to global security concerns.

While welcoming Volume 4 of the journal, I wish to extend my gratitude to the editorial board headed by Professor Emeritus Amal Jayawardane for their expertise and true commitment in bringing out this publication.

I sincerely hope this edition of the *Defence and Security Journal* would be beneficial to all readers, and endeavours of this nature will undoubtedly be a precursor to fresh and unconventional research in the field of security.

I look forward to insightful and refreshing contributions for our future issues.

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THE CHALLENGE OF FILLING THE STRATEGIC POWER VACUUM IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

Captain Rohan Joseph

ABSTRACT

The Indo-Pacific arguably remains as one of the most discussed ocean spaces in recent history due to its geopolitical significance. Enhanced global maritime connectivity centred on the Indo-Pacific region makes maritime security a key thematic area of discussion. In addition to the key regional players, the strategic interest shown towards the Indo-Pacific by Washington has signalled that this ocean space is of high value to the United States as well. The world has also witnessed Washington gradually inclining towards nationalism, leaving aside partners, and thereby creating a vacuum in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. foreign policy dereliction and ineffective Indo-Pacific strategies in existence are seen as some of the contributing factors which created this strategic power vacuum. Experts hint that Beijing is well set to replace the U.S. not only in the Indo-Pacific but, globally as well. But, can China truly replace the U.S. and emerge as a superpower? Experts continue to point out cooperation as the only way out of the complicated issues that continue to unveil in the Indo-Pacific. Time has come for the Indo-Pacific players to decide whether they rule the world's most strategically sensitive region through greater cooperation or that they succumb to failures that are inherent in their strategic initiatives. While competition among key players in the Indo-Pacific will continue to remain, it will be largely in the hands of the two key players, the U.S. and China, to ensure that competition is not turned into a misfortune.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific, Strategic Power Vacuum, Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategies

INTRODUCTION

The general area of the Indo-Pacific expands from the Eastern African coast across the Indian Ocean and South China Sea (SCS) to the Western and Central Pacific. Arguably, the Indo-Pacific remains as one of the most discussed ocean spaces in recent history due to its geopolitical significance. Thirty-six countries, over three billion people, 3,000 languages, and a diverse set of cultural identities blended with other parameters such as 62 percent contribution to the world GDP and 46 percent to the merchandise trade (De, 2018) make the Indo-Pacific region one of the most diverse regions on the planet (Auslin, 2018). Out of many vital concerns, trade and energy Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) that span across the Indo-Pacific add a great deal of significance to the sustenance of global trade.

Today, the world economy is heavily dependent on maritime trade as nearly 90 percent of goods are transported by sea. It is estimated that approximately USD 1.2 trillion maritime trade bound to the U.S. transits the SCS annually and nearly 30 percent of global maritime trade also takes passage through the SCS (Erickson, 2015). Further, eight of the world's busiest container ports are also located in the Indo-Pacific. The Indian Ocean facilitates the transfer of approximately two-thirds of the global oil cargo to the Pacific (Erickson, 2015) and has the potential to influence global maritime trade to a significant extent in the coming few decades, making it one of the most sensitive areas due to the complicated nature of affairs.

Today, the Indo-Pacific has become a place for power competition (Bishoyi, 2016). As stated, maritime connectivity and trade potential of the Indo-Pacific makes the region a crucial factor in global trade and security. The region has also immensely contributed to the economic growth of certain leading nations such as Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. Enhanced global maritime connectivity centred on the Indo-Pacific region makes maritime security a key thematic area of discussion for regional and global powers both in shaping and executing their strategies. While the above strategies continue to evolve, especially the U.S. engagement in the region is closely monitored by allies, partners, and competitors.

In addition to the key regional players, the strategic interest shown towards the Indo-Pacific by Washington has signalled to the rest that this ocean space is vital to the U.S. The 'post-Cold World War international order' continues to evolve bringing in new dimensions mainly in the fields of diplomacy, military, and economic affairs. As often reported in the media, the current international system has experienced few shocks as a result of some recent remarks made by U.S. President Donald Trump. A strong stance on the 'America First' policy, withdrawal from some of the leading multilateral agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement, Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Iran Deal followed by remarks on partners and allies have made the rest to think that the U.S. is less concerned on playing a leadership role in the Indo-Pacific (Tu, 2018). Global issues that need decisive U.S. engagement have witnessed Washington gradually inclining towards nationalism leaving aside partners who embrace internationalism and thereby creating a vacuum in the Indo-Pacific. Further, those who are critical of the U.S. engagement in the region state that several Indo-Pacific strategies introduced by regional and global players are unlikely to reap positive benefits due to the strong nationalistic approach adopted by the U.S.

The U.S. foreign policy dereliction and futile Indo-Pacific strategies in existence are seen as some of the contributing factors which resulted in the creation of a power vacuum in the Indo-Pacific. This discussion also extends to examine whether the People's Republic of China (PRC) is capable of filling the power vacuum in the region as often highlighted by analysts.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY DERELICTION

American history shows that the public and policymakers have viewed alliances with suspicion. The U.S. Founding Fathers preferred to "steer clear of permanent alliances," and entered into "temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies" (Fromkin, 1970). The U.S. tradition of establishing alliances commenced with the signing of the Treaty of Alliances and the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in February 1778 (Ayres, 2014). Since joining the allies in World War II, the U.S. has established several collective defence agreements such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Rio Treaty in recognition of the significance of forming alliances for superior security cooperation. These agreements stand as proof to highlight that the U.S. has traditionally favoured alliances and placed trust in cooperative mechanisms to improve its security under various administrations. However, as analysts note, it appeared to have changed based on recent controversial views expressed by President Trump.

However, after nearly seventy years of sketching the rules-based order initiated by President Harry Truman, President Donald Trump's critics argue that he is attempting to overturn the same (Smith and Townsend, 2018) and the latter has also raised doubts over Washington's security assurances to its allies (Daadler and Lindsay, 2018). Critics further note that the Trump administration has also ridiculed U.S. alliances as "obsolete", questioned U.S. non-proliferation policy, criticised free trade agreements, condemned international institutions and put aside the idea that the U.S. had a moral duty to promote democracy and human rights abroad (Brands, 2017). These sentiments from the President have hinted that the U.S. is gradually moving away from internationalism to worship nationalism so that the campaign "Make America Great Again" could stand its ground.

Today's global security threats and challenges continue to evolve at a rapid pace. Nations have become more reliant on each other for security and stability. Terrorist attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and threats posed by non-traditional actors exemplify the challenge of finding solutions to threats in isolation (Sherwood-Randall, 2006). Globally, American interests are challenged, requiring the U.S. to strengthen alliances for the advancement of national interests. Global security challenges can be assured only if broader alliances are made while strengthening existing ones. As the complexities of threats and challenges, especially in the maritime domain, continue to gather momentum, the U.S. needs to expand strategic planning and coordination of efforts with its allies and partners (Sherwood-Randall, 2006).

Ensuring global security by way of leading partners and allies has been one of the key tenets of U.S. foreign policy. Until recently, the U.S. played a crucial role in providing much-needed guidance, assistance, and leadership with the close

cooperation of Indo-Pacific partners and allies. However, certain factions argue that what is presently emerging from Washington is that the Trump administration is gradually working to leave alliances for narrower nationalistic benefits endangering their own security. By estranging allies, President Trump is creating a vacuum and analysts predict that the PRC is in the process of filling that vacuum. As China attempts to fill the void created by the U.S., one could expect tensions to further escalate in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. foreign policy critics point out that unless a significant effort and thought are injected for the reclamation process of the U.S. foreign policy at this crucial juncture, the PRC could become successful in filling that foreign policy vacuum in the Indo-Pacific.

However, in a bid to turn the tide in its favour, the U.S. has recently launched many initiatives to enhance engagement with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. The passing of the Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) Act in October 2018 paved the way in creating a new U.S. development agency, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC) (Runde and Bandura, 2018). The BUILD Act remains as a response to the economic challenges presented by China. The BUILD Act provides ample opportunities for the U.S. to engage in the Indo-Pacific through a model that is different from what is being used by China. However, whether the U.S. strategy can make a difference in the Indo-Pacific or not can be mainly analysed by taking into account the strategies of regional players.

INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGIES: EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY

The strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific region has prompted leading nations such as Australia, China, India, Japan, and the U.S. to launch respective Indo-Pacific strategies. Each Indo-Pacific strategy attempts to achieve specific strategic objectives relevant to respective countries by way of working in unison with regional partners. In addition to the above players, it is interesting to note the discussions that are taking place among the higher German defence officials in looking at deploying German Marine components in areas such as the Taiwan Strait (Kliem, 2019). Even though there are few other areas the German Marine elements need to asses before a possible deployment, such a deployment, if materialised, could add to Germany's reputation as a nation that respects the freedom of navigation and rule-based international order. On the other hand, by undertaking such a deployment Germany would be careful not to harm the trade relations that Berlin enjoys with Beijing. While it is better to see more players engaging in the Indo-Pacific, one could see the already complex region becoming further complicated. However, the potential of these strategies achieving a desired end state is being questioned as they have so far failed to become a conduit in the Indo-Pacific in achieving common objectives. While one faction continues to view these strategies as a way to counter Chinese influence and as a way to contain China from further expanding its tentacles in the Indo-Pacific, the other highlights the importance of keeping the

Indo-Pacific free and open by way of effectively employing these strategies. A brief look at the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and strategies adopted by Japan, India, and Australia will help better comprehend the dynamics of these strategies in shaping Indo-Pacific affairs.

AMERICA'S FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

At the 2017 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Vietnam, U.S. President Donald Trump drew a connection to the U.S. economy and national security when he announced: "The U.S. has been reminded time and time again in recent years that economic security is not merely related to national security. Economic security is national security. It is vital to our national strength" (U.S. Department of Defence, 2018). At the 2018 Shangri-La Dialogue, former U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis highlighted the requirement for Indo-Pacific countries to come together in shaping the future of the region while paying attention to the maritime space. He announced: "the maritime commons is a global good, and the Sea Lanes of Communication are the arteries of economic vitality for all.... Through our security cooperation, we are building closer relationships between our militaries and our economies" (White House, 2017). The former Defense Secretary's 'free and open Indo-Pacific' remarks recognised the importance of interoperability, strengthening rule of law, private sector-led development and the importance of protecting the SLOCs (White House, 2017).

The U.S. strategy placed greater significance on its partners and pledged that the U.S. will assist partners and allies by way of capacity and capability building. However, those who are critical of the U.S. approach points out that the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy has failed to make a significant impact among the regional players due to rising isolationist policies. Critics also highlight that President Trump's foreign policies attempt to point out to the world that leaving partners to embrace nationalism is what the U.S. foreign policy is all about. Even though the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy attempts to project the value of partners and allies, critics blame the Trump administration for doing the right opposite. It is in this context that Washington's approach has been criticised for failing to realise the importance of allies and partners in fulfilling the strategic objectives mentioned in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. The Indo-Pacific embraces globalisation and multilateralism which essentially indicates that the dealings in the region are based on cooperation among partners and allies. Certain Indo-Pacific players have also raised concerns about the U.S. commitment and real potential in empowering others in the region.

JAPAN'S 'FREE AND OPEN' INDO-PACIFIC (FOIP) STRATEGY

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe first introduced the FOIP concept in 2016 (Chellany, 2018). Japan adopted the FOIP as the new foreign policy strategy that

attempts to combine two continents – Asia and Africa, with two oceans – the Indian and the Pacific (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). The FOIP foreign policy strategy aims at promoting stability in the region by strengthening partnerships with India, East Africa, Australia, and the U.S (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). Both Japanese and the U.S. FOIP strategies have similarities and the latter used the prefix 'free and open' to shape its strategic approach into the Indo-Pacific affairs (Chellany, 2018).

It is interesting to observe how Japan's FOIP strategy is making an impact in achieving core objectives stated in its foreign policy. The Chinese engagement in Indo-Pacific affairs greatly influenced the Japanese to shift away from their 'checkbook diplomacy' to craft a more proactive approach (Green, 2018). Through FOIP, Japan indicated her willingness to lead the Indo-Pacific by respecting a rules-based order that embraces the 'free and open' concept. Unlike other Indo-Pacific strategies, the FOIP concept looks at the broader Indo-Pacific region covering Africa and the Western Pacific which offers wider engagement opportunities. Tokyo's commitment towards 'free and open' needs more flesh to convince the regional players of what the strategy could bring into the Indo-Pacific allies and partners in making the SCS area 'free and open'. On the other hand, Beijing views the FOIP as a reactive strategy that aims at containing its expansion (Kistanov, 2018).

INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2014 introduced the 'Act East' policy, replacing the previous 'Look East' policy (Kugelman, 2016). India intends to engage with the Asia-Pacific to promote economic cooperation through enhanced bilateral and multilateral dialogue (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has a significant place in the 'Act East' policy and India has made a point to extensively engage with many of the other Indo-Pacific organisations to fulfil its objectives (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). It is important to note here, the release of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) at the 34th ASEAN summit in Bangkok June this year (Hussain, 2019). The AOIP appears unique when compared with other Indo-Pacific strategies as it places ASEAN at the centre of a regional architecture while staying away from the U.S. strategy of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) (Hussain, 2019). Even though the AOIP gives a broader platform for ASEAN member states to actively engage in the Indo-Pacific, the initiative requires having in place a sound strategy that aims at achieving intended objectives by way of working closely with other regional mechanisms. It will be interesting to see how the AOIP is planning to manage the competition among key players in the Indo-Pacific without endangering ASEAN's Indo-Pacific interests.

Even though the 'Act East' policy has not been directly viewed as a strategy to counter China, the Chinese strategic manoeuvres in the SCS and expansion forced

India to make a sizable impact by way of placing a strategically viable foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific. The 'Act East' policy gives India an institutional framework to assess Chinese influence more diplomatically. Despite the slow progress of the 'Act East' policy, it has made some headway in making clear that the policy will not act as a means to contain China. The renaming of the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) as the U.S. Indo-Pacific (USINDOPACOM) on the other hand indicated the recognition placed by Washington on the Indian Ocean affairs as the two oceans, the Indian and the Pacific, have many things in common especially in terms of increasing maritime connectivity (Marcelo, 2018). The renaming also reminds the importance of India to the U.S. in making strategic initiatives in the wider Indo-Pacific. The Indian factor will remain as a strong pillar for the U.S. in implementing their strategy, sharing the Indo-Pacific vision of other players and most importantly to have India as a strong partner to counter the China factor.

Prime Minister Modi in his Keynote address at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018 stated that India's engagement with the world will be through the Indo-Pacific (Chaudhry, 2018). India's announcement of 'free, open, inclusive' Indo-Pacific (FOIIP) policy at the Shangri-La Dialogue and reiteration of the term 'inclusive' indicates that India wants all the nations included in the Indo-Pacific strategy rather than being dominated by a few (Chaudhry, 2018). It is quite evident that India wants to see the inclusion of China in the Indo-Pacific dialogue so that the 'Act East' policy objectives could be achieved by working with Beijing. Active participation in the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (Panda, 2017) along with Japan, the 'Neighbourhood Policy (Tourangbam, 2019) and 'Security and Growth for All in the Region', also known as SAGAR, which elaborates the cooperation mechanism in the Indian Ocean Region (Kapur, 2019) are also seen as essential strategic components of India's broader Indo-Pacific strategy.

AUSTRALIA'S INDO-PACIFIC APPROACH AND THE QUAD

The Australian government has not declared a dedicated Indo-Pacific strategy like Japan, India or the U.S. However, the 2017 Australian Foreign Policy White Paper highlighted the importance of peaceful evolution by respecting fundamental principles of Indo-Pacific players (Foreign Policy White Paper, 2017). Like all the other key members in the Indo-Pacific, Australia also seeks a stable and prosperous region by way of cooperating with the U.S., Japan, Indonesia, India, Republic of Korea, ASEAN and China (Foreign Policy White Paper, 2017). The 2016 Australian Defence White Paper also highlighted the importance of strengthening the Australia-U.S. alliance as well as the necessity of the U.S. leadership in protecting vital interests in the region (Australian Government Department of Defence, 2016). While it is not quite clear whether the Australian policy aimed at balancing the U.S. and China against each other, it is evident that Australia seeks to establish strong alliances with other regional forums/mechanisms and informal collaborative arrangements such as the 'Quad'.

The present-day 'Quad' is a result of the humanitarian coordination effort that was established following the 'Boxing Day' tsunami with the participation of Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. Initially identified as the 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue', the 'Quad' suffered setbacks with the withdrawal of Australia in 2007, until all four decided to reconvene in 2017 (Ayres, 2018). Many experts view the 'Quad' as a vital partnership among some of the key players that has the strength to face PRC's pressure and to uphold the core values of the FOIP strategy (Smith, 2018). While attempts are being made to label the 'Quad' as an alternative to the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI) and a China containment strategy, those who are critical of the initiative say that 'Quad' is capable of neither. It is in this context that the expectations of Indo-Pacific strategies and deliverables are being compared with the 'Quad' and has labelled the latter as a failure.

The stated objectives of the abovementioned Indo-Pacific strategies have been to ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains as a region that values a rule-based order. However, the PRC continued to believe that the unstated objective of these strategies is to contain China under the leadership of the U.S. Further, China points out that none of the above strategies have the potential to achieve the desired objectives set out in them. Current Indo-Pacific strategies resemble a reactive response to the expansion and influence of competitors. Reactive approaches adopted in drafting these strategies have resulted in producing 'reactive strategies'. Reactive strategies are not capable of addressing complicated issues that require proactive approaches. On the other hand, pro-BRI elements argue that the initiative is capable of shaping the Indo-Pacific contours over the other initiatives.

THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI)

The BRI has entered into its sixth year. Addressing the fifth anniversary of the BRI last year President Xi Jinping highlighted that the initiative has contributed to improving the global governance system (Minghao, 2018). With 103 countries and many other organisations signing agreements connected to the BRI, China believes that the initiative has helped several disadvantaged countries to reap wider economic benefits (Minghao, 2018). President Xi has also attempted to convince the world that the BRI is largely for economic cooperation and it does not entail any security objectives.

While experts continue to argue against and in favour of the BRI, what is clear is that Beijing has been able to identify the importance of filling voids that are created as a result of other Indo-Pacific strategies. Analysts cite Hambantota port investment as an example to explain how a vacuum created by one player was filled by another. The Sri Lankan officials first reached out to the Indian companies and they refused to invest in Hambantota port citing it as a project destined to fail (Abi-Habib, 2018). The Chinese involvement in the majority of other parts of the region

resembles a similar fate and the BRI has shown that the initiative has succeeded in establishing vital nodes at strategically important maritime locations in the Indo-Pacific.

Through an array of investments related to the BRI, China has seized the opportunity to establish essential infrastructure requirements. Many players in the Indo-pacific are not capable or willing to invest in the same magnitude as China. The economic strength of the PRC has been a decisive factor over other key players in the Indo-Pacific. Beijing's strong economic stance has given them an edge over the others enabling the PRC to fill the economic void in the Indo-Pacific. However, the possibility of Beijing filling the strategic power vacuum created as a result of the actions of some of the key players in the Indo-Pacific needs careful dissection.

CAN CHINA REPLACE THE U.S. IN THE INDO-PACIFIC?

Looking at some of the statistics and predictions related to China, experts hint that Beijing is well-posed to replace the U.S. not only in the Indo-Pacific but globally as well. These predictions are largely attributed to the rapid economic growth (China's GDP growth for the first quarter of 2018 was recorded as 19.88 trillion Yuan) (Huang, 2017). A report released by PricewaterhouseCoopers projects that China will emerge as the leading economy in 2050 (2017). China's intention of becoming a superpower was first officially denounced by Deng Xiaoping at the United Nations in 1974 saying 'China is not and will never become a superpower' (Huang, 2017). Since 1974 China has evolved and today many view Deng Xiaoping's statement with scepticism due to contradictory signals emanating from Beijing. Some argue that if China is capable of replacing the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific, it necessarily means that China is capable of replacing a global superpower. But, can China truly replace the U.S. and emerge as a superpower?

A nation has to be powerful in economic and military means for it to gain the power to exert influence on global affairs for it to be considered as a superpower. Due to economic might, the U.S. remained the most dominant economic power during the Cold War era. Despite predictions, China's economic might does not make China a superpower; but it makes China the world's largest economy. Having the largest consumer and production base along with a rapid economic expansion could comfortably make the Chinese economy strong and stable. However, China could easily become a victim of its own success due to challenges in the domestic front. Poverty, corruption growing inequality, diminishing resources, shrinking/aging population, and degrading environmental conditions are some concerns that experts hint Beijing would encounter in continuing the current economic growth.

On the other hand, the U.S. military remains the most powerful and technologically advanced military in the world and it is the only country that can command the

world through six geographic combatant commands. No nation has the capacity and capability to be present globally on the same scale as the U.S., and their ability to make superior technological advances in all the domains add flesh to the strong military structure. Interestingly, a recent Chinese military document indicated President Xi's strong desire to strengthen its military (Peck, 2018). During a meeting with high ranking military officials, President Xi ordered that the "armed forces must strengthen their sense of urgency and do everything they can to prepare for battle" (Stanway, 2019). President Xi's remarks have to be viewed through a broader strategic lens and it will be interesting to see how Beijing plans to continue the military modernisation process to be in par with the U.S. military. One of the biggest hurdles that China has to overcome would be to gain prominence in the world as a leading maritime power. However, China is seen by experts as a nation that has blended both continental and maritime strengths to become a state with hybrid powers.

In addition to the economy and military, experts state that there are many other essentials China has to fulfil to realise the 'superpower dream'. The U.S. holds a sizable advantage of leading global consumer brands, language, renowned higher education, innovation, technological superiority and science and research development among many other soft and smart power advantages over China. Taking into account a range of key aspects, analysts highlight that China will find it challenging to supersede the U.S. and emerge as a global superpower in the near future. Above all, America's ability to globally project the military might remain as one of the critical elements in the superpower equation. Therefore, the U.S. will retain its position as the dominant power globally while China will continue to climb the ladder to strengthen its position as a preeminent regional player by 2030 (Wyne, 2018).

COMPETITION, COOPERATION, AND COEXISTENCE: THE WAY AHEAD

However, the above statement does not guarantee that China will not pursue the dream of becoming a global superpower. Experts in favour of increased U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific point out that instead of filling the existing and possible future gaps, the present administration is creating conditions that enable Beijing to fill the voids created as a result of the former's lack of engagement in the region. Global and regional U.S. foreign policy delinquency has impacted the Indo-Pacific equilibrium which has resulted in creating a strategic vacuum. Even though China is not capable of replacing the U.S. in the same magnitude in the international affairs realm, China has been successful in strengthening bilateral relations with a number of Indo-Pacific countries. Analysts attribute this trend to the isolationist approach adopted by the present U.S. administration.

Further, pro-BRI segments point out that strategies introduced by the Indo-Pacific players including the U.S. have failed to make an impact on the magnitude of the BRI. Such groups also argue that the Indo-Pacific strategies have failed to make a lasting impact as these strategies focused on containing China rather than being proactive in addressing important strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific. As experts point out, China is slowly but surely navigating through the gaps created by regional players and the U.S. in order to secure its interests in the Indo-Pacific employing 'Chinese characteristics'.

Experts continue to point out cooperation as the only way out of the complicated issues that continue to unveil in the Indo-Pacific. Decision-makers in Washington and Beijing continue to look at the issues in the Indo-Pacific as issues that only belong to the two key players - the U.S. and China. Observers note the inability to carefully match strategic 'Means' to a clear 'Ends' leading the U.S. policy from a level of competition to confrontation (Campbell and Sullivan, 2019). The U.S. needs to be more durable in the strategy and policy context rather than making speculations on Beijing's next move. Coexistence remains as one of the key areas for the U.S. to focus on when managing the competition. China has today emerged as a peer competitor with a truly global reach geared with diplomatic, economic, technological and military strengths like never before in its history. The notion of containment strategy, therefore, will only face unprecedented challenges especially at a time when the China-U.S. economic integration continues to grow in a backdrop where Beijing maintains a rapid globalisation process. It is in this context that the value of coexistence becomes significant over the containment strategy.

Both the U.S. and China should seek to establish coexistence in four critical competitive spheres: 'military, economic, political, and global governance' (Campbell and Sullivan, 2019). As Indo-Pacific presents a number of hot spots that could easily spark a war, the two players need to be more sensible in dealing with events that could easily result in a major conflict. The U.S. should focus on deterring Beijing's actions that have resulted in challenging internationally accepted norms. On the other hand, China will have to live with the fact that the U.S. is all set to make a notable presence in the Indo-Pacific. Accepting the above reality will be one of the key steps China can take in making the Indo-Pacific a more stable place for the rest. The question should not be on who is capable of filling the gaps and voids in the Indo-Pacific, but more importantly how well the U.S., China, and other players understand the importance of filling those vacuums in order to ensure the Indo-Pacific remains an ocean space that respects international rules and norms for the greater good of humankind.

The time has come for the Indo-Pacific players to decide whether they rule the world's most strategically sensitive region through greater cooperation or that they succumb to failures that are inherent in their strategies which aimed at outmanoeuvring each other. Some argue that it is largely in the hands of the U.S. policymakers to

decide the fate of the Indo-Pacific region through greater cooperation with all the key players, including China. Even though the actions of the U.S. could certainly impact the Indo-Pacific equilibrium, the fate of the region will extensively depend on how well each other respect and abide by the international rules and norms that are already in place. The responsibility, therefore, lies with key players led by the U.S. and China to ensure that this ocean space is not used as a platform that can harm the very use of the Indo-Pacific but to focus on charting a course that enables all the players to navigate steering clear of wrecks. Strategic power vacuums created as a result of various strategies, therefore, need careful assessment before taking action. Failure to do so could result in making wider gaps and voids that could drive the entire Indo-Pacific into becoming a heavily contested area. Therefore, both Washington and Beijing need to place prominence for cooperation if they are to address contemporary challenges. While competition among key players in the Indo-Pacific will continue to remain, it will be largely in the hands of the two key players, the U.S. and China, to ensure that competition is not turned into a misfortune.

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RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT AND ITS IMPACT ON NATIONAL SECURITY OF SRI LANKA

Superintendent of Police M.T.T. Ruwan Kumara

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's Right to Information Act was enacted on 24 June 2016. The Act serves as a key entry point to strengthen transparency and accountability in the government, addressing corruption and increasing the trust between people and the state. The purpose of this research was to examine whether the implementation of the RTI Act poses a threat to national security. Based on a review of literature, it was found that this area had not been researched so far in relation to Sri Lanka. The study was based on a mixed research methodology, which comprises a combination of data analyses and interviews with a semi-structured questionnaire. Data analysis involves RTI applications received by the Tri-Forces and 200 cases of appeal inquiries concluded by the RTI Commission. This study revealed that the term 'national security' has not been precisely defined under the RTI Act; the public authority uses different definitions of the term. Very few applications have been received by the Tri-Forces under the RTI Act, which could threaten national security. It appears even the few applications that have been rejected by the Tri-Forces were done under proper procedure. According to the first 200 inquiries concluded by the RTI Commission in the year 2018, not even a single appeal has been lodged against the refusal, which was done on the grounds of a threat to national security. Interviews and data analysis revealed that the implementation of RTI Act does not pose a threat to national security.

Keywords: Appeal Inquiries, National Security, RTI Act, RTI Applications

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

On 24 June 2016, the Sri Lankan Parliament enacted the Right to Information Act, No. 12 of 2016 (the RTI Act). The RTI Act grants Sri Lankan citizens the right of access to information in the possession, custody or control of public authorities (Bresnick, 2015). The Act came into effect on 3 February 2017. Accordingly, all public authorities (PA) falling within the scope of the RTI Act were expected to be prepared to receive and process RTI requests by this date (RTI Act, 2016).

The free flow of information is a must for a democratic society as it helps society to grow and to retain a continuous debate and discussion among the people. No democratic government can survive without accountability and the basic postulate of accountability is that the people should have information about the functioning of the government. In the past public dealings were kept in strict secret, a practice

which often led to corruption, misuse and abuse of statutory and administrative power. Freedom of information brings openness in the administration which helps to promote transparency in state affairs, keep government more accountable and ultimately reduce corruption. Disclosure of information in regard to the functioning of the government must be the rule and secrecy an exception under this new concept. The term RTI is often used interchangeably with freedom of information and has long been regarded as a fundamental human right. In its very first session in 1946, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 59 (1), stating: "Freedom of information is a fundamental human right and... the touch-stone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated".

GLOBAL HISTORY OF RTI

Sweden was the first country to adopt a law giving individuals the right to access information held by public bodies, in 1766. It took nearly two centuries before the next country, Finland, to adopt RTI law in 1951. By the year 1995, only nineteen countries around the world had adopted what have come to be known as RTI laws (Mendel, 2014). The fifteen years from 1980 to 1995 witnessed new RTI laws being adopted at an average rate of less than one per year. However, in the wake of the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and democratisation processes in other regions, the rate of development of RTI laws more than quintupled over the next fifteen years and it sustained the same pace as 2015 approached (See Figure 1).
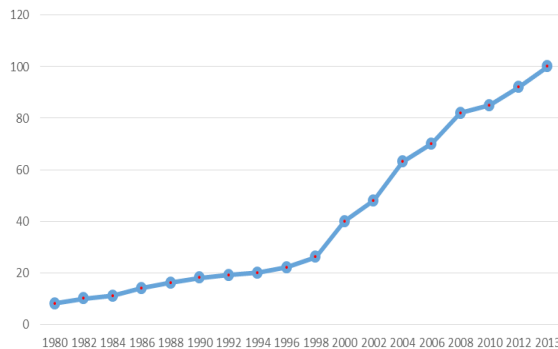

Figure 1: Chronological Development of RTI Laws
Source - RTI Rating by the Centre for Law and Democracy and Access Info, Europe

Furthermore, while all but four of the first 19 countries to adopt RTI laws were Western democracies, the next 79 have been distributed over every region of the world (Mendel, 2014) (See Figure 1.2).
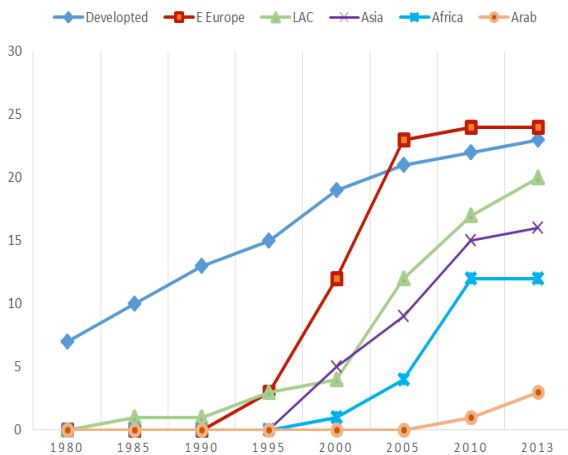
Figure 1.2: Chronological Development of RTI Laws by Region
Source - RTI Rating by the Centre for Law and Democracy and Access Info, Europe

SRI LANKA'S HISTORY OF RTI

The situation in Sri Lanka was no different to that of other countries until the 1990s; denial of public information was commonly seen in the public sector. This, however, began to change in the 1990s, with Sri Lankans increasing pressure on respective governments to allow them access to public information. However, Sri Lanka's information law is not something that emerged overnight. Sri Lanka's journey to enact RTI law was a prolonged and difficult struggle. Following a long struggle spanning over two decades, the Parliament of Sri Lanka, in a celebrated move, enacted the RTI Act to give meaning to the citizen's Fundamental Right to Information in 2016. It is important to remember that the RTI Act does not give Sri Lankan citizens any new rights. It only provides for a process to exercise the Constitutional Right of Access to Information that came with the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 2015 (Ministry of Finance and Mass Media, 2017, p. 4). The concept of good governance directly emanates from the right to know which seems to be implicit in the right to the "freedom of speech and expression including publication" guaranteed under Article 14A (1) in the Sri Lankan Constitution (Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 1978).

It is observed that there are two fundamental principles being established with the Sri Lankan RTI. First, the people have the right to know information of which the functions of the state are accomplished using public funds. Second, RTI Act would make the government transparent and more accountable; the effective use of it would, in the long run, curb corruption. Sri Lanka is one of the last countries in South Asia to enact RTI law[1]. Sri Lanka's RTI Act shot to third best in the world less

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1   The year in which the Right to Information Act came into force in South Asia- Pakistan- 2002, India- 2005, Nepal- 2007, Bangladesh-2009, Afghanistan, Maldives & Bhutan - 2014

than a week into its enactment (Illanperuma, 2017) because it was well formulated with lessons learnt from other countries.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Only two years have passed since the RTI Act came into force in Sri Lanka. Since Sri Lankans have not had any experience in the RTI law, it did not yield smooth results immediately after implementation of the RTI Act.

With the enactment of the RTI Act, there was a widespread opinion in the public particularly among the members of the military and the intelligence community that it was a threat to national security. Later, this suspicious mind-set gradually spread among the general public to a certain extent. Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena who is a member of RTI Commission says, "Many governments around the world jib nervously at the thought of introducing Right to Information laws due to fears that these laws may only work against them which is correct to a certain extent" (Jayawardena, 2018). Although no study or media report has claimed that the RTI Act is a threat to national security, it is important to investigate how such a view was spread among the public.

LITERATURE REVIEW

RTI laws are relatively new in most countries and because their adoption has been a difficult and contested process, much of the research in this area has focused on analysing the passages of legislation and on the comparison of the provisions in pieces of legislation against global good practices. There is little empirical research on how these provisions have worked in practice, especially in the context of developing countries (Dokeniya, 2013). Even in Sri Lanka, the RTI is a new concept and no research in the RTI law and its practice has been conducted so far.

However, there have been few studies carried out on RTI law in Sri Lanka by professional organisations[2], and few media reports released by journalists, but focusing on the implementation process on Information Law. For example, Sandun Jayawardana, a Sri Lankan Journalist, wrote an article to the *Sunday Times* titled "Public authorities confused, unprepared as RTI Act becomes operational". He notes that, "when making inquiries that quite a few institutions did not know who they are. Phone queries to a dozen ministries were met mostly with confusion" (Jayawardana, 2017).

Meanwhile, none of the studies nor media reports have discussed the impact of information law on national security in Sri Lanka. Subsequently, efforts were made

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2   World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Verité Research- Germany, Democracy Reporting International and RTI Commission Sri Lanka etc.

to investigate how information law affects national security in other countries too. It is interesting to note that although there have been a number of studies on information law related to developing and developed countries, none of them discuss its impact on National Security. Since the existing literature does not provide answers to this question, an in-depth study was conducted with the institutes working directly in the field of RTI and the individuals who are dealing with the information law in Sri Lanka.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a mixed method which is a combination of desk-based secondary data analysis of the RTI Appeal Inquiries concluded by the RTI Commission, statistics of RTI applications received by the military forces and primary data collected from interviews conducted with relevant stakeholders, public officials and representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with extensive experience in RTI Act of in Sri Lanka. A qualitative research approach is particularly applicable for the purpose of this study, to establish connection between the objectives of the RTI Act and its implementation process through interpretation. In addition, the qualitative method is also allowing the validation of quantitative methods.

Further, the study made use of quantitative research strategy because the data analysis was able to produce plethora of information including comparative figures that could lead to identifying the real insides of the RTI implementation and its effect to national security. One of the highlights of this study is the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve the most successful results. As an example, in this study, RTI experts' opinions were integrated with the findings of the data analysis on each subject. Interviews were conducted with key officials of the under-mentioned PAs and the NGOs with a semi structured questionnaire. They include Right to Information Commission, Sri Lanka Army, Sri Lanka Air Force, Sri Lanka Navy, Transparency International Sri Lanka and Center for Policy Alternatives.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the current political instability and the security situation following the Easter Sunday attack[3], none of the details related to State Intelligence Service (SIS) is mentioned in this study.

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3   On 21 April 2019, Easter Sunday, three churches in Sri Lanka and three luxury hotels in the commercial capital Colombo were targeted in a series of coordinated terrorist suicide bombings. Later that day, there were smaller explosions at a housing complex in Dematagoda and a guest house in Dehiwala.

NATURE OF RTI IN SRI LANKA

The right of access to information for the citizens was guaranteed by insertion of new Article 14A into the Sri Lankan Constitution by its 19th amendment. It is considered the most revolutionary reform ever applied to the Constitution since 1978. However, with the developments of RTI in Afghanistan, on 28 September 2018, they were ranked the first in Global RTI Index, and Sri Lanka lost its prestigious position and dropped from the third in 2017 to fourth place in the global ranking in 2018 (Centre for Law and Democracy, 2018).

The Act of Right to Information, however, is a very different Act. As far as all the other laws are concerned, the executor of the law is the government and people just abide by these laws. However, as far as the law of RTI is concerned it is the opposite: in this, the public is the executor and the government its actor; thereby showcasing a role reversal.

THE SCOPE AND COVERAGE OF THE RTI ACT

According to Article 14 of the Constitution of Sri Lanka and Section 3 of the RTI Act, the right of access to information is restricted only for the citizens of Sri Lanka. It is also limited only to the access for public information.

Surprisingly, according to section 4 of the RTI Act, RTI law supersedes all other laws in Sri Lanka. Section 4 of the Act indicates: "In the event of any inconsistency or conflict between the provisions of this Act and such other written law, the provisions of this Act shall prevail".

Meanwhile, the military, the Intelligence community and the criminal investigators have carried out their covert operations under the provisions given to them in the National Secrecy Act and few other acts[4]. According to the facts in this clause clearly indicated that those units inevitably lose their protection. The provisions of this clause created an undue fear among the members of the Armed Forces and the Intelligence community on the RTI Act.

THE SCOPE OF EXEMPTIONS OF THE RTI ACT

The RTI Act itself is self-restrictive in nature. The Act does not make the Right to Information as an absolute right, but imposes restriction on this right. Section 5 of the RTI Act deals with exemption from disclosure of information. There are two

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4   Police Ordinance- No. 16 of 1865, Electronic Transaction Act- No. 19 of 2006, Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption Act- No. 19 of 1994, Declaration of Assets and Liabilities law- No.1 of 1975 etc.

clauses in the RTI Act that make it possible to reject information that may affect national security.

1. Section 5 (1) (b) (i) - Information shall be refused if disclosure of such information would undermine the defence of the State or its territorial integrity or national security.

2. Section 5 (1) (h) (ii) - Information shall be refused if the disclosure of such information would expose the identity of a confidential source of information in relation to law enforcement or national security.

In examining the above two clauses, it is clear that the RTI Act does not have to provide any information that may compromise national security. Since the two clauses make it clear that the information on national security should not be provided, it is clear that the prevailing opinion among members of the Armed Forces and the intelligence community is an undue fear.

FINDINGS

WHAT IS NATIONAL SECURITY?

The problem is that national security is not just two words; instead, it needs a broader interpretation and meaning. However, the act does not provide such a broad definition. The RTI Commission has also acknowledged that not having a clear definition of national security is problematic, stating: "The problem lies that aspects such as national security are not defined under an Act, and is existing as an illusive network" (Pinto-Jayawardena, 2017).

There are hundreds of definitions for national security. Originally, it was conceived as protection against external military attacks. But national security is not a trivial matter and it is a very broad subject. In addition, national security is discussed under a variety of subjects such as physical security, political security, economic security, ecological security, security of energy and natural resources, cyber security, infrastructure security, and space security. The Department of Homeland Security of the USA defines national security as "the national effort to ensure a homeland that is safe, secure, and resilient against terrorism and other hazards where American interests, aspirations, and ways of life can thrive to the national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce the vulnerability of the U.S. to terrorism, and minimize the damage from attacks that do occur" (Reese, 2013). Homeland security is not constrained to terrorist incidents. Terrorism is one of the many threats that endanger society. Within the U.S., an all-hazards approach exists regarding homeland security endeavours. In this sense, homeland security encompasses both natural disasters and man-made events. Thus, the domain of homeland security must accommodate a plethora of situations and scenarios,

ranging from natural disasters (e.g., Hurricane Katrina, Irma) to acts of terrorism (Homeland Security, 2019). The above indicates the complicated nature of the subject of national security.

In that sense, the Information Officer makes individual decisions based on his or her knowledge and attitude on the national security since there is no single accepted criterion for all Public Authorities. These situations clearly disclose that the decision to deny access to information based on whether or not a matter is a threat to national security may vary considerably from person to person and can be interpreted differently.

However, the RTI Commission has stated that when authorities deny information, it is mandatory to explain the reasons for rejection that could jeopardise national security. According to the RTI Commission

> We consistently said, then and now, national security can be a ground for a refusal for information, but it cannot be just merely cited as a ground. It cannot have special sanctity by itself. Therefore, it is covered by RTI, but if there's a particular, specific overall national security concern, then it is up to the commissioner and the courts to look at the matter and balance the facts before deciding as to what side the information should fall (Pinto-Jayawardena, 2017).

Gehan Gunatilleke, an international human rights lawyer and RTI activist also expressed similar views on the non-availability of a clear definition for national security. According to Gunatilleke, "when it comes to national security, while it is understandable to have certain exceptions in place, a blanket rule stating that RTI is a threat to national security could set a bad precedence" (Kotelawala, 2015). The idea that PA can withhold information from the people under one blanket exception can be very problematic. There needs to be structures for people to review individual instances where exceptions are used.

However, Sri Lanka is fortunate that all matters pertaining to national security are subjected to the RTI Act, despite the fact that the absence of a clear definition for national security remains as a disadvantage. This is because, matters related to national security are not subjected to the RTI law in many countries in the world. In India, certain security and intelligence agencies established by the government are exempted from coverage under the RTI Act (Surie, 2014, p. 59). Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena also confirmed this exemption, stating "In India it is accepted as such, and in Indian national security is not covered by their RTI Act" (Pinto-Jayawardena, 2017). In the United States of America (USA), several key actors are not subjected to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), including: Congress and its support offices and agencies, such as the Government Accountability Office, the Government Printing Office and the Library of Congress, the federal courts,

and the parts of the Executive Office of the President (Alexander, 2014, p. 551). Therefore, the RTI applicants do not have access to all public records held by the Federal Government in the USA.

Prior to the enactment of the RTI Act, there were plenty of instances where government officials have refused to provide information, relying on their personal views and attitudes. The common practice used by government officials for such occasions was the exception: a threat to national security. However, the matter of national security has been subordinated to the RTI Act and therefore the possibility of rejecting the information deserved by the public under the guise of national security has been avoided. The RTI Commission has also stated that it is no longer possible to unreasonably deny the information under the guise of national security. Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena explains:

> That is why you can't have a blanket denial of everything as national security. It must depend on the circumstances of each case. That's a very common position taken by even courts of law. The court has been very consistent that if citing national security for a particular action, then the reasons must be given. The court will examine those reasons and give a decision as to whether those reasons are correct or the constitutional right of the protection of arbitrary arrest or repression prevails (Pinto-Jayawardena, 2017).

IS RTI ACT A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY?

There is no central database of RTI applications in Sri Lanka. Therefore, analysis was conducted on RTI applications received by three major organizations that directly affect national security, the Sri Lanka Army, the Sri Lanka Navy and the Sri Lanka Air Force. If any RTI application is refused on the grounds of national security, an appeal can only be made to the RTI Commission. Therefore, appeal inquiries concluded by RTI Commission were also analyzed.

PERSPECTIVE OF SRI LANKA ARMY (SLA)

Few interviews were conducted with Military spokesman, and some officers who directly deal with RTI requests, and an in-depth study was carried out on RTI applications received by the SLA. The under mentioned information was obtained from SLA.

Table 1: Details of RTI Applications Received by SLA- Year 2017 & 2018

Con No	Description	No. of Applications
01	Total number of RTI applications received	71
02	Number of applications responded	48

03	Number of applications refused
	  a. Threat to national security
	  b. Other exemptions in Sec 5 of the RTI Act
		14
		6
		8

04	Number of applications related to day to day administrative matters	13
05	Matters not yet sorted due to various reasons beyond the purview of SLA	9

Source: Sri Lanka Army

The SLA adopts a streamlined and centralised system for RTI applications, thereby minimising the shortcomings and loopholes. The Media Director of the SLA has been assigned with the responsibility for all matters pertaining to the RTI Act and accordingly SLA maintains a central database on all applications received by the SLA at the Directorate of Media. When a RTI request is received by the SLA, the decision is taken by the Director Media and is conveyed to the to the applicant directly. Every application is carefully studied and decisions are made by a centralised agency and a specific officer, so there is no risk of changing the pattern of decisions. Often, the right decisions are made and RTI record management is kept with high standards at the SLA.

According to Table 1, the percentage of applications refused by the SLA is approximately 20 percent. The number of information requests refused by the SLA citing a threat to national security is only 9 percent out of the total.

In the case of the SLA, very few applications which could threaten national security have been received under the RTI Act. The SLA has refused to provide information on these applications using the exemptions of the RTI Act following proper procedure. According to the first 200 inquiries concluded by the RTI Commission in the year 2018, not even a single appeal has been lodged against the refusal citing a threat to national security. The Chairman of the RTI Commission specifically stated that the SLA is cooperative and in particular, very positive about the RTI Act. Considering all the facts mentioned above related to SLA, the implementation of the RTI Act does not pose a threat to national security.

PERSPECTIVE OF SRI LANKA AIR FORCE (SLAF)

An interview was conducted with the Deputy Director Administration (DDA) who directly deals with RTI requests, and an in-depth study was carried out on RTI applications received by the SLAF. The under mentioned information was obtained from SLAF.

Table 2: Details of RTI Applications Received by Sri Lanka Air Force - Year 2017 & 2018

Con No	Description	No. of Applications
01	Total number of RTI applications received	28
02	Number of applications responded	23
03	Number applications rejected	02
	a. Threat to national security	-
	b. Other exemptions in Sec 5 of the RTI Act	02
04	No of applications not yet responded - awaiting Attorney General's (AG) instructions	03
	a. Threat to national security	01
	b. Other reasons	02
05	Number of applications related to day to day administrative matters	23

Source: Sri Lanka Air Force

The SLAF also maintains a system similar to the SLA to handle applications received under the RTI Act. The streamlined and centralised system for RTI applications that was adopted by the SLAF is also very successful in minimising shortcomings and loopholes. When a RTI request is received by the SLAF, the decision is taken by the DDA and the applicant is informed of the decision directly. All RTI applications are scrutinised and decisions are made by a centralised unit by a specific officer. So there is no risk of changing the pattern of decisions. Often, the right decisions are made and RTI record management is kept with high standards at the SLAF.

According to Table 2, the percentage of applications refused by the SLAF is approximately 7 percent. Those two applications were refused citing other exemptions in the RTI Act. There were three applications that have not been responded which is 11 percent out of the total applications. Those three applications cannot be considered as refusals. The SLAF assumed that the answers to the three RTI Applications could pose a threat to national security. Therefore, the SLAF has

sought advice from the AG on those three applications and is awaiting instructions from the AG. One of these applications was to obtain the information on air power possessed by the SLAF which could pose a direct threat to national security. This amount is only 4 percent compared to the total number of applications received by the SLAF. The other two applications were regarding the welfare fund and hotels operated by the SLAF. These two applications cannot be considered as threat to national security.

In the case of the SLAF, it has received very few applications under the RTI Act. Majority of the applications have been properly responded by the SLAF as expected by the RTI law. It is very clear that the two applications that have been directly refused by the SLAF were done under proper procedure. It is commendable that instead of directly refusing few complex RTI applications, the SLAF has sought advice from the Attorney General's Department and informed the applicant of the delay in responding to their requests. No appeal has been lodged with the RTI Commission regarding these refusals. Therefore, it can be ascertained that the applicants have accepted the refusals by the SLAF as legitimate. Thus, only one application that poses a threat to national security has been received by the SLAF and the request has been addressed professionally. In view of all these facts mentioned above, the SLAF has acted lawfully as is expected by the information law. Significantly, the analysis of the RTI applications received by SLAF indicates the implementation of the RTI Act does not pose a threat to national security.

PERSPECTIVE OF SRI LANKA NAVY

The Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) has a slightly different system to the SLA and the SLAF on handling RTI requests. The SLN has divided the RTI requests into five areas and has appointed separate IOs for each subject matter. Those five areas and respective IOs are as follows;

1.   Naval Operation   - Deputy Director Naval Operations (DDNO)

2.   Land Operations   - Deputy Director Land Operations (DDLO)

3.   General Administration   - Deputy Director Naval Administration (DDNA)

4.   Legal Affairs   - Deputy Director Legal (DDL)

5.   Navy Police matters   - Deputy Provost Marshal (DPM)

RTI Applications received by the SLN are forwarded to the respective divisions according to the subject matter of the inquiry described above. Thereafter, the decision is taken by the respective IO and the applicant is informed of the decision directly. Accordingly, separate databases are maintained by each section and there is no centralised database for the entire SLN on RTI requests.

The author was able to interview and obtain details only from two units, the DDL and the DDNA. It is a common practice of the IOs of SLN to consult the DDL as to whether the answers provided for the RTI requests complies with the Act. Therefore, the interview with DDL revealed not only the matters related to legal affairs, but also all the other fields in the SLN particularly on national security. Although all five IOs were not interviewed, the information shared by DDL was a substantial representation of the entire Navy.

Table 3: Details of RTI Applications Received by the Directorate of Legal, and Naval Administration Unit - Year 2017 & 2018

Con No	Description	No. of Applications
01	Total number of RTI applications received	20
02	Number of applications responded	19
03	Number applications rejected	01
	a. Threat to national security	00
	b. Other exemptions in Sec 5 of the RTI Act	01
04	Number of applications related to day to day administrative matters	19

Source: Sri Lanka Navy

According to Table 3, only one application has been refused by both the units due to the unavailability of the requested information at the SLN. None of the applications posed a threat to national security. Although the facts related to other three units of the SLN is not available, if there was any request of information that would threaten national security, those requests would have been forwarded to DDL for further instructions. However, the DDL confirmed that the Directorate of Legal has not received any inquiries that threaten national security.

According to the data of the SLN with regard to RTI law, it is clearly visible that the SLN has functioned in accordance with the provisions of the RTI Act. In particular, this information discloses that the RTI Act has not been a threat to national security.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION COMMISSION

Chairman, and Senior Research Officer of RTI Commission were interviewed and statistics of RTI Appeal Inquiries are mentioned in the Table 4.

Table 4: Details of RTI Appeals Received by RTIC - Year 2018

1	Number of appeals brought forward from year 2017	22
2	Total number of appeals received	1013
3	Number of appeals rejected	213
4	Number of appeals considered for inquiry	822
5	Number of inquiries concluded	549
6	Number of ongoing inquiries	273

Source: RTI Commission

Two hundred in person appeal inquiries were reviewed and analysed to see if there was any request that threatens national security. It is also significant to note that in the two hundred appeal inquiries there was no discussion of any case related to national security.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Sri Lanka's RTI Act was enacted on 24 June 2016 giving meaning to the citizens' fundamental right to information and the Act became fully operational on 3 February 2017. The information law serves as a key entry point to strengthen transparency and accountability in the government, addressing corruption and increasing the trust between people and the state. With the enactment of the RTI Act, there was a widespread opinion in the public particularly among the members of the military and the intelligence community that it was going to pose threat to national security. Later, this perception gradually spread among the general public to a certain extent. Although no study or media report has claimed that the RTI Act is a threat to national security, it was important to investigate whether the implementation of the RTI Act poses a threat to national security or not.

RTI laws are relatively new in most countries and their adoption has been a difficult and contested process. As a result, much of the research in this area has focused on analysing the passage of legislation and the process of its implementation. Even in Sri Lanka, the RTI is a new concept and there is no academic research conducted so far. However, there have been a few studies carried out on RTI law in Sri Lanka by professional organisations but neither of them nor the media reports have discussed the impact of information law on national security in Sri Lanka. The Exemptions in the section 5 of the RTI Act state that the Public Authorities are not obliged to provide any information that poses a threat to national security and such requests shall be refused. However, this study suggests that lack of a definitive definition of national security is a problem in every aspect.

On this basis, the entire public service lacks one specific policy when taking decisions on matters related to national security. This situation may pose a risk or compromise national security under RTI law. National security is a matter that must be given top priority by any state and it cannot be underestimated or endangered under any circumstances. If there is a threat to national security, the results can never be remedied. The Easter Sunday attack is a classic example for this situation. Therefore, it is very important to be proactive in the face of such threats.

The RTI Commission should work diligently on this matter to provide a definitive definition for national security under the RTI Act to prevent such situation from occurring in the future. The RTI Commission should engage with legislators, government officials, members of the Armed Forces, and Intelligence operatives, as well as RTI experts, representatives of NGOs, academics, journalists, and the general public for this task. Therefore, the Government of Sri Lanka must act immediately to define national security or if it cannot be done expeditiously, at least some temporary measures must be taken immediately.

Public Authorities are acting alone on the complex and controversial RTI requests that could pose a threat to national security and it does not appear that there is combined decision-making process in place to address such issues. Therefore, officers who are directly responsible for national security must collectively analyse RTI requests that could threaten national security even though the requests are small in numbers at the moment. The Ministry of Defence must take complete responsibility and work diligently with the other public authorities to implement a mechanism to address complex situations. Such proactive measures can definitely identify future possible threats and the Ministry of Defence must take immediate steps to curb or minimise such threats to national security under the RTI Act.

Interviews with the IOs of the Tri Forces revealed that according to their knowledge and experience, that implementation of the RTI Act has not posed a threat to national security. Analysis of RTI applications revealed that only a handful of requests received by the Armed Forces which caused a potential threat to national security. A small number of such applications were refused information under the provisions of the RTI Act and no appeals have been made to the RTI Commission against those refusals.

Therefore, all these facts clearly indicate that the implementation of the RTI Act has not posed a threat to national security so far. However, it does not mean that the same situation will continue to exist in the future since the RTI Act has been in place for less than three years. Therefore, there should be constant monitoring of the implementation of the RTI Act, particularly its impact on national security by the relevant public authorities.

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CYBER SECURITY IN SRI LANKA AIR FORCE: EFFECTS OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR

Wing Commander HMLS Lankathilake

ABSTRACT

Cybersecurity measures at Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) were initiated from the year 2013. However, SLAF is under imminent threat for information security in vulnerable cyberspace and there is a higher chance for the SLAF to be victimised as the next service organisation. As it is observed that cyber-attacks often focus on individual users of the webmail, there is a need to identify the specific characteristics of the individuals being targeted prior to causing a great damage to SLAF. The main objective of the study, therefore, is to find out the factors leading to cyber-attacks in SLAF and to propose feasible damage control measures to mitigate future threats. This paper was developed through the deductive approach to hypothetically test the theory and correlation of variables. Counterproductive computer use is a concept that has been subjected to many discussions and mismanaging of incoming mail could fall under the counter productive work behaviour and that is the research interest of this paper. However, response to an unknown e-mail could be influenced by several factors and the researcher focused on cybersecurity awareness, negligence, emotional stability and computer literacy. Cybersecurity index was calculated with percentage of spam emails filtered through the spam server and mails go beyond that. Cybersecurity awareness and emotional stability positively correlated with the respondent behaviour while the correlations of negligence and computer literacy were not significant. Respondent behaviour and cybersecurity index negatively correlated significantly. Since there is valid relation between the cybersecurity awareness and emotional stability to the cybersecurity index, it is essential to make necessary precautionary measures such as introducing awareness programs, test on Emotional Stability and treat accordingly.

Keywords: Cybersecurity, Computer Literacy, Emotional Stability, Negligence, Respondent Behaviour

INTRODUCTION

The domains of warfare evolved over the last century and the latest member to the family – Cyber Warfare – joined as the fifth domain. Network-centric warfare creates uncertainty over power projection with the fifth domain and influence on terrorism drives the world towards novel ways to derive the precautionary measures on cybersecurity. The vulnerability in the cyber domain has increased exponentially within the last few decades.

An understanding of the cyber domain and related terminology could be more convincing by reading through the researches on analogous discipline. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) defines cybersecurity as, "the collection of tools, policies, security concepts, security safeguards, guidelines, risk management approaches, actions, training, best practices, assurance and technologies that can be used to protect the cyber environment and organization and user's assets" (2009). This definition supports the agreement of the measures taken for the protection of the information in the cyber domain. Thing (1999) defines cybersecurity as, "the body of technologies, processes and practices designed to protect networks, computers, programs and data from attack, damage or unauthorized access. In a computing context, security includes both cybersecurity and physical security." As the definition suggests, security in the cyber domain is two-fold, i.e. physical security and cybersecurity. Physical security extends the discussion on the measures and efforts to physically break out of the security and cybersecurity extends to intangible security measures. CCTV cameras take care of the physical protection of hardware equipment and the world is struggling toward the protection of data through networks, primarily via the internet. However, the researcher narrowed down the future discussion of this paper purely based on the security measures that are intangible in nature.

Cyber attackers target either an individual or an organisation. An organised attack to a web server or database of an organisation by Denial of Service (DoS) or Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack would make the organisation unavailable in the cyberspace for a considerable time. It was understood that most attacks to organisations originated through an individual security lapse of a person leading to a catastrophic damage to the organisation. Attacks targeting personnel are a preliminary ground preparation for organised attack to an organisation. It has been identified that personnel attacks are easier as well as more frequent. It is important to find the reasons leading to personnel attacks as organisations have to pay more concern on the stakeholders since the attacks would originate through one of them. This paper focuses on personnel cyberattacks and discusses the personnel attributes leading to victimisation for cyberattack.

INFORMATION SECURITY

Most of organisations have become slaves of information technology (IT) over the last few decades for internal operations (Stanton et al., 2004). Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) altered its way in relying on IT with the establishment of the Information Technology Unit in 1992 at the Air Force Headquarters (Pereira, 2000). Bresnahan et al (2000) suggested that the demand for skilled labour in organisations increased with the organisational change mediated by IT and positively correlated with decreasing prices of IT related equipment. Further, they suggest that there is a direct relationship with the use of technology and the skills of employees in an organisation. IT literacy has become an essential skill to be employed in most

organisations. However, to bridge the IT skill-labour gap, organisations employ IT illiterate personnel. Cybersecurity was a novel concept for the SLAF prior to the establishment of the Cyber Security wing in 2013 to monitor frequent DDoS, Structured Query Language (SQL) injection or vulnerability scanning attacks to SLAF servers. It was understood that the number of cyber attacks on SLAF during the year 2016 were close to 1,000 per month except, in the months of March and May. However, sufficient data has not been released to analyse the trend of the number of attacks and the degree of the damage caused due to these attacks as unauthorised access to these data would tarnish the image of the organisation. Emerging trend of cyber terrorism in the world would make this situation favourable for their side and launch mega attacks to vulnerable organisations like SLAF. The face of such attacks would not be familiar and the degree of damage cannot be predicted. As such, precautionary measures need to be taken to minimise the unforeseeable damage.

E- MAILS

Within the last decade, the three traditional primary production factors that defined the productive potential of the economic system; land, labour and capital were displaced by information (Quaresma et al., 2013). Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have come to play a vital role in organisations and managing information was decisive. The e-mail system is a tool used in organisations for sharing of information instantaneously and simultaneously at low cost. However, organisations whispered that this effective communication tool would only be used for work related tasks and activities, therefore, doubts remain unchanged towards the actual picture. The success and popularity of the e-mail system was inevitable to handle large traffic of messages sent and received (Whittaker and Sidner, 1996). Consequently, extensive use of this communication tool would be a daily problem for all the employees to manage large volume of information exchanged. This increasing traffic of e-mails would be the carrier for malicious content or for directing users to fraudulent and unsafe websites. New dimension of security has emerged in organisations to counter this problem, reflected in computer network security to secure its data during the time that employees spend with e-mail, including the management of incoming and outgoing messages (Mano and Mesch, 2010).

END USER BEHAVIOUR

Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) is a novel phenomenon which emerged over the last few decades (Fox et al., 2001). Yu, (2014) defines CWB as follows:

> Counterproductive work behaviour is any intentional unacceptable behaviour that has the potential to have negative consequences to an organisation and the staff members within that organisation. These behaviours include acts such as theft, calling in sick when you're not sick, fraud, sexual harassment, violence, drug and alcohol use, and inappropriate use of the internet.

Stanton et al. (2004) argued that there is a significant correlation between information security and end user behaviour, which would be another face of CWB as that falls under the inappropriate use of internet. Emerging trends in information security focused on end user behaviour (internal threat) and attempts to research on factors affecting the compliance behaviour to information security (Bulgurcu et al., 2010). Computer Security Institute (CSI)/Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) survey in year 2004 stated that a majority of security threats incurred were due to the actions of insiders (Gordon et al. 2005). Lee and Lee (2002) argued that employees of an organisation would pose challenges to jeopardise information security due to their ignorance, mistakes and deliberate acts. End user information security awareness would contribute to the information security of organisations in two directions, as general awareness and Information Security Policy (ISP) awareness (Bulgurcu et al., 2010). However, the degree of awareness would influence the intention and attitude of employees to shape the perception of behaviour in the internal security environment of an organisation. Deviant CWB involving computer use such as deviant social norms may knowingly contradict organisational goals (Morris, 2007). For example, use of computers to view pornography by an employer may intentionally spread viruses or accessing and sharing confidential company information would leave an organisation vulnerable to many issues such as cyberattacks. Morris (2007) suggests that personality and attitude are the governing factors of counterproductive use of computers at work place. Five force model (Big Five) is a commonly used tool for the measurement of personality traits in most organisations. The Big Five traits are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism commonly referred to as OCEAN (Barrick and Mount, 1991). However, there is very limited literature applying the Big Five on e-mail users. Neuroticism, commonly known as emotional stability, would be an influencing variable to rate the degree of response to an unknown e-mail received as the researcher focus towards that direction. Venkatapathy and Madhumathi (2016) argues that counterproductive use of computers range from minor outcomes like internet surfing during working hours to more serious outcomes like watching pornographic videos and sharing confidential information. They extend the argument to suggest three main forms of CWB related to counterproductive computer use as cyber loafing, cyber slacking and cyber aggression. The concept of cyber slacking defines the behaviours which include online chats, online gambling, online banking, stock trading or even visiting pornographic websites. Cyber loafing defines the behaviours related to use of organisational internet or emails. Cyber loafing generally means always engaging on the web during work hours, doing non-work-related activities (Ugrin et al., 2008). In 2002, Lim argued in his taxonomy that cyber loafing distributes over two factors as web browsing and e-mailing. He has researched three main factors related to e-mailing as checking non-work related e-mails, sending non-work related e-mails and receiving non-work related e-mails. However, the researcher limited this paper towards information security through e-mailing concerning how employee responds to an e-mail from an unknown source which would lead towards the cyber security in SLAF. Stanton et al. (2004)

suggests that technical expertise and employee intention would contribute to information security of an organisation to various degrees. Technical expertise would unfold more elaborately as cybersecurity awareness and computer literacy are related to the research. However, the researcher is of the view that technical expertise and employee intention would allow the employer to shape his behaviour in unproductive computer use and that eventually lead to information security of an organisation. Naïve mistakes such as password behaviour of an employee would influence information security of an organisation (Stanton, 2002). Stanton (2002) studied six password behaviours in an organisation namely frequency of changing password, using numbers and punctuation in password, writing down password, share password with work group, share password in company and share password outside of the company. He concluded that only the first three behaviours have medium range correlation with the training and awareness as there is no relation to the last two behaviours. However, the researcher argues that password behaviour would be the most suitable key result indicator for negligence rather than naïve mistakes since the behaviour of employees over frequent awareness circulars of SLAF. Further, the researcher is of the view that negligence and cyber security awareness would be influencing factors for the counterproductive computer use which lead to issues in information security of an organization. Many tools have been developed to measure the strength of a password. However, one tool may show the strength of a password as excellent while another tool would not. Todnem (2016) suggested a formula to calculate the strength of a password and he proposed that if the value is 75 or above, it is an indication of a secure and strong password.

Password Strength = (CX4) + [(C-U)X2] + [(C-L)X2] + (NX4) + (SX6)

C - Total number of characters
U - Number of uppercase letters
L - Number of lowercase letters
N - Number of numbers
S - Number of symbols

There is a significant threat posed by internal users for the information security of an organisation. Accordingly, 91 percent of cyberattacks derive from phishing e-mails. Employees are more susceptible to a phishing attack with direct bearing to emotional motivators as curiosity, fear and urgency (Zurier, 2016). That signifies the correlation of emotional stability and responds to a phishing e-mail. Belani et al. (2016) suggested following methods of phishing attacks are commonly used by the attackers over susceptible employees to gain access of ICT systems of an organisation. However, they stressed that it is not an easy task for an employee to differentiate a phishing mail unless he possesses sufficient knowledge on the subject.

Click-only - An email that urges the recipient to click on an embedded link.

Data entry - An email with a link to a customised landing page that entices employees to enter sensitive information.

Attachment-based - Themes of this type train employees to recognize malicious attachments by sending emails with seemingly legitimate attachments in a variety of formats.

Double Barrel - A conversational phishing technique that utilizes two emails – one benign and one containing the malicious element.

Highly Personalised - Simulates advanced social engineering tactics by using specific known details about email recipients gathered from internal and public sources.

METHODOLOGY

This paper was developed through the deductive approach to hypothetically test the theory and Correlations of Variables (Hayes, 2000). Inappropriate use of the internet comes under CWB (Yu, 2014) would be the research interest of this paper. Stanton et al. (2004) argues that it is more appropriate to use the term counterproductive computer use when employees use internet inappropriately which leads to compromise the information security signature of an organisation. The researcher focused on studying the influencing factors for Respond Behaviour (RB) of an employee in presence of unknown e-mails as most of the cyberattacks are originating from a simple phishing attack (Zurier, 2016). Therefore, the number of phishing attacks would be a fair indicator to define the Cybersecurity Index (CSI) of an organisation whereas, larger the CSI, higher the probability to susceptible attack. Degree of Cybersecurity Awareness (CSA) would be an influencing factor of RB through Cybersecurity Policy Awareness (CSPA) and General Awareness (GA) (Bulgurcu et al., 2010). Further, personality and attitude (Morris, 2007) would influence RB of an employee. However, neuroticism (emotional stability) has got least attention in RB in ICT and researcher would drill the area to fill the research gap. Attitude and intention of the end user would be influenced by the CSA and computer literacy (Stanton et al., 2004) whereas the researcher suggests CSA and computer literacy (CL) as governing factors for RB which would be treated separately. Naïve mistakes such as password behaviour would have direct bearing over RB (Stanton, 2002) and the researcher suggests the term 'negligence' would be more appropriate to use, in place of 'naïve mistake' with the presence of CSA and to treat independently.

The researcher measured six variables and derives possible correlation among them. However, the researcher used ratio data to measure CSI and accumulating the secondary data collected from SLAF on cybersecurity attacks or attempted attacks to an individual during last six months of year 2016. Lower the CSI, better the protection in cyberspace. Dawes (2007) proposed a five or seven point Likert scale would give slightly better results comparative to higher point scales. Thus, the researcher used five point Likert scale to measure five variables. Gliem and Gliem (2003) argued that multi-item measures present least errors in measurement of attitudes of a respondent's comparison to single-item measure. The researcher is in agreement with the argument and used multiple items to measure variables in Likert scale. However, the researcher used ratio data to measure the password strength and converted to negative Likert scale (since measuring variable is negligence) treating a score below 50 as the least strength while score 120 or above as the highest strength to comply the multiple items in common scale. In addition to the measured six variables, researcher treated demography separately to justify the sampling technique used in this paper. Cheyne and Ritter (2001) suggested that carefully and appropriately targeted respondents would give better results with online survey over traditional paper survey. People's social desirability is low when they answer an online questionnaire rather than answer a paper-based questionnaire and they believed that they can conceal their identity (Joinson, 1999). The research focused on the response behaviour to unknown e-mails and it is more desirable to post an online questionnaire for better results. The argument strengthened that the target group has access to the internet to log in to their e-mail either via their own arrangement or SLAF provided method. The theoretical population considered for the study is the strength of the SLAF where the results of the study was generalised. However, the study population for the study is the total number of SLAF mail users which accounts for approximately 1,050. Such that the element of the population is the individual user of SLAF mail. Sample frame is the list of users available at the ITU of AFHQ. Scientifically drawn sample size needs to be finite with population values to get the finite value for the sample size. The sample size derived from Cochran (1977) equation with 95 percent confidence level is 360. Stratified sampling technique was considered while taking the branch and rank in SLAF as separate strata. However, a simple random sampling technique was used at the final stage of sampling to select the specific officer to be selected as a respondent.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research data collected from 232 respondents reveal the possible correlation among the developed variable through the conceptual framework. Relation of mediating variable RB, with independent variables; CL, CSA, N and ES are merits to consider. Cybersecurity awareness of the selected sample is fairly satisfied. It was found that the negligence level of the sample is marginally low and that is a good sign for the organisation. The central tendency of Emotional Stability (ES) suggests that the level of employees in SLAF has bias more towards the centre, therefore, a low ES is

not a positive indicator for the organisation. It was found that the computer literacy (CL) of the selected sample is fairly good. Further, the response behaviour of the selected sample indicated the satisfactory behaviour of the respondents. Bivariate analysing reveals that there is a positive correlation between RB and CSA and that suggests that respondent behaviour could be influenced by sufficient cybersecurity awareness. Negative yet less significant correlation between RB and N suggests that the respondent behaviour could not be influenced by negligence. However, emotional stability suggests very good statistical relationship with respondent behaviour and correlation is significant. Correlation of computer literacy with respond behaviour is not much significant. Respond behaviour and cybersecurity index shows very good relation with the higher value of correlation coefficient.

Cybersecurity awareness unfolded mainly into general awareness and policy awareness. It can be suggested that both of these awareness level of SLAF personnel are satisfactory. More than 50 percent of respondents suggested three or more options available to prevent cyberattacks. This is a positive indicator for cyber awareness. Most of the respondents are not using data travellers for sharing data. This would be due to the restrictive culture of data travellers in SLAF where users were forced to switch to alternative methods. Directive has worked in a favourable way to SLAF as its staff have shifted towards better and secure methods available. However, SLAF personnel are not too conversant with the reporting culture of lost data travellers and need to be educated for better results in future. Overall, there is still room for the development of this factor. Frequent awareness programmes would serve the purpose. It is, therefore, important to ensure the high state of cybersecurity awareness since the factor significantly correlates with the respond behaviour, thus to the cybersecurity index. It is noteworthy that the level of negligence of the selected sample is slightly low. Negligence was mainly focussed on the password behaviour and facts suggest that SLAF personnel are following good practices of password behaviour. However, SLAF personnel are very poor in logging into the mail in each session. This habit is not favourable for SLAF. Respondent behaviour does not show much influence to the password behaviour with less significant correlation among the variables. Response behaviour of this group could not be influenced by password behaviour, thus bearing less significance on cybersecurity. Negatively skewed curve of the computer literacy suggests literacy rate of the sample is in a good shape. They are more conversant on updating of the operating system which is a very good sign for an organisation. Less significant relationship of the CL with RB has proposed that CL cannot influence RB significantly. That is not a positive sign for the organisation. However, with regard to the completion of work, they prefer to work at office rather than attending at home. This situation was clear even with the presence of important family commitment. Furthermore, it is quite doubtful about the answer on work at office rather than attending at home as it is more bias towards the organisation. This might be a limitation which most researchers face when inquiring about the attitude towards organisational concepts. ES also suggests very good correlation among the respondent behaviour. Personnel

of SLAF can be emotionally influenced by an external party for individual benefits. This would be a threat to the cybersecurity of an organisation. Thus, measures to be taken to improve the level of emotional stability of employers. ES is a psychological phenomenon that requires careful attention.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Cybersecurity Awareness (CSA) and Emotional Stability (ES) could influence the respondents' behaviour on how they react to unknown emails received. This factor has a direct bearing on the Cybersecurity Index (CSI) which denotes the degree of attempts that could present to individual respondents. Lower the CSI, higher the safety as people would not receive unknown emails which determine threats form external sources. As there is valid relation of the CSA and ES to the CSI, it is essential to make necessary precautionary measures such as introducing awareness programs periodically and testing on ES in order to minimize effects of counterproductive work behaviour in Sri Lanka Air Force

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CHINA'S FUTURE RELATIONS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION: A STUDY FROM A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST APPROACH

Bhagya Senaratne

ABSTRACT

The People's Republic of China has asserted itself as a South Asian state by showing a keen interest in its affairs. China's stance indicates that it respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries and is not favourable towards involving itself in the domestic affairs of other countries. However, China's current relations in the South Asian region are facing a predicament as there is a possibility of some national governments and their domestic constituencies not favouring China's policies in their countries. Stemming from a Neoclassical Realist lens which underscores the importance of state-society relations in the foreign policy-making of a country, this article analyses the reasons as to why national governments and their domestic constituencies, especially in the South Asian region may have these perceptions and also what type of policies and practices have led to this opposition. The primary objective of the study examines how China's relations in the South Asian region can be improved in order to create a better image. Following the case study method, the research examines how the public from Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have influenced each of these countries' foreign policy-making towards China. It was found that China's foreign policy executive needs to be conscious that the people of South Asia are currently assertive about their governments' policy initiatives, thus requiring a more conscientious approach. China must be mindful that these concerns could also affect the future of the Belt & Road Initiative. In conclusion, when analysing the South Asian states' external relations pertaining to China, it can be established that these states will attempt to be more vociferous in their interaction and relations. Hence, China should calibrate its diplomacy to suit modern day requirements so that it does not alienate other countries.

Keywords: Belt & Road Initiative, China, Foreign Policy, Neoclassical Realism, South Asia

INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is not a stranger to the South Asian region and the Indian Ocean Region, as it has traversed these waters and has been associated with these countries from the time of the Ancient Silk Road. From not too long ago, a selection of Chinese nationals and some of its regions, especially those regions in the West and the South Western areas of the country, have increasingly rallied a South Asian identity, over an East Asian one. Therefore, in modern times, China

has asserted itself as a South Asian state by showing a keen interest in South Asian affairs. Towards this end, it sought observer status in the region's regional entity, i.e. the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a move, which was welcomed by the South Asian states. Further, even though China does not have any physical borders with the Indian Ocean, it considers itself an Indian Ocean state for two reasons: firstly, as it borders Indian Ocean littoral states and secondly, because it navigates in its waters. Further, historical records indicate that China has been sailing the vast Indian Ocean Region (IOR) for at least the past six centuries. These are merely two examples that illustrate China's presence and sentiments towards the region. They also showcase the interest China displays towards the Indian Ocean Region and South Asia.

This article analyses as to whether there is a possibility of national governments and their domestic constituencies from South Asia not favouring China's policies in their countries, and if so, what the basis for such sentiments are. As an analytical research, the objective of the study was to examine how China's relations in the South Asian region can be improved in order to create a better image for it to practice its principle of 'peaceful coexistence'. Accordingly, the study employed the neoclassical realist theory of international relations to examine the research problem identified above.

The value of this research article is that it undertakes a systematic analysis of publicly available data to interpret China's relations in the South Asian region from a neoclassical realist perspective. Neoclassical realism is important for this study, as it considers the position or impact of various domestic variables, people or institutions on a country's foreign policy. Hence, the study diverts from focusing only from an extra-regional perspective of the South Asian region or that of a Chinese perspective, and instead, focuses on how the South Asian countries perceive China. Therefore, this research provides new insight on how China should implement its relations in the South Asian region, by taking the perspectives and the sentiments of the domestic constituencies of South Asia into consideration.

Accordingly, this article comprises of four sections. The first section provides definitions of the South Asian region as well as the Indian Ocean Region. This is taking into considering the location, their borders and resources, as they are important in understanding the relationship between the PRC and the South Asian states. This section also provides a brief description of neoclassical realism and the variables considered in this research study. The second section illustrates China's current relations in the South Asian region. As such, the author analyses China's relations in three of the South Asian case studies, namely Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The future of China's relations in South Asia is discussed in the third section. This section discusses the importance of understanding and engaging with domestic constituencies for China to conduct positive and successful relations in the region in the future. It also rationalises the stance taken by these South Asian states

in forming negative images about China. The fourth and final section consists of the concluding remarks, which includes suitable recommendations for the People's Republic of China to pursue its interactions with the South Asian countries.

SOUTH ASIAN REGION

As this paper discusses about China's relations in South Asia, this section briefly illustrates the borders of the region that it considers to be South Asia.

Established in 1985, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation initially considered South Asia to consist of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This meant the borders of the region extended from Bangladesh's border with Myanmar in the East to Pakistan's border with Iran to the West. The North of the region borders the Himalayas whilst the South is bordered by the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, the Arabian Sea borders Pakistan and India to the West whilst the Bay of Bengal borders India and Bangladesh to the East. The South Asian region was also bordered by Afghanistan to the Northwest, prior to Afghanistan's membership to the regional organisation. In addition, the region is home to the two Indian Ocean island-states of the Maldives and Sri Lanka. In 2007, the association formally expanded its membership and geographical location by accepting Afghanistan. Since the latter's inclusion, the region now borders former member states of the Soviet Union, such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the Northwest. As such, an interesting feature of this region is that half of it – i.e. to the South – is bordered by water bodies, with the northern areas being demarcated by land borders.

However, for purposes of this discussion, this research paper considers the South Asian region to also include Myanmar, a country East of Bangladesh and India, bordering China to the North. Myanmar is also open to the Indian Ocean, thus giving it the status of an Indian Ocean littoral state. Myanmar can be identified as a frontier state between South East Asia and South Asia, due to its physical geography as well as cultural affinity to each region. This paper considers Myanmar to be a South Asian state for several reasons. Firstly, Myanmar was part of the British Empire along with the other South Asian states, thereby showcasing similarities in political struggles and contemporary politics (Osada, 2015). Secondly, Myanmar, similar to Pakistan and Sri Lanka, experienced years of conflict, subsequent to their independence as the British followed a divide and rule policy. This policy decision of the British resulted in reduced economic growth, too is a similarity among these countries. Geographically, Myanmar also permits it to be considered as a South Asian state, as it links closely with Bangladesh and the North East of India. China's interaction and initiatives in Myanmar is the third reason this paper views Myanmar to be a South Asian state. These initiatives carried forth by China very much connects Myanmar to what the article defines as South Asia and are also reason for greater inter-linkages between Myanmar and the South Asian region.

INDIAN OCEAN REGION

The South Asian region is also home to the Indian Ocean which roughly covers 20 percent of the world's space. It is also abundant with natural resources such as petroleum and natural gas reserves as well as many rich natural minerals, such as manganese nodules, ilmenite, and tin and 4.2 percent of the total area consists of continental shelves. This ocean space is in possession of some of the world's largest fishing grounds, supplying roughly 20 percent of the total world's fish catch. Home to 55 percent of the world's known offshore oil reserves, the Indian Ocean is also a major throughway for the transport of raw material and commodities, such as crude oil, iron, coal, rubber and tea. Further, forty percent of the world's offshore natural gas reserves are in the Indian Ocean littoral states.

Approximately half of the world's container traffic passes through the Indian Ocean with 30 percent of the world's trade being handled in its ports. Furthermore, it is estimated that over 60,000 ships continue to sail from east to west and vice versa annually, carrying two thirds of oil and half of all container shipments. It is estimated that currently 80 percent of China's energy shipments are imported through the Indian Ocean region, which showcases that there is an inherent interest by China towards safeguarding these routes, the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOCs), as well as engaging with the region to ensure its imports are safe.

As a preamble to the discussion on China's role in South Asia, it is important to recognise John W. Garver's observation:

> China's objective in the SA-IOR is to grow friendly, cooperative relations across many dimensions with all the countries of that region on the basis of mutual benefit, understanding and trust. In the Chinese formulation, this dictum is called the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (2012, p.392, emphasis in original).

The concept of Peaceful Coexistence is at the heart of the discussion in this paper, as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) upholds the Five Core Principles of Peaceful Coexistence[1], namely mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual nonaggression; mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence (State Council, People's Republic of China, 2015). Peaceful coexistence can be described as collaborating without being hostile to one another, which underscores the very essence of the Chinese dictum that is discussed in this paper.

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1   The Five Core Principles on Peace Coexistence as they are known today, derive from a 1954 derivation, by the name Panchsheel. The latter came into the public discourse via a joint statement issued by China and India in June 18, 1954, when the Chinese Premier visited India to discuss about Tibet with Indian Premier Jawaharlal Nehru. http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/191_panchsheel.pdf

South Asian countries consider China as a regional power, as unlike India, it has not been involved with the historical struggles in the region. This is due to the peaceful association of China with the South Asian region through its Ancient Maritime Silk Road. As a result, China is more economically attractive to South Asia, which is important in building good relations with the neighbouring countries (Wagner, 2016, p.318). China is further attractive to South Asian states as a counter-weight to the regional hegemon, i.e. India. Its relations with Pakistan are a case-in-point where both China and Pakistan have cooperated on many defence matters, with India as the common point of reference. The South Asian states do not like to acknowledge India's default hegemon status, therefore welcomed interaction with extra-regional powers such as China. Furthermore, the odds are in favour of China which has the economic capacity to invest and trade in South Asia as well as provide defence assistance when required.

NEOCLASSICAL REALISM

Neoclassical realism was coined by Gideon Rose in his review article in 1998 and was later developed via the works of Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Steven E. Lobell (2009, 2016). In his article, Rose emphasised the influence of exterior and interior factors when a state formulates its foreign policy. Emphasising the importance of the state in international relations, neoclassical realism, as a theory on foreign policy, identifies the importance and relevance of various domestic-level intervening variables.

Of the three major variants of neoclassical realist theory on international relations, this research study draws on the model developed by Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell (2016), i.e. the Type III model of Neoclassical Realism. This model provides a detailed analysis of how domestic-level variables such as leader images, a state's strategic culture, state-society relations and domestic institutions influence a country's foreign policy-making.

Accordingly, this study focuses on two of the above-mentioned domestic-level variables, notably, leader images and state-society relations, in its examination of China's relations with the Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It, therefore, conducts a systematic analysis of the influence individuals – state leaders such as Mahinda Rajapaksa (November 2005 to January 2015) and Maithreepala Sirisena and Ranil Wickremesinghe (January 2015 to present) in Sri Lanka; Nawaz Sharif (June 2013 to July 2017), Imran Khan (August 2018 to present) in Pakistan; and Aung San Suu Kyi, Thein Sein (March 2011 to March 2016) in Myanmar – have on the decision-making process vis-à-vis external relations of these three countries. As this research scrutinises influence the general public or the domestic constituencies have on foreign policy-making, the third domestic-level variable, i.e. state-society relations, is important towards this consideration. This variable analyses the nature of interaction between the central government and the domestic public. It also

defines the difficulties the Foreign Policy Executive (FPE) has to overcome in formulating and implementing a foreign policy favourable to the state, so as to not face domestic opposition.

The motivation for selecting these two particular variables depend on the time-frame under consideration in this study. Hence, the research examines the short-term and short-to-medium term time frames (Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016). Therefore, the consideration of both this particular time-frame and the domestic-level variables are of importance to this research study.

CHINA'S RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA

When discussing China's relations and involvement in the South Asian region and the Indian Ocean, it must be noted that SAARC included China along with Japan, South Korea, the European Union and the United States as observers of its organisation in 2007. This was a move that was welcomed by all the South Asian states, thus indicating that even a decade ago, the South Asian states recognised China's growing role in the region as well as were agreeable to China's engagement in the region's affairs.

Although China applied for an observer status of the SAARC in 2005 and received approval for the same two years later, China has not been successful in developing multilateral ties with it. Christian Wagner asserts that China concentrated on and is content with having "bilateral relations rather than on multilateral structures", therefore, it has not focused on driving its relations with this South Asian organisation (2016, p.307). However, this inability can be largely attributed to the lack of cooperation within the SAARC itself. Further, the distrust and unequal power dynamics among the states are also a reason as to why the SAARC has not been successful in harnessing the potential it should have, by engaging in partnerships with either other states or with other regional blocs. As a result, China has not been able to sign an economic agreement with the organisation, which represents the entirety of South Asia, with which, it has very favourable bilateral economic arrangements. China's sentiments towards the South Asian region were echoed during President Hu Jintao's visit to Pakistan in 2006, when he stated: "China wants to develop friendly and cooperative relations with all South Asian countries on the basis of equality and reciprocity" (as cited in Garver, 2012, p.392, emphasis original). A favourable economic agreement with China would greatly benefit SAARC as an organisation, as well as the region's countries in their individual capacities. A more recent understanding for China not signing a multilateral agreement with SAARC could be attributed to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – a multilateral venture driven by China, seeking contributions from the countries that have subscribed to it.

Whilst bilateral agreements are convenient and often devoid of multilateral bureaucratic red tapes, it does not suggest that China is shying away from multilateral commitments. Even though bilateral agreements permit China to have suitable terms with each individual country in the South Asian region, it does not afford the same benefits as that of a multilateral engagement. One of the foremost projects that suggest China's keen interest in driving multilateral engagements is the BRI. According to the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the Belt and Road Initiative "…aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents …, establish and strengthen partnerships among … countries" (2015). This amply showcases that China intends to create an intricately woven multilateral commitment which promotes and relies on connectivity to better harness the economic potential trapped within countries and regions.

Since the early 2000s, China's interactions in South Asia have witnessed an increase, especially in terms of funding and investments. This is attributed to two reasons: firstly, due to the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, which saw the worst recession in over a century affecting most of the western countries; secondly, the accumulated capital within China, which had not been invested outside its shores was ready to be utilised (Havemann, 2018). The global financial crisis meant the western economies could neither choose to nor afford to spend beyond its shores, as a result, other investors such as those from China, had the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the fourth and final stage of encouraging Chinese overseas direct investment (ODI) was visible from 1999 onwards. It is during this time period that the term 'going out' strategy was utilised (Guo, 2013). This is clearly explained in Wen Jiabao's speech with reference to China's 'Going-Out' Strategy:

> We should hasten the implementation of our 'going out' strategy and combine the utilisation of foreign exchange reserves with the 'going out' of our enterprises (*The Economist*, 2009).

The 'Going Out' strategy implemented by Beijing in the 2000s, permitted the Asian economic giant to make use of its foreign exchange reserves to enable Chinese companies to expand and acquire businesses overseas. According to *The Economist*, China's foreign reserves at the time were the largest in the world (2009). This is a long-term result of China opening up its economy to the world and enabling internal growth of the country. Therefore, whilst the rest of the world was short of capital, China had an accumulation of wealth ready for investment purposes and immediate utilisation.

Having focused on encouraging science and technology related research during the Four Modernisations under Deng Xiaoping, Chinese companies started investing heavily in various construction projects, expansion and operation of port facilities such as that of Gwadar, Karachi, Colombo, Hambantota, Chittagong and Kyaukpyu in the South Asian region (Brewster, 2016). By this time, China had gained a

reputation as being successful in constructing and operating port facilities both at home and abroad.

David A. Brewster categorises China's port related projects in South Asia into three broad areas, differentiating between them according to their economic function as service ports, hub ports and gateway ports (2016). The previously proposed Sonadia in Bangladesh can be cited as an example for a service port whilst Colombo and Hambantota in Sri Lanka can be cited as the second type of port, which is a hub port (Brewster, 2016). Gwadar in Pakistan and Kyaukpyu in Myanmar are illustrative of the third type of port which connects China with the Indian Ocean. The establishment of gateway ports by China brings the securitised lens on the Indian Ocean to the fore, as it is trying to expand an enclosed sea space by establishing overland transport corridors.

These gateway ports are connected to the corridors which run overland providing access to lesser developed regions in China the opportunity to develop and expand. Whilst also ensuring regional connectivity and growth, these corridors also make the Indian Ocean accessible to those who utilise the overland corridors, thus decreasing the use of the sea lanes. Furthermore, in diversifying the manner in which China's energy shipments reach its borders, China is able to lessen the threat to its oil and gas tankers that traverse the Indian Ocean and its various choke points to reach its shores.

In the following sections of the article, the author proceeds to briefly discuss China's relations with Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

PAKISTAN

A long-standing ally of China's in South Asia commencing in the 1960s, Pakistan is viewed as an all-weather strategic cooperative partner (Embassy of the PRC in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 2018). The military partnership between the two countries is a well-known fact, especially due to the shared security concerns. However, China asserts that its relations with Pakistan are not intended towards countering India, and are purely economic in nature (see also Garver, 2012). Regardless of the nature of their relationship, together, China and Pakistan have been able to secure sound financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank to fund various joint collaborations.

Even though the two countries have long-standing good relations, China is aware of the security risks in engaging with Pakistan, especially in the latter's tribal areas (Brewster, 2016). China is conscious that it cannot rely on Pakistan alone to provide security towards its investment and would require mechanisms of its own to circumvent this. This is a concern China has in engaging in large-scale projects in

Pakistan, as it is wary of ensuring the safety and the longevity of its investments. In 2017, China singularly invested $990,000 in Pakistan, a 12 percent increase from the foreign investment it made in the previous year (China Statistical Yearbook, 2018).

With an investment of at least $50 billion, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a very important initiative for China (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, 2017). It is considered as one of the most crucial projects the Chinese have lined up in order to diversify their energy routes and also to develop their western hinterlands. This project, when fully operational, would enable China to circumvent the Indian Ocean in channelling its energy shipments to the country. This project would also enable China's North-Western frontier, the Xingjian Autonomous Region, to also flourish. The road, railway and air transportation system that is proposed would not only permit the two countries to prosper bilaterally, but also contribute to the prosperity of neighbouring, Afghanistan, India, Iran etcetera (CPEC, 2017). As such, investments via the CPEC project can be broadly categorised as energy, investment, Gwadar and other projects such as laying Fibre Optic Cables, establishing an Early Warning System to name a few (CPEC, 2017).

Even though this project is beneficial to the entire region and would result in the two countries prospering, China's involvement in how this project is being carried out is causing some discomfort within Islamabad. For example, comments on CPEC by Pakistan's cabinet member for commerce, industry and investment, Abdul Razak Dawood sparked tension. Accordingly, it was reported that Dawood stated that the terms and conditions of the approximately $50 billion CPEC project be reviewed and reassessed (Anderlini, Sender & Bokhari, 2018; Reuters, 2018). Dawood's comments spring from Chinese companies receiving various tax exemptions which provide these companies with an advantage over other foreign companies. In addition to Dawood's statement, Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Asad Umar indicated that he intended to table the CPEC project in parliament, to reveal details of the project as well as to discuss "the terms and conditions of Chinese loans" (Kiani, 2018). Furthermore, a report by the World Economic Forum (WEF) states that the newly elected government in Pakistan would want to encourage fresh discussions on CPEC, enabling consultations with business personnel, "civil society and locals affected; ensure landowners receive fair compensation; encourage hiring local labour" (2018). A foremost criticism of this project is that it is not transparent and the costs involved are unknown. As such, there were fresh negotiations on projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Even though these sentiments have been voiced by the new Government of Pakistan, China has maintained that they have close cooperation between each other and is not concerned that their bilateral relations would be affected.

Furthermore, this project has given rise to animosity between federal states such as Balochistan and the central government, with the local population being discontent

and concerned "that the huge energy and transport projects deliver few benefits for locals" (Zheng, 2018). According to Titterton & Abbas, the project has also given rise to the insurgent movement in Balochistan, causing a rise in terrorist activities and attacks on Chinese nationals and various assets (2019). Commenting on the attacks from November 2018, Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted: "The failed attack against the Chinese Consulate was clearly a reaction to the unprecedented trade agreements that resulted from our trip to China. The attack was intended to scare Chinese investors and undermine CPEC. These terrorists will not succeed" (Aamir, 2018). Comments by the prime minister indicate that the Pakistani government is concerned of the detrimental effects this kind of behaviour from various parts of society could have with their bilateral relations with China. Incidents such as these, showcase that domestic constituencies inclusive of opposition parties do not favour China's policies, capabilities and exploitation of Balochistan's natural resources in Pakistan (Aamir, 2018; Nooruzzman, 2018). However, regardless of these domestic sentiments, China continues to invest in Pakistan.

SRI LANKA

China-Sri Lanka relations are identified as an all-weather friendship, as both parties have stood by each other during pressing times since Sri Lanka recognised the People's Republic of China in 1950. Signing of the bilateral Rubber-Rice Pact in 1952 was an achievement at its time. With years of generosity to its name, China was also one of the few countries that assisted Sri Lanka during the latter's civil conflict. It is worthy of mention that the culmination of the internal civil conflict in mid-2009 introduced the potential for countries to invest in Sri Lanka, as the peaceful environment was conducive for investment. However, Sri Lanka's traditional donors in the west could not contribute to the island's development, due to the global financial crisis, creating space for a wealth-rich China to engage. China's 'Going Out' strategy which was being implemented approximately at the same time, was a significant impetus for their interest in investing. As a result, China's investment and financial assistance contributed positively towards rebuilding efforts in the country (De Mel, 2011; Grovum, 2013; Samaranayake, 2017; Wagner 2016, p. 312; Ye, 2013).

China's investments in Sri Lanka mainly focused on constructing new airports, roads, ports, coal power plants and railways (Aneez, 2013; Annual Report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2009-2015; Annual Report of the Ministry of Finance & Planning, 2009-2015). In 2007, China invested in the construction of the new port in Hambantota and the Mattala International Airport alongside it. Further investments were made in the construction of the coal power plant in Norochcholai and the construction of the Southern Expressway, the Colombo International Financial City (CIFC a.k.a. Port City) to name a few. In 2011, it ventured into a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to expand the existing port in Colombo.

With the exception of the PPP in the Port of Colombo, the Colombo-Katunayake Expressway and the Southern Expressway, the other projects in Sri Lanka have come under heavy criticism partly due to the lack of planning on one hand and the inconvenience caused to the general public, on the other. Investment projects such as the Colombo-Katunayake Expressway and the Southern Expressway have eased the daily commute between various destinations and have also significantly reduced travel time between cities. With an investment of approximately $500 million, the Colombo South Harbour is contributing to the national economy by conducting successful port operations. The Norochcholai Coal Power Plant for instance, is criticised due to its never-ending breakdowns, leading to power shortages around the island. The use of out-dated technology and sub-standard material have often been quoted as reasons. The port in Hambantota and the airport in Mattala are criticised for being ill-planned and ill-timed. In addition, domestic constituencies are criticising the government for acquiring their private land to build the industrial zone in the port's vicinity (Aljazeera, 2017). Furthermore, people are of the view that these projects are triggering a debt crisis as they are not generating the required money to service the debt incurred in repaying loans (Kulamannage, 2018; Wijenayake, 2016). This inability has caused the Sri Lankan government to proceed towards a debt-equity swap for the Hambantota Port, giving 80 percent of the port's share to the China Merchants Ports Holding (International) Company Ltd (Daily FT, 2016). As a result, the resultant impression among the local Sri Lankan populous is that Chinese investments are not benefitting them (Senaratne, 2018). Furthermore, there is a significant debate on the environmental impact by the CIFC and whether it followed the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure (Fernando, 2019; Wijenayake, V., 2014) prior to commencing construction. When compared to other multi-party governments, it is easier to obtain loans from China, due to the nature of its political structure. Hence, national governments are more inclined towards obtaining loans from China. As a result, local partners are not keen on obtaining vital reports such as EIAs. Therefore, both donors and recipients are at the receiving end of public criticism.

Thereby, there is a disfavour among Sri Lankans regarding China's engagement in the country due to various reasons such as environment concerns, certain loans obtained for projects that are not benefitting them and job insecurity, as China brings its own labourers as there is a shortage of labour in Sri Lanka. This, therefore, brings to the fore the intervening variable of state-society relations that dictates how a country's foreign policy is crafted.

MYANMAR

Myanmar is a key ally in China's development of its southern region, which has hitherto been underdeveloped. Projects such as the Myanmar-to-China oil pipeline play a crucial role in supplying crude oil to the refinery in Yunnan, thereby

propelling industrial development within the landlocked region. The pipeline which is approximately 3,000 kilometres long, pumps 260,000-barrels of oil per-day to the Anning refinery (He, 2017). This project enables China to access oil from the Middle East faster and also directly to its refineries. In addition, it has a positive security implication as tankers laden with crude oil no longer have to traverse through the Strait of Malacca to China's eastern shores. The sea route through the Strait of Malacca has been an area of great concern for China, as it believes it is susceptible to both natural and political interference which is resultant of not having an alternative safe passage to its shores. China envisaged another project which connects China and Myanmar with South Asia, named the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor (BCIM) which intends to improve the connectivity of Bangladesh's ports via road networks from Myanmar.

In 2011, Myanmar suspended the Chinese driven Myitsone Dam project, due to amongst other reasons, countrywide protests for the project (Bowman, 2016). Accordingly, President U Thein Sein stated: "being the government elected by the people, it upholds the aspiration and wishes of the people…. It is also responsible to solve the problems that worry the public. Therefore, the government will suspend the Myitsone dam project during its tenure" (as cited in Fuller, 2011). As a result, the government suspended the project as it was inconveniencing the people. In 2017, over 300 families from the village of Tang Hpre that were displaced by the project were protesting against the dam being built and implemented (Inkey, 2017). Bowman asserts that the public's voice is very clearly audible and that 'it has power', as such, China needs to engage with it and listen to it (2016). This is a clear indication of when the voice of the local populous, as indicated in Neoclassical Realism, has been able to influence and change the course of foreign investment, which were not benefitting them.

Projects such as the Myitsone dam also raised environment concerns, for instance the damage it would cause the Irrawaddy River, the area of land it would flood, the endemic flora and fauna that would be affected (Bowman, 2016; Fuller, 2011; Htoon, 2019; Inkey, 2017; Ives, 2017).

THE FUTURE OF CHINESE RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA

Futuristically speaking, China needs to be mindful that the people of South Asia are now more informed about their governments' behaviour as they have access to information, thus requiring a more conscientious approach of the public's well-being. This demonstrates that regardless of the bilateral state-to-state diplomatic relations between countries, the public will showcase their displeasure in the event the projects inconvenience them; thereby affecting the future of the joint collaborations initiated by China. This can be validated from a neoclassical realist perspective, by analysing the above cases.

Accordingly, it can be identified that state leaders who are involved in foreign policy-making as well as the domestic population are influenced by each other. In the instances mentioned, the state leaders are in a predicament as they have to change the course of foreign investment due to domestic opposition. There are many concerns that cause these oppositions, such as environmental concerns, transparency of the project, manipulation by opposition parties towards governments. Once again, both of these are reasons for ill-favouring of Chinese policies in South Asian countries, by especially the domestic constituencies of countries. Moreover, when China negotiates infrastructure projects in the future, it needs to be mindful as to whether the project would inconvenience the domestic populous by way of relocating their villages or whether the public well-being would be contested. Accordingly, the Chinese government and their investors need to be conscious that there is a difference in the mode of governance in their country and others, i.e. in communism and democracy. Therefore, how the public interacts will also differ and this would be a new experience for the Chinese, since projects and activities can be changed in democracies as there are elections in multi-party systems, leading to regime changes. When political parties are in the opposition, they criticise the government and the projects carried out by them. Further, the public would voice their concerns regarding such projects and ensure their terms and conditions are renegotiated or strive to halt them. Therefore, it is advisable for Beijing to exercise some caution on the methods of implementation as well as the projects themselves, such as in acquiring the relevant environment clearances.

When analysing China's current relations in the three case studies presented, it was identified that there are mixed perceptions towards Chinese investments as well as practices. However, a constant or a commonality in the three case studies deliberated above on Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar are that governments and domestic constituencies are not overly satisfied with the Chinese investments in their countries. This will have a significant effect on China's future interactions in the region as well as the projects implemented under the Belt and Road Initiative. Therefore, China must be mindful that these concerns could also affect the future of the BRI as domestic constituencies and national governments will be sceptic, if the projects under the BRI are not implemented effectively and the Chinese government does not justify how these projects would benefit the South Asian countries. Even though the Belt and Road Initiative is considered economic in nature, it will naturally have security implications due to the nature of the projects carried out and due to the projects themselves.

With these internal implications in mind, it will warrant China to ensure its investments are safe and secure from both insecurities within the countries they have invested in, as well as in the ocean space, on which their economy is heavily reliant on. Additionally, with the increasing securitised lens on the enclosed Indian Ocean space, it is likely that China will play a substantial role in providing security requirements to the Indian Ocean littorals it is closely working with. It has thus far

shown that it is a reliable net security provider, a role it will proudly continue to enact in the future.

As Chinese merchant vessels increase in number, the IOR is also set to witness an increase in Chinese Naval presence. The Chinese Navy will not only want to secure its own merchant vessels, but also that of the trade and energy that is being shipped to China. This will result in deeper cooperation with navies of the South Asian countries. As PLAN increases its naval footprint in the Indian Ocean, it will strive to ensure its naval relations too are positive and beneficial towards its activities in the region.

It is noteworthy that within a span of months in 2018, two of China's major infrastructure partners in the South Asian region – namely Maldives and Pakistan – changed their governments. In September 2018, the Maldives democratically elected a new president – Ibrahim Mohamed Solih – to serve for the next five years (Manning and Gopalaswamy, 2018; Rasheed and Afeef, 2018). This would be a huge turning point for relations between China and this archipelagic Indian Ocean state, as the incumbent president Abdulla Yameen had very strong bilateral relations with China, leading to the implementation of Chinese projects such as a friendship bridge – Sinamale Bridge, the expansion of the international airport as well as the leasing of the Feydhoo Finolhu island for tourism (Business Report, n.d.; Latheef, n.d.).

Pakistan appointed Imran Khan as their prime minister, who has pledged to review the projects currently undertaken by Chinese companies. The new government has pledged to be more transparent about projects such as CPEC as well as address concerns pertaining to the country's national interests. However, these shifts in politics would test Beijing in implementing its dictum of 'Peaceful Coexistence', whereby similar to Sri Lanka, it should make suitable arrangements for their government to work with the two newly appointed governments in South Asia.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, when analysing the South Asian states' external relations pertaining to China, it can be established that the domestic populous of countries like Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will attempt to be more vociferous regarding the investments coming into their countries. They will also scrutinise their foreign relations. Therefore, it is quintessential for China to be aware of intervening variables such as leader images and state-society relations as discussed in Neoclassical Realism when implementing is strategy in South Asia.

Further, as China maintains it is following a principle of peaceful coexistence, it needs to showcase how both parties would mutually benefit by implementing

certain projects. Moreover, it also needs to understand and acknowledge the hesitation and displeasure shown by certain South Asian countries. Going forward, China therefore, should calibrate its diplomacy to suit modern day requirements and also to not alienate other countries; it should compromise and treat others with equality and respect. Having understood the negative predicament, China should employ its core principle of peaceful coexistence to conduct its future diplomatic relations with the South Asian countries. China will thus be more cognisant of the concerns aired by the South Asian states, and aware that these concerns are legitimate and could be replicated elsewhere in the world. Thus, China should proceed to positively change the way it interacts with South Asia, by also taking into consideration levels of corruption, lack of modern technology and know-how in these countries. This understanding would also befit China in implementing various projects under the Belt and Road Initiative and also assist in its longevity and reliability.

It can be ascertained that China's perspectives are changing and also determining the manner in which extra-regional powers interact with the South Asian region. On one hand, this paves the way for a new manner via which international relations will be conducted in the region, while on the other, it showcases that China will thus be the determining factor in how the relations are carried out. This will, therefore, pose a more direct securitised lens on the Indian Ocean Region as well as on South Asia. As such, China needs to be sensible in implementing its Core Principles with immediate effect. China's positioning in the international arena in doing so, will have two possible features: firstly, that it creates a new model for how the world interacts with one another, and secondly, the dynamics of its relations with the South Asian region will change.

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ROLE OF THE SRI LANKAN MILITARY IN POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION

Wing Commander Nuwan Jayawickrama

ABSTRACT

The protracted conflict of nearly three decades in Sri Lanka came to an end by militarily defeating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009 and bringing unilateral victory to the Sri Lanka Military. The post conflict reconciliation since then has been in question affecting the national security of the country. This study attempts to define a role for the Sri Lankan military in this reconciliation process based on the first-hand information collected from the personnel who are employed in the Civil Security Department (CSD) Barathipuram Project (Farm), Visuvamadu, Mullaitivu using the Grounded Theory approach. It has been argued in this paper that the role of the Sri Lankan Military should be to effectively interact with people to identify and satisfy the aspirations of the communities who were affected by the conflict in order to build relationships and to stimulate co-existence and reconciliation in collaboration with the civil administrative system. The paper recommends facilitating the Sri Lanka military to perform their role effectively. In order to do that, the civilian administration and the military should promote and develop a civil-military doctrine to promote reconciliation in the post-conflict context. Further, a strategy must be formulated to identify and satisfy the aspirations of the conflicting communities giving prominence to aspects such as non-discrimination, sense of security and belonging. In formulating such strategies, all the stakeholders are to be consulted, the Action Plan for Reconciliation and Co-existence is to be developed, attention must be accorded to apprise the general public and stakeholders of the reconciliation process with special references to the success story in the Visuvamadu project. Finally this study opens a window for further research to identify the perception of the community with regard to reconciliation.

Keywords: Interaction, Non-discrimination, Reconciliation, Sri Lanka Military, Trust

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka declared an end to its protracted conflict by defeating the Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2009. The intangible damages of the conflict in terms of relationships, trust, mutual understanding, values, association, perceptions, attitudes, and mutual respect are far greater than the tangible damages to infrastructure, livelihood, and other socio-economic aspects. Though nearly a decade has elapsed since the military victory, the researcher who was serving in the area in 2017 could not witness a

considerable degree of interaction between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. The researcher had first-hand experience observing that the Tamil community still has an antipathy towards the military and the Sinhalese community. However, this antipathy could not be observed when they worked hand-in-hand with the military in disaster relief work in 2017 when the area was severely affected by the drought. Thus, these incidents indicate that such antipathy is contextual. When this was further examined, it was found that though there were many initiatives to re-establish the eroded relationship between the Tamil and Sinhalese communities in the name of reconciliation, invariably, none of them was found successful over the past decade affecting the national security.

A recent study titled 'Failure of reconciliation in Sri Lanka and risk of reproduction of war' reveals the lack of unanimity amongst the actors within the government regarding post-conflict reconciliation, confrontational agenda between the government, civil society organisations and international community, ambiguity maintained with regard to policies on reconciliation and peacebuilding, contradiction among the key policy makers in the reconciliation process, greater deal of ignorance among the general public were identified as the potential factors for failure of reconciliation during the period commencing from 2009 to 2015 (Silva, 2017).

In the meantime, the resolution adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission, promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka in October 2015 urges the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to implement their recommendations without further delay and have indicated their discontent on the progress made by the GoSL (UN, 2015). The resolution emphasises the importance of a comprehensive approach to promote healing and reconciliation. It encourages the GoSL to fulfil its commitments towards the reconciliation process (UN, 2015).

Sri Lanka Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) which was prepared by considering the Peacebuilding Context Assessment (PCA) reveals that 32% of the population still do not understand the meaning of reconciliation (UN, 2016). It further mentions that ethnic minorities have the lowest level of access to basic services including health and education as well as access to productive assets such as lands. According to the Socio-Economic Data published by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, the Northern and Eastern provinces record the lowest per month household income of Rs. 34,286 and Rs. 30,676 respectively, in comparison with the all-island figure which is Rs. 45,878. The same data indicates the two conflict affected provinces are low in housing conditions, sanitation and availability of household equipment and access to electricity (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2016).

At present, a National Policy on Reconciliation and Coexistence has also been formulated based on the PPP by the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation

(ONUR) (ONUR, 2017). However, the National Action Plan on Reconciliation and Coexistence is yet to be developed which is the first and foremost implementation strategy in the said policy. Having understood the ground reality, the requirement of establishing proper infrastructure in the conflict affected areas seems to have neither been duly attained amid exchange of negative points of view at all levels of the political hierarchy. The point that needs to be stressed here is that the PCA of 2016 reveals that the radicalised frustration with state institutions has led to the conflict (UN, 2016). Further, it was revealed that the military has the necessary capacity to establish essential infrastructure and resources at their immediate disposal. As such, the role of the military in post-conflict reconciliation seems to have another dimension in the present-day context.

Amongst the many studies on post-conflict reconciliation, except for a few, none of them have discussed the role of the military in the post-conflict reconciliation process. Even, the very few studies that discuss the role of military neither discuss at length the specific roles the military can play nor about a strategy that could utilise the capacities of the military in these reconciliation efforts.

The Sri Lankan military consists of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA), Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) and Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF). A defined role of the tri-forces, except for their classical role with regard to the post-conflict reconciliation, could not be found, though they have been engaged in community work in the conflict-torn areas (Sri Lanka Army, 2018, Sri Lanka Navy, 2018). However, SLAF's inaugural Basic Doctrine speaks about Aid to Civil Power, Humanitarian Assistance, Economic stabilization and Infrastructure Development, and Support to the Government's Rehabilitation Mechanism. Yet the doctrine is to explore the implementation strategy (Sri Lanka Air Force, 2018). The role of paramilitary forces such as Special Task Force of Sri Lanka Police has also not been prominent in the reconciliation context (Sri Lanka Police, 2018). Civil Security Department of Sri Lanka (CSD) which is another entity that falls under the paramilitary category has been engaged in several post-humanitarian operations and activities (Civil Security Department of Sri Lanka, 2018).

THE PROBLEM

The military being a vital instrument of national power which safeguards the interest of the nation has greater capacity and responsibility to help the local community in any kind of national calamity. The exclusive capacity of the military with its large human resource can always come to the help of civilian administration in national calamities. However, neither the capacity nor the role of the Sri Lankan military and the paramilitary forces have been considered or defined respectively in the PPP (UN, 2016) and in the National Policy with regard to the post-conflict reconciliation (ONUR, 2017).

Thus, it is understood that the country has paid minimal attention to employ the strength of the military to promote reconciliation since the conclusion of the conflict with the LTTE in 2009. More importantly, a recent study reveals that the stakeholders of the reconciliation process in post-conflict Sri Lanka seem to have failed in delivering what is expected from them during the last eight to nine years (Silva, 2017).

Thus, the problem experienced here is that the potential of the Sri Lankan military has not been made use of fully in the process of reconciliation in the present-day context where all other stakeholders also could not do much in promoting reconciliation in the country.

IMPERATIVES FOR POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION

Conflicts arise due to incompatibilities and differences which affect the relationships among communities (Uyangoda, 2005). Building of trust between antagonised groups in a conflict is of paramount importance to breed the required cooperation among these groups. Then trust and cooperation will re-establish the eroded relationships over a long period of conflict which is vital for meaningful coexistence and reconciliation (Bloomfield et al, 2003). Further, the literature presents that socio-economic development in conflict-torn areas is another vital aspect for reconciliation (UN, 2016). In the present-day context, GoSL has neither been able to foster cooperation and build trust and confidence among the stakeholders involved in the present reconciliation process nor between the parties to the conflict. This status, in turn, will not be conducive to promote mutual trust, cooperation and confidence among the affected communities by the conflict (Silva, 2017).

Conflict reconciliation theories emphasise that it is essential to have change of attitudes and behaviours into meaningful relationships between conflicting parties. Well-defined mechanisms and processes are also mandatory to heal broken relationships (International IDEA, 2006). Further, it is evident that the dynamics of a conflict which may vary from one conflict to another would demand a unique model for reconciliation suitable for each conflict situation. More importantly, it is all about grassroots activity rather than a strategic intervention (Bloomfield et al, 2003). These theories are applicable to Sri Lanka too. Thus, identification of realistic aspirations of the people who suffered from the conflict is necessary to formulate plans to promote reconciliation.

Further, it is evident that scholars and organisations are more concerned with the end results that have to be achieved in order to initiate the reconciliation process. The absence of fear is found to be vital in order to start the process of reconciliation (Bloomfield et al, 2003). However, the military's role in this context seems inadequately addressed and not given adequate consideration. Moreover, the

national policy highlights the requirement of leadership, efficiency and effectiveness in implementing the national policy on reconciliation and coexistence (ONUR, 2017).

MILITARY AND POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION

In this context, it is important to look at the existing literature on the role of military in reconciliation. Mosser (2007) explains the role of the military in reconciliation with a model known as 'AR2 Process'. The role of the military has been broadened with forcing function while emphasising the requirement of a secure environment at the top-most place. However, the specific roles, other than the military's classic role to provide security, have not been discussed in the study (Mosser, 2007).

The United States Joint Forces Stability Doctrine explains security, economic development, infrastructure development, governance, and rule of law as the substantive functionalities and competencies of the state (U.S. Department of Defense, 2016). Although, the US Stability Doctrine of 2015 echoes the military role in length, a specified role in the reconciliation neither has been encouraged nor promoted.

Another study emphasises the rationality of the Sri Lankan identity, national security, the national reconciliation through civil-military knowledge sharing (Satheesmohan, 2015). Hence, the potential role that can be played by the military with its civil counterparts may be very costly to be ignored in the national security parlance.

Another model, 'I-3 Sri Lanka', explains the role of the military in reconciliation. The author explains how the role of the military in reconciliation diminishes whilst the role of the other stakeholders of the reconciliation increases when the social impact moves from fear to prosperity (Goonetilleke, 2013). The said study explains the degree of importance of the military's role in the reconciliation effort. But, in comparison to Silva's (2017) findings, the role of the other stakeholders in the present-day context has been in question. On the other hand, the specific role other than its classical role of the military has not been specifically elaborated in the model and how military can ensure social well-being incorporation with other stakeholders has also not been addressed in the study.

In essence, as per the available literature the trust building has been identified as the core requirement of reconciliation (Uyangoda, 2005). The security and social economic development are of paramount importance to stimulate trust building (Bloomfield et al, 2003). On the other hand, the role played by the leadership to bring all the stakeholders together to run the reconciliation process effectively is pivotal (ONUR, 2017). These aspects are in question in Silva's study (2017) at a

juncture where the role of Sri Lanka's military in the process of reconciliation has not been defined despite its greater capacity.

RECONCILIATION IN BARATHIPURAM PROJECT

The *Lankadeepa* on 25 March 2015 published an article titled *'Vanniye govibim aswaddana hitapu koti samajikayo'* (Ex-LTTE combatants engaged in farming in Vanni). The article explained how the CSD operates a farm in Visuvamadu in Mullaitivu District of the Northern Province with a diverse group of people employed under the command of a Colonel of the SLA (Samarakoon, 2018). This farm is named as Barathipuram project. In this project, the majority consisted of ex-LTTE cadres, Tamil non-combatants belonging to both genders and most of the persons from the CSD were Sinhalese who were fluent in Tamil. The article presents views of the employees in the project and elaborates how hardcore ex-LTTE combatants work in coordination for a common objective in the project leaving their differences aside. Further, it explains the bond and trust that exists between those employees (subordinates) and the Commanding Officer (CO) of the Camp who runs the project, Colonel WW Rathnapriya Bandu. More importantly, the article emphasises that the real reconciliation is displayed in the project itself (Samarakoon, 2018).

With this backdrop, the researcher visited the project in person and collected data from two focus groups working in the project. This particular project consists of 750 personnel out of which several farming teams have been formed with a leader for each team. The teams have been empowered to decide on the crops to cultivate according to the season. The team leadership is seasonally changed to give opportunity for all the members to lead the teams.

The data collected from the two focus group discussions were coded under qualitative data analysis as explained by Bryman (2012). The respondents explained the reasons behind a healthy environment as described in the above-mentioned article during the interviews. Subsequently, data was collected from Rathanapriya Bandu, the CO of the camp on the evolution of the project.

IDENTIFYING AND SATISFYING THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE

On completion of data analysis, it was found that the aspirations of the communities affected by the conflict are represented in three broad categories. Those are: upholding non-discrimination, nurturing sense of security, and nurturing a sense of belonging.

UPHOLDING NON-DISCRIMINATION

The recruitment of ex-LTTE personnel who were Wounded-In-Action (WIA) to the project irrespective of their impairments was repeatedly emphasised by both focus groups. Equal treatments for all and special care for those who are in desperate need of such care were also prominent concepts that emerged during the data collection. Common rules and regulations with regard to the functions of the project and application of a common code of conduct for all the Supervisors, Team Leaders of the project and other members of those teams, was also another concept. Hence, it was found that none of the personnel from the time of recruitment to the present day at the Barathipuram project has been ill-treated or deprived of their rights though they had many differences in terms of culture, beliefs and values. Further, ONUR has identified equality as the foremost actionable policy principle of the National Policy on Reconciliation and Co-existence (ONUR, 2017). Yusuf in his online article to Sunday Times on 1 July 2018 argues as to how people could be won when they treated with dignity. Dignity which means self-respect is vital for equality (Yusuf, 2018).

NURTURING SENSE OF SECURITY

The indicators in relation to an absence of violence and fear, basic needs such as water, shelter, employment, physical security, protection and happiness could be identified during the coding of data from two focus groups. In the process of reconciliation when fear no longer rules, a sense of confidence and trust breeds (Bloomfield et al, 2003). The social-economic development provides a sense of economic security (UN, 2016 and Marapana, 2018). These have no exception to the personnel at Barathipuram projects or to any other in the affected communities. Similarly, this can be attributed to the Maslow's Theory of Motivation where he explains five levels of needs of a human being in order for him to be motivated (Maslow, 1943). The job and shelter have satisfied the psychological needs of the focused group and absence of violence, absence of fear and job security have satisfied the Safety Needs of the local community discussed in the Hierarchy of Needs.

NURTURING SENSE OF BELONGING

The data revealed that the farming teams were given the liberty to decide what to cultivate in the project as the employees have a sound understanding on local farming. The team members effectively participated in problem solving and decision making and this has made them build affection towards the place of work, team, superiors, and also to the system. Recognition of the talents and strengths was another positive aspect displayed in the project as per the data collected. On

the other hand, data indicated the concept of unity. Maslow (1954) identifies and ranks the sense of belonging as the third need in his Hierarchy of Needs of a human being. As cited in Hagerty et al (1992) Anant explains that the sense of belonging is very important as 'sense of personal involvement in a social system so that persons feel themselves to be an indispensable and integral part of the system'. Humber and Kelly (2004) argue that a culture of respect for human rights and human difference is developed creating a context where each citizen becomes an active participant in society and feels a sense of belonging which is one of the interrelated strands of the process of reconciliation. A study on Sense of Belonging (Hagerty *et al*, 1992) explains the relationship among sense of belonging, build inter-group trust and reciprocity social support and how important it is   for mental and physical health. Sense of Belonging as highlighted in these concepts is easily identifiable in the Barathipuram project. Thus, it is evident that the identification of aspirations of the communities who were affected by the conflict needs to focus on the above three broad aspects in the Sri Lankan context.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The data presented two main categories which are paramount for 'Building Relationships'. Those are 'Trust' and 'Cooperation'. The data collected from the CO of the camp specifically indicate that the decision to remove weapons from sentries or 'zero weapon concept' in the camp risking the security of himself was an attempt to build trust between the employees and the CO and his team. Further, humane treatment, risk taking nature to go beyond the specified regulations in the enlistment criteria, found to be the grounds to foster trust between the CO and the subordinates. Thus, the 'Trust' emerged as a category. Some scholars have identified that reconciliation is the process of trust building (Bloomfield et al, 2003) whilst some argue that trust is a core prerequisite for reconciliation (Wanasinghe, 2012). In any way, 'Trust' is a vital component in building relationships between antagonists. It was found that 'trust' is a vital aspect that led to peaceful coexistence in the project. Yusuf in his article titled 'Colonel Ratnapriya Bandu and the Lessons of Reconciliation' on 1 July 2018 argues that the critical lesson learnt from a reconciliation perspective is that, he has clearly won the trust of those whom he worked with. The gestures of affection were clearly spontaneous and heartfelt. It indicated that whatever perception there was of the Army in the North, those perceptions could be changed and the people have been won over a period of time, by treating them well and with dignity. Further, the comments received to the article titled Rehabilitated LTTE cadres in tearful send off for departing Commander' dated 11 June 2018, show how impressive the work of the Colonel was, in terms of winning the trust of the people whom he has worked with (Daily Mirror, 2018).

A society is unlikely to develop inter-relationships if at least minimum degree of cooperation is not maintained (Bloomfield et al, 2003). In this study, it was pointed

out that the military can interact with the community due to its greater capacity and they are in the process of releasing the lands to their original owners which were under the military control. These are the two prominent concepts under the category of 'Cooperation'. It was found that the cooperation between the CO and the subordinates of the project were at a higher degree in the areas of recruiting, problem solving and decision making. Mr. M.Y.S. Deshapriya, Present Secretary to the Ministry of National Coexistence Dialogue and Official Languages, during the interview highlighted that the cooperation of the military towards the community work in the North, attracted the people towards the military as they were very effective. Similarly, the former Army Commander General Mahesh Senanayake during an interview on 9 October 2018 emphasised that 90 percent of land has been released to the owners and apart from that, they are conducting School Cadetting programme in the schools in the North. These are identified as the activities that reflect the cooperation and trust building. Thus, it is found that the emerged category of cooperation is an essential ingredient in building relationships. Therefore, it is realised that the trust and cooperation which are resultant of identification and satisfying the aspirations of the communities affected by the conflict, will build relationships between conflicting communities in the process of reconciliation.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS PROMOTES COEXISTENCE

Many of the respondents explained their view with regard to the past violence inflicted on the Tamil community and were of the view that remembering or digging up the bitter past would be harmful for the present improved relationship instilled in the project. Further, they had highlighted that the antagonists must live in harmony to coexist. Hence, concepts such as forgetting the past, acknowledgement of misunderstanding and mistrust, were given prominence when coding the data and the category emerged was identified as 'Coexistence'.

The Oxford dictionary defines 'co-existence' as "state or condition of living in harmony despite different ideologies and interests". Further, co-existence has been explained as relationships between persons or groups in which none of the parties is trying to destroy the other (Kriesburg, 1988). Coexistence is observed in terms of living in harmony, sharing their happiness and sorrow and forgetting the past in the CSD Barathipuram project. Hence, it is evident that building relationships paves the path to co-existence.

INTERACTION (CIVIL-MILITARY)

The importance of the involvement of civilian-led administrative system in the process of reconciliation was emphasised by all the participants. This aspect is discussed under the following broad categories namely leadership, discipline, and language

LEADERSHIP

The participants repeatedly highlighted the participatory decision-making process and empowerment, friendly and flexible working environment with no room for discrimination, and the absence of workplace harassment in the project. The interest of the CO to learn about their culture, beliefs, food habits and empathy were specific qualities of a leader that surfaced from the data. According to the data collected, it was revealed that the CO, from the very beginning has paid respect and acknowledged the values, customs and traditions of the local community. He had even gone to the extent of changing his dress code and has taken interest in studying the preferences of the local community. He always appeared in civilian dress and not in his uniform. The use of talents of his subordinates, risk taken to enlist WIA persons, managing the diverse groups who have undergone enormous violence, fostering team work, mutual respect, honesty and delegation of authority to empower employees are a few of the other concepts that emerged from the data and these have generated the category of 'Leadership'. It was found that the leadership of the CO of the Visuvamadu project has been the driving force from the outset in 2012 to date. The respect, affection and the loyalty to the leadership have never been in question. The data further revealed that the leadership also possesses qualities like empathy, humaneness, respect to the culture of the Tamil community and commitment. The empowerment of subordinates to stimulate teamwork and then to build cohesive teams to take up challenges with regard to farming were promoted owing to the sound leadership in the project. Hence, it was found that the leadership plays a major role in the process of reconciliation in the practical sense.

DISCIPLINE

Former Army Commander, General Daya Ratnayake, was of the view that discipline deteriorates when a country is devastated, but the military remains as a disciplined and well-organised entity which is committed to its cause (Interview on 29.08.2019). He further explained that the Sri Lankan forces are people-centric unlike the military forces in some other countries who live in military containments. Their discipline and commitment are the key strengths to engage in these tasks and to build the trust among the communities affected due to conflict. Those concepts generated the category of 'Discipline'. More importantly, the maintenance of discipline in the project was another vital attribute to create the present healthy environment at the place of work (project).

LANGUAGE

The data also highlighted that language is of paramount importance for communication and it was duly acknowledged and highlighted by each participant

during the interviews. In order to identify the realistic aspirations of the people, it was evident that the military has the capacity in terms of effective interaction owing to its strengths. The former Army Commander revealed during the said interview that 38 percent of the members of the SLA are fluent in Tamil and they have already started recruiting Tamil youths to the SLA. It is evident that the military should carry out these roles in collaboration with the civilian administrative system which is a vital aspect in a democracy.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the above findings, the researcher developed a conceptual model to determine a particular role for the Sri Lankan Military in post-conflict reconciliation. The framework is given below:

Figure 1: Framework Derived from Data Analysis
Source: Author (2018)

ROLE OF THE SRI LANKAN MILITARY IN POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION

Therefore, the role of the Sri Lankan military in the post-conflict reconciliation could be defined as an effort to effectively interact with people to identify and satisfy the aspirations of the communities who were affected by the conflict in order to build relationships and to stimulate co-existence and reconciliation in collaboration with the civil administrative system.

All the scholars and experts consulted for data collection agreed upon on a common stand, i.e. the military is to perform all these tasks in collaboration with the civilian administrative system. This is mainly due to Sri Lanka being a democratic state and reconciliation being a civilian function. This will also eliminate the lack of coordination in terms of civil-military knowledge sharing which has been identified as a reason for failure for national reconciliation (Satheesmohan, 2014).

Further, it was found that the cross-sectoral principles of the National Policy on Reconciliation and Coexistence could be applied to all stakeholders who are designing and implementing reconciliation and coexistence programmes and activities. The disciplined, committed and dedicated leadership with nonviolent communication skills is also paramount to this aspect as argued by Dr. Joe Williams, the present Director General of the Peace Council.

On the other hand, some specific constraints which might hamper the military role in post-conflict reconciliation were identified such as the unavailability of an indigenous action plan for reconciliation and the fear of the victor. Some of the respondents in the focused group expressed their fear for the military uniform and perceptions of Tamil politicians towards the military. Further, unemployment in the area has been a matter of great concern as these unemployed ex-cadres could be manipulated by extremists.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study recommends that the potential role of the Sri Lankan Military in post conflict reconciliation should be an effort to identify and satisfy the aspirations of the communities who were affected by the conflict in order to build relationships and to stimulate co-existence and reconciliation in collaboration with the civil administrative system.

In order to play an effective role and to overcome the existing constraints, the following recommendations are made. First, the civilian administration and the military should promote a greater understanding among policy makers on reconciliation and develop a civil-military doctrine to promote reconciliation in the post-conflict context. Second, a strategy must be formulated to identify and satisfy the aspirations of the conflicting communities giving prominence to aspects such as non-discrimination, sense of security and belonging. Third, in formulating such strategies, all the stakeholders should be consulted, and the Action Plan for Reconciliation and Co-existence be developed accordingly.

Attention must be paid to apprise the general public and stakeholders of the reconciliation process of the success story in the Visuvamadu farm (Barathipuram project) through media. As far as future research is concerned, it would be useful to conduct further research to identify the perceptions of other communities not covered by this research with regard to military involvement in the process of reconciliation. It is evident that genuine efforts to identify and satisfy the aspirations of the people who were affected in the conflict through a Civil-Military collaboration will necessarily drive the reconciliation process forward.

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LIFE CYCLE OF TERRORISM: CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

Muhammad Abbas Hassan and Asad Ullah Khan

ABSTRACT

The government performance in the post 2014 scenario shows its commitment to fight against terrorism and violent extremism in Pakistan. Pakistan has been affected by terrorism and extremism for over three decades but the situation got worse after Pakistan joined the US-led war against terrorism. The transformation of Pakistani society from peaceful to violent is heavily influenced due to external support and activities in Afghanistan. This paper analyses Pakistan's efforts in addressing terrorism and radicalisation as most of the western experts are of the view that Pakistan is reluctant to eliminate this menace from its soil. There is also a need of a litmus test for Pakistan's efforts in terms of its short-term and long-term effectiveness. The analysis of various steps taken in the form of Kinetic operations and policy implementation is necessary to conclude the effectiveness of those steps taken in the recent past. The launch of the National Action Plan in 2014 resulted in cutting the life line of the terrorism cycle in Pakistan. This decline of violence needs to be sustained by putting the non-military issues on the front page along with traditional security issues and due attention is needed to be given to home-grown problems of Pakistan. If those issues are not discussed, the terrorism life cycle is likely to start all over again.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Jihad, Pakistan, Social Construction, Terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan which literally means the land of pure was formed to ensure peace and prosperity in the region and to avoid conflict among the two nations i.e. Hindus and Muslims (Majid, 2014). Unfortunately, this has not been the case for Pakistan. Once a peaceful society, where acts of violence were condemned and security was provided to minorities, transformed into a breeding ground of terror.

At its inception, the Pakistani society had inherited a set of its own problems which were mostly non-traditional in nature and the threat to life was not that prominent (Afzal, 2012). Unfortunately, this changed after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the whole country was put into a tailspin. The Jihad embraced by the then president Zia ul Haq to validate his rule over Pakistan as a dictator not only put the country off track but also resulted in the import of terror (Girardet, 2012). Freedom fighters made Pakistani tribal areas their base of operations. The refusal of these

terrorists who were earlier branded as freedom fighters or jihadi's to return after the Soviet pull-out is one of the causes that led to terrorism in Pakistan (Cohen, 2003).

Once the Soviet jihad was over, Pakistan was put under the Symington sanction and this resulted in an enormous burden on the feeble economy. Moreover, the political turmoil during the 90's ensured that these freedom fighters remained unchecked and as a result they established their networks throughout the country. Furthermore, making use of the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the terrorists also made inroads into Afghanistan and as a result Taliban were able to form a government in Kabul.

With the government's inability to keep a strong check on its tribal areas and with further sanctions imposed on Pakistan after the nuclear testing of 1998, it was evident that these terrorists were a ticking bomb and waiting for a watershed event. This came in the form of 9/11 when the twin towers in New York were hit by passenger planes in broad daylight (Tom, 2003). The Americans blamed Al Qaeda, a transnational terrorist organisation based in Afghanistan, for this act of terror. Al Qaeda instead of denying this allegation never refuted. As a result, a new war was imposed on Afghanistan and in collateral; Pakistan which was relevantly peaceful plunged into terrorism.

This paper analyses the life cycle of terrorism in Pakistan in light of the post-9/11 events and how the Pakistani efforts have resulted in curbing this menace through concrete and sustainable actions. To do this it is also important to shed some light on the pre-9/11 scenario of the country and how it contributed to the rise of terrorism in Pakistan.

PRE-9/11 PAKISTAN

If one word can define the Pakistani society before 9/11 it would be "denial" (Dinah, 2007). Religious extremists had infiltrated the masses and were running around the country as free birds. The hate speech generated by such elements was not only leading to sectarian divide but was also promoting violence in the back of the minds of many who were exposed to their activities. This was further backed by an anti-West agenda where the West was portrayed as a villain and the post-nuclear testing sanctions further promoted this sentiment (Haider, 2015). It should also be noted here that Mian Nawaz Sharif who was leading a right wing party, the Pakistan Muslim League and was the leader of the house twice in the 90s, maintained cordial ties with the Saudi regime. The close relations ensured that no check and balance is kept on the funding of madrassas and mosques. At the same time, a number of Shia organisations were emerging and it is believed that this was done through the financing by Iran (ASMA 2017). The Iran-Saudi proxy war was at its peak during the 90s in Pakistan. As a result, a whole generation grew up with zero-tolerance against the opposite sect or anyone who was not following their 'brand' of Islam.

Meanwhile, as the minds of the innocent were being exposed during 1990's to violence in a very systematic manner, the frequency of terrorist incidents was very low (Haider, 2015). Due to this there was no consensus on terrorism and the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 even included crimes such as kidnapping for ransom, hostage-taking or hijacking as terrorism (ATA, 1997). Since there were no organised frequent terrorist incidents inside Pakistan, the state lacked the infrastructure and legislative measures to carry out operations against these outfits. An extra reason for not taking any action was the use of religion by the terrorists and extremists. This allowed extremists to gather public support and use it against the government if any action was planned to be taken against them.

Therefore, it is evident that Pakistan was peaceful on the outside, but there was a lot going on in the background that the state was willing to deny and the public was willing to overlook (Haider, 2015).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AGAINST TERRORISM

The problem that Pakistan was facing in defeating terrorism was that it failed to gather public support against the terrorists. A number of educated people were Taliban sympathisers and thought that the state should not take action against its own people. The image of the armed forces was declining at a steady rate and as a result a number of incidents occurred where a uniformed officer was attacked or harassed by the public (NACTA Report).

The state machinery badly needed a push and unfortunately this came through a set of two different events that took place with a gap of six years i.e. 2009 and Army Public School attack in 2014. The first one which was later proved to be a fake video was of a girl being whipped by Taliban in Swat. The video was released at a time when Pakistan Army under the democratic rule was finding it hard to develop a national consensus against the Taliban rule in Swat (Hasnaat, 2016).

The masses believed that the Pakistan Army was not doing the right thing and were criticising the forces across all forums. In this scenario a video came out and spread like wild fire. It showed the barbaric nature of the Taliban and it was promoted that this would be the fate of all girls across the country if the evil is not nipped in the bud. As a result, the whole country rallied with the forces and Pakistan Army carried out one of the most successful counter insurgency operations in the history of the region. Within a few weeks, the area was cleared with the top leadership escaping to Afghanistan. However, after seven years of the operation, it was revealed that the video that brought hue and cry across the globe was fake (Malik, 2016).

The second incident, the 16th December Army Public School attack in 2014, is one of the most brutal incidents in Pakistan. It was ironically the same day when Pakistan lost its eastern part in 1971 (Karock, 2015). During the December 2014

attack, a group of terrorists managed to infiltrate the school operated by the Pakistan Army and killed over 140 school children indiscriminately. They also killed a few of the staff members. This sad day is also known as a watershed event in Pakistan's fight against terrorism.

Within days of this horrific incident and while the country was in mourning, the Pakistan Army in consultation with the government accelerated its fight against the terrorists. Eradicating these terrorists became a national narrative and Operation Zarb-e-Azab which was not gaining momentum for a few months got the support it needed and the results were phenomenal.

It is evident that it is the social construction and national narratives that bring armies close to victory. In addition to this, in Pakistan's scenario for Swat operation the social construction was engineered but in the second case, it was the move by terrorists that brought the country closer and united against terror.

POST 9/11

The September 11, 2001, was a phenomenon that changed the security landscape of the globe. The then president of the US said "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them" (Bush, 2001). By saying this it was clear that he was referring to Taliban. The Western world especially the NATO states reacted to these terrorist attacks and condemned it and the European countries invoked article 5 of NATO Charter. Being a victim of terrorism, the Western world offered its support to the US to curb this menace of terrorism. The US claimed having credible information of the involvement of Al-Qaeda and its associates in the massive terror attack on its soil. Pakistan joined the US-led war on terror as many of the Muslim countries joined the US in war on terror. Pakistan not only joined but also offered logistical and moral support to the coalition forces. The Afghan war started with the intense initial bombing by the Americans across the country. Primarily based on ground intelligence, the anticipated results of this offensive were not fruitful in the beginning. As a result, Americans decided to use air strength as a core power in this war (Rogers, 2004).

Pakistan has been caught in the net of terrorism, extremism, sectarianism and militancy due to increased global terrorism and the armed conflict in Afghanistan. It has disturbed the peace, caused fear and unrest in the country. Pakistan has been under severe traditional and non-traditional security threats and this has adversely affected the internal security fabric of Pakistan in the domain of economic, political, ideological and environmental aspects. Terrorist groups kept expanding their networks by forming alliances, attracting people on the basis of religion and sectarian divide. FATA, KPK (Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan were the major targets because they are

in close proximity of Afghanistan. More than 70,000 Pakistanis have sacrificed their lives due to these violent terrorist attacks, including civil, military and LEAs (Law Enforcing Agencies) personnel (Hanif, 2018). Post- 9/11, Pakistan has faced increase in terrorism. Al Qaeda and TTP (Tahrik e Taliban Pakistan) was a great threat to internal security and later on DAESH was also added to the list. Pakistan has lost $130 billion during its war against terror (Khan, 2017). Terrorism in Pakistan can be observed in four manifestations: a) Terrorism in the name of religion: here religion is manipulated for personal interests. These terrorists impose their perceived interpretation of the religion on the masses. b) Sectarian Terrorism: Religious groups are divided into different sects. These sectarian terrorists spread hate and violence against the other sects by targeting popular personalities, attacks on worship places and on festivals. For example, Shia-Sunni conflicts c) Ethno-political terrorism: When the ethnic identity and politics merge together and violence is used to present their demands, it leads to terrorism. Karachi has been a target of this kind of terrorism. d) Sub-national terrorism: it is the subdivision of a nation and demand of a separate homeland within the state leading to sub-national terrorism. The example of Baluchistan perfectly fits here.

According to National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) during the era of 2004 to 2010, Pakistan observed rise in terrorist attacks. It was the time when the 2008 Swat operation commenced and Pakistan's government decided to eliminate this menace of terrorism with kinetic operations. In the first phase, Swat operation was conducted successfully and terrorists ran away to other areas like North and South Waziristan. In the second phase, the Military operations started in North and South Waziristan which happened to be cutting the lifeline of terrorists in Pakistan. During these operations the number of attacks was high as it was to some extent a blow-back for terrorists as they were getting weak. This situation can be summarised in a graph as shown below:
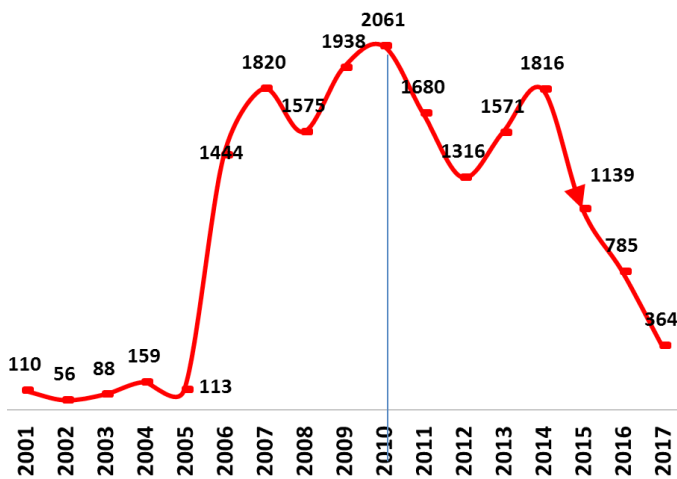

Figure 1: The Number of Terrorist Attacks from 2001 to 2017
Source: National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Pakistan

However, Pakistan realised that the kinetic operations across the country were not the only solution to break the life cycle of terrorism in the country. Extremism and terrorism cannot be differentiated clearly in the context of Pakistan as for Pakistani society both terms are overlapping. Extremism is the war of ideas, mind-set and attitude of the person who always thinks in a programmed direction with an absolute belief that whatever he/she is thinking is the religiously right and correct. Lack of accountability, economic instability, lack of opportunities and justice lead to extremism. Pakistan also has a threat of cybercrime, hate speech, violent videos and extremist narratives utilized to spread extremism through social media. Organised crime is another menace that includes drug dealing, smuggling and human trafficking. The revenue generated from these crimes is then used to fund terrorist activities.

Already existing security apparatus did not have the potential to curb the illness of terrorism and extremism, so there was a dire need to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the security apparatus. In order to combat these threats, the first ever National Internal Security Policy was adopted in 2014 along with National Action Plan (NAP), which was adopted in December 2014. The policy aims at addressing the issues related to internal security, creating a secure environment where the fundamental rights of the citizens are protected. It is based upon mutual inclusiveness to maintain social harmony. Its major objectives are security of the borders, getting international support to eradicate terrorism and extremism, peaceful resolution of the conflicts while keeping rule of law in view, capacity building of the Police Department and civil armed forces. There are three key goals of National Internal Security Policy (NISP): a) Dialogue with the stakeholders. b) Isolation of the terrorists from their support systems. c) Enhancing deterrence and capacity of the security apparatus (NISP Policy Document 2014).

After the successful implementation of the NISP 2014-2018, the number of terrorist attacks and activities decreased drastically (Mubashra, 2018). Even after the successful implementation of the first policy, there was a dire need to do more on this front. Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants repositioned in Afghanistan and DAESH is establishing its paths around the border of Pakistan (Manenti, 2018). They have the potential to step into different parts of the country. Pakistan has taken steps for the prevention of DAESH from spreading its terror, violence and extremist ideologies in the form of National Action Plan. The majority of Pakistan's population consists of youth, their ideology and narratives are targeted by the extremists, educational campuses have been under terrorist attacks and places of worship of minorities were also targeted in order to make the country weak. There is also a threat of cyber-attacks, since the terrorists use social media for propaganda, hate speech, violent videos spread psychological trauma and fear in the country (Theohary, 2011).

Keeping in view of the previous policy and the lessons learnt from it, the second phase of the National Internal Security Policy 2018-2023 is adopted. Its vision

is a peaceful and democratic society that has mutual inclusiveness, political and economic stability. National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2018-2023 was formed on the basis of Islamic teachings, Quaid-e-Azam's policy statements, 1973 Constitution of Pakistan and Pakistan Vision 2025. Islam promotes tolerance, diversity, pluralism and peaceful coexistence while Quaid-e-Azam also promoted religious and cultural diversity. Constitution of Pakistan promotes social justice, protection of minorities and local governments. It focuses on promotion of rule of law, maintenance of social justice and acceptance for diversity. It has three key domains: a) Administrative Domain: the major focus of this domain is the capacity building of civil, military and LEAs personnel in order to tackle the non-traditional threats. b) Ideational Domain: the major focus of this domain is the national narrative since the core of any terrorist movement is their (narrative). Having a national narrative is very necessary, national narrative by NACTA aims at bringing national cohesion. c) Socio-economic Domain: focuses on the trust between the state and society, push and pull factor compels the people. Push is the lack of fundamental rights, while the pull is the financial funding from the terrorist or extremist groups that attract people to join them.

The National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014-2018 aims at reconstructing all the facilities that were harmed by the terrorist attacks. These included infrastructure development since many educational campuses, hospitals, communication networks were targeted, so their reconstruction was necessary. The energy infrastructure was also hit by the militants to halt the economic progress across the country. It is also aimed at the rehabilitation of the victims of terrorist activities. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were formulated for the rehabilitation process. Reintegration was another major component of NISP 2014-2018 as it is aimed to bring about social uplifting across the country by providing the citizens with loans, jobs and education. Mainstreaming of madrassas is another aim of this policy because some of the madrassas were involved in extremist and terrorist activities. Madrassas are an important component of the Pakistani society because they provide education, food and shelter to a lot of children who are underprivileged. It is necessary to merge them with the educational system of Pakistan by providing them with financial help, supporting their administrations, forming and regulating their academia.

The National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2018-2023 follows the 6R approach to accomplish the goals and objectives: a) Reorient: its objective is to maintain rule of law and its key areas are criminal justice reforms, judicial reforms, prison reforms, cyber security and choking financial support of extremists and terrorists. b) Reimagine: its objective is a shared vision, Pakistanis reimagining their society as a peaceful, democratic, harmonious and tolerant society so they all have a shared vision and move in the same direction. c) Reconciliation: its main objective is social justice; it aims at the reconciliation with the targeted areas that include FATA, KPK and Baluchistan etc. d) Redistribute: its objective is also social justice and protection for the marginalised groups including youth, women, children and the minorities

through redistributive measures. e) Regional approach: it aims at political stability and maintain regional peace along with neighbouring countries. f) Recognise: it aims at promotion of research in different fields of social sciences so that better methodologies and strategies could be adopted (NISP Policy document, 2018).

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Pakistan was pushed into the dungeons of terrorism, sectarian violence and extremism during the Afghan Soviet War. A major terrorist attack in Peshawar on Army Public School in December 2014 provoked the policy makers to draft a comprehensive plan of action to address the root causes and eliminate them. Joint efforts were made by the civil, judicial and military institutions and National Action Plan was formulated with twenty points of agenda. In 2008, a moratorium on capital punishment was promulgated by the government that served a defensive mechanism for the militants, terrorists, armed groups and criminals from being executed and thousands of innocent people were slaughtered by their hands. In March 2015, by the act of parliament moratorium was partially lifted and approximately 485 terrorists were executed since 2014.

National Action Plan is devised to target the society in such a way that menace of extremism and terrorism can be eliminated effectively. There are a total of twenty points in the National Action Plan, and if the government implements it in a serious manner, it can work effectively to root out this menace. These steps includes: 1. Death Sentence (Convicted Terrorists); 2. Army's Special Trial Courts; 3. Ban on operation of militant outfits / gangs; 4. Strengthening of NACTA; 5. Action against Literature / Newspapers promoting hatred, sectarianism and extremism; 6. Dismantling Communication Network of Terrorists; 7. Choking financing for terrorists and terrorist organisations; 8. Ensuring against re-emergence of Proscribed Organizations; 9. Effective steps against religious persecution; 10. Establishing and deploying dedicated CTF (Counter Terrorism Force); 11. Dealing with sectarian terrorists; 12. Registration and Regulation of Religious Seminaries; 13. Ban on glorification of terrorism through print and electronic media; 14. Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Reforms & IDPs Repatriation; 15. Measures against abuse of Internet and Social Media for terrorism; 16. Zero tolerance of militancy by Punjab; 17. Karachi operation to be taken to logical conclusion; 18. Reconciliation by Baluchistan Government; 19. Afghan Refugees Registration and Policy; 20. Reforming Criminal Justice System.

Security-oriented approach of neutralising militancy may deal with the problem superficially. Unless the root causes of the problem are addressed, the problem of radicalisation can re-emerge in new forms. Historically, the issue of ethnic and sectarian violence in Pakistan unfortunately started with the so-called "Islamisation of the society". Mosques and Madrassas were two important institutions invariably

used to achieve certain political objectives (Ayoob, 2004). The most vulnerable target in this regard was youth studying in Madrassas.

Nonetheless, Pakistan has conducted the most vibrant kinetic operations ever carried out against terrorism in the history of any nation. The nose-dive in the terrorist attacks is brought down to 364 in the year 2017 as compared to more than 2000 attacks in 2010 (Khan, 2017). The main instruments used against hate speech control, terrorism financing control, the registration of Afghan refugees, administrative and development reforms in FATA, action against elements promoting sectarianism, non-glorification of terrorist organisations on print and electronic media set a good example of use of the combination of hard and soft power. Such measures would certainly help avoid the society to fall back into the old situation.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan has come a long way in its fight against terrorism. It has lost over $130 billion in this war and made some great advances today (Khan, 2017). Today, when Afghanistan is still engulfed in war, Pakistan is on the road to peace and prosperity with terrorists only operating in small pockets. The life cycle of terrorism clearly shows that it is not possible for an indigenous movement to rise without the support of foreign actors and it is this external support system that keeps the movement going. Initially there was denial among the people which led to a series of bombings and attacks across the country. Then there were events that invoked national unity and it was the support of the people and determination of the government which allowed the armed forces to launch one of the most successful operations to eradicate terrorism from the Pakistani soil.

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OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE MODEL FOR ENHANCING THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY OF SRI LANKA

Squadron Leader Chamara Wanigasinghe

ABSTRACT

Today, most governments and intelligence agencies have realised that Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) is the latest technology-driven mechanism to produce actionable intelligence. Many scholars in the field of intelligence have pointed out that, introduction of such technologies would multiply the capabilities of intelligence organisations by automatically providing reliable, credible and timely intelligence when and where required. Therefore, the importance of OSINT systems has grown in recent years and become a strategic enabler of decision and policy-making process for any nation. However, many experts have observed that, there are access control issues and vulnerabilities of such OSINT systems which could be a national threat when extracting classified data by its vendors. Therefore, this study assesses the situation of present threats to the Sri Lankan national security due to the use of OSINT by government intelligence agencies and proposes a secure and credible OSINT model which is exclusively customised for the Sri Lankan national intelligence mechanism which would enhance human intelligence collection efforts blended and multiplied with state-of-the-art technologies. Further, the proposed model is validated through interviews with the intelligence community, cybersecurity experts and key appointment holders in national level information systems in Sri Lanka. Hence, the employment of the proposed model will enable the Sri Lankan intelligence agencies to produce timely, credible and reliable intelligence for strategic and tactical decision-makers of the military, police and other law enforcement agencies to retaliate emerging threats to national security.

Keywords: Military Intelligence, National Security, OSINT

INTRODUCTION

"Intelligence remains our basic national instrument for anticipating danger: military, political and economic. Intelligence is and always will be our first line of defense, enabling us to ward off emerging threats whenever possible before any damage is done. It can also be a means of anticipating opportunities"

- US President George H W Bush

This statement goes well beyond the traditional National Security and Defence norms. It indicates the strategic thinker's anticipation of extracting opportunities out of emerging threats. In line with that, it is a mandatory requirement for any nation to strengthen their intelligence capabilities to anticipate any form of threats

against the national security (Ana, 2013). This is achievable through an expansion of the human intelligence collection efforts and force multiplied with state-of-the-art technologies (Deb, 2018).

Today, most sophisticated intelligence agencies in the world including USA, UK, Russia and China have realised that Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) is the latest technology-driven mechanism to produce actionable intelligence. Many scholars in the field of intelligence have pointed out that introduction of such technologies would multiply the capabilities of the intelligence organisations by enabling them to provide reliable, credible and timely intelligence when and where required (Cortney, V. Parachini and S. Girven, 2018).

Economic recovery is given priority in any post-conflict situation. Sri Lanka too placed economic development a priority in its development agenda over other concerns. However, after the Easter Sunday attack, the government has realised that National Security should be given priority and steps should be taken towards developing a comprehensive National Security Strategy. In addressing the above concern, the initial and best course of action is the development of a sophisticated intelligence network within Sri Lanka.

Presently Sri Lanka has two primary intelligence arms: the State Intelligence Service and the Defence Intelligence. In addition, the Police maintain the Special Branch, while the Special Task Force also has its own Intelligence Division. Furthermore, the Terrorist Investigation Department (TID) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Police also work closely with intelligence agencies on matters related to National Security. Therefore, aforesaid organisations are required to work under a unified command to improve coordination and enhance the capabilities of intelligence network in Sri Lanka. Hence, this is an appropriate time to redefine our own intelligence process and mechanisms by incorporating cutting-edge cyber technologies into a single intelligence model which are presently operationalised by state and non-state intelligence agencies in many countries. Therefore, this paper proposes a secure and viable OSINT model for Sri Lankan national intelligence mechanism in order to enhance present intelligence capabilities. Further, the proposed model will enable timely, credible and reliable intelligence for strategic and tactical decision makers, which would act as a force multiplier. Hence, the proposed model provides opportunities for intelligence entities of the military, police or other law enforcement agencies to increase the tempo in both tactical and strategic decision-making process.

IMPORTANCE OF OSINT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Today many 'new' media sources (social media, internet media) disseminate large amounts of user-generated content. Examples for such contents include 500 million Tweets per day on Twitter and the 98 million daily blog posts as well as millions

of individual personal Facebook pages (Batrinca and Treleaven, 2015). With this evolution of the new information landscape, it became essential for intelligence entities to harvest relevant content through this virtual domain, to detect and understand the next movement of threats against the national security of any nation (Koops et al. 2013).

Moreover, Carter *et al.* (2012) argue that available information and actionable intelligence have significant difference in the 21st century information landscape as shown in Figure 1. Therefore, it became a challenge for intelligence entities to find a mechanism to reduce this information gap due to increasing amount of information available for actionable intelligence.
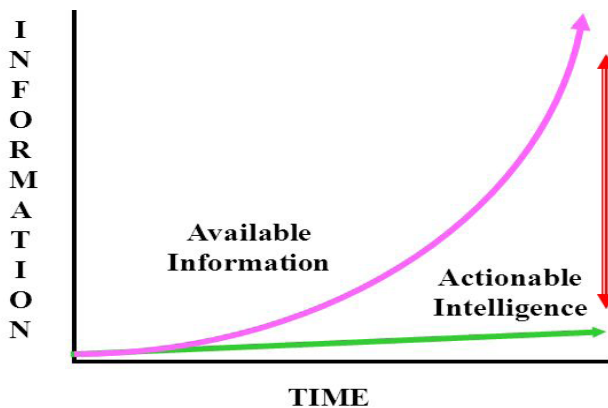
Figure 1: The Gap between Available Information and Actionable Intelligence
Source: Earth Intelligence Network, USA

In this context, OSINT seems to have the potential to develop into the most well-suited intelligence discipline in the modern information age to confront the modern day challenges faced by intelligence entities (Ana, 2013). This does not necessarily mean that its role will surpass the one that clandestine disciplines have. It remains to be seen whether OSINT could be established as an indispensable part of the intelligence process and as a vital contributor to the final intelligence product owing to its compatible nature with the global environment (Minas, 2010).

Moreover, as claimed by David Steel (2012), in the long-run OSINT will replace 80 per cent of the current manpower and dollars devoted to secret sources and methods. Also, the employment of OSINT technologies may result not only in monetary saving, but it is also less risky than utilising sensitive technical and human sources (Frontiers in Massive Data Analysis, 2015).

As per a survey carried out by the Recoded Future Incorporation USA (2017), when it comes to processing and analysis of information, one full security event read by a machine is equal to just 10 words read by a human analyst, on average as follows:
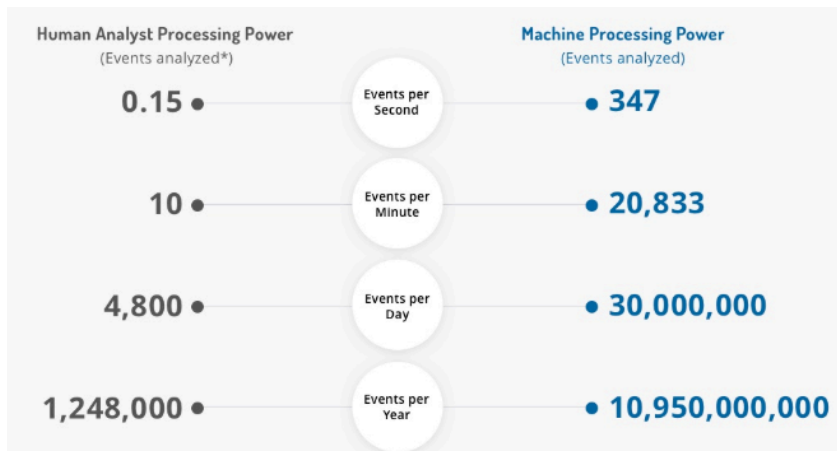
**Figure 2: Information Processing Power Comparison between
Human and Machine**
Source: Recoded Future Incorporation Survey (2017) Report, USA

However, as per the experiences of the different intelligence communities of Sri Lanka, employment of such machine-oriented mechanisms are a timely requirement against today's state-of-art of technology driven threats.

SECURITY THREATS TO SRI LANKA NATIONAL SECURITY

As claimed by primary intelligence arms of Sri Lanka, there are several potential threats that need special attention and they can be categorised into three as local, cross border and outside threats.

a.   **Local Threats**

(1)   Ideological extremists and emergence of other religious extremist groups
(2)   The creation of ethnic divisions and communal violence (North radicalisation)
(3)   Local sympathisers of LTTE diaspora
(4)   The growth of organised crime
(5)   Possible re-emergence of terrorism

b.   **Cross Border**

(1)   ISIS activities over the region
(2)   Non-traditional threats through technology driven new media, including social media
(3)   The challenges of maritime security and border control (Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, and Money Laundering)

c.   **Outside Threats**

(1)   Activities of LTTE diaspora
(2)   Radicalised International Groups
(3)   Foreign interference in domestic affair

As claimed by United State Country Reports in 2015, 2016 and authorised officers in Armed Forces of Sri Lanka, there is a significant increase of the above threats in the recent past. There is a significant increase of the above threats in the recent past. Easter Sunday attack could be taken as one such example. Thus, it has become a challenge for Sri Lankan military and government intelligence organisations to provide timely and accurate intelligence for decision makers whenever required to conduct subsequent operations against those threats. Thus, any intelligence model which is developed in the Sri Lankan context must be capable of addressing those threats effectively and efficiently.

WHY WE NEED TO BUILD AN INDIGENOUS OSINT MODEL

There are a number of OSINT models and products marketed by vendors at present. However, most of such commercially available OSINT products are accessible by vendors and would pose a risk to the National Security of a country. Therefore, utilisation of such commercially available OSINT products would be vulnerable due to in-built limitations of controlling its accessibility. This could lead to classified data being extracted or accessed by the interested parties, state or non-state actors. Further, such products would not be developed as tailor-made models exclusively for the Sri Lankan intelligence context and its mechanisms. In reality, due to utilisation of cutting edge and sensitive technologies, the cost factor on these models is very high making it unaffordable for countries like us. Therefore, purchase of such OSINT system would not be an effective solution for increasing the intelligence capabilities in Sri Lanka. Thus, it is now critical to decide on the strategic move to find how to develop indigenous and exclusively customised OSINT model for Sri Lankan intelligence mechanism to multiply the capabilities of exploiting opportunities through anticipated threats to assure national security.

DEVELOPMENT OF OSINT MODEL THROUGH THE INTELLIGENCE CYCLE

The intelligence cycle is the most common way to describe the intelligence process. The term 'intelligence process' includes all actions taken in order to achieve the result. There is a plethora of different 'intelligence cycles' in the world (Johnson 1986; Hulnick 2006; Evans 2009; Prunckun 2010; Clark 2013; Phythian 2013). However, Sri Lanka military inherit their military culture from British Forces, the currently adopted intelligence process is more aligned towards the UK intelligence

cycle as shown in Figure 3. Thus, UK intelligence cycle is the most suitable intelligence process to the Sri Lankan context.
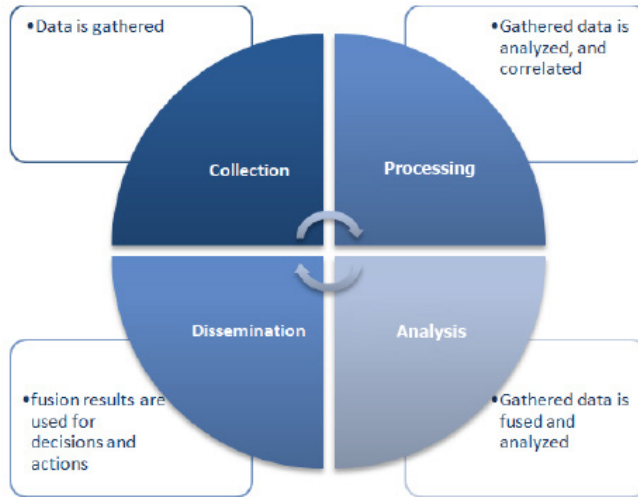
Figure 3: Intelligence Cycle
Source: UK Joint Doctrine Publication for Intelligence

Further, according to the Criminal Intelligence Manual of UK, there is a strong positive relationship with dissemination of intelligence and each step of collection, processing and analysis of intelligence (Criminal Intelligence, 2011) as per the Figure 4. Thus, it was realised that, the efficiency and effectiveness of producing actionable intelligence process could be increased by induction of suitable mechanisms in the collection, processing and analysis steps.
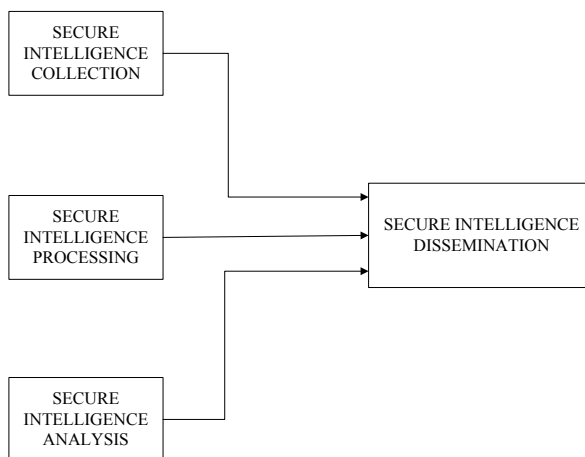
Figure 4: The relation between Process of Intelligence Cycle
Source: Author

As per the available literature, it was further found that there is a transitional relationship between the numbers of characteristics belonging to each step. Thus, the following conceptual framework (Figure 5) was developed based on those characteristics.
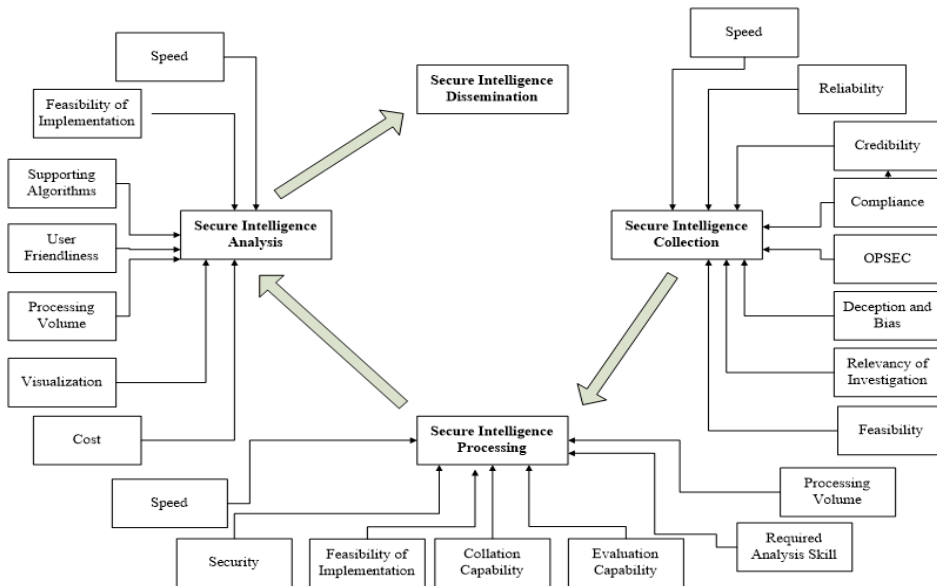

Figure 5: Conceptual Framework for Selection of Suitable Mechanisms for Intelligence Cycle
Source: Author

Thus, the selection of the most suitable mechanism should be based on the characteristics indicated in the figure. More importantly, some characteristics positively influence the particular stage of intelligence cycle while some characteristics negatively influence. Therefore, a careful data analysis was done for the selection of the most suitable mechanism from each step.

SECURE INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

As per the Army Open Source Intelligence Manual (2012), there are three OSINT collection sources categorised as open, classified and close that are used for the different application of intelligence operations as follows:

a. OSINT Software Tools (Open): OSINT software tools collect data through publicly available sources that belong to the Open category source (Hagen and L. Kaluzny, 2013). Further, those tools are mainly categorised into three types as follows as per the nature of information gathered.

(1)   OSINT Data Collection and Collation Tools
(2)   Social Media Search Tools
(3)   Geospatial Intelligence Software Tools

b. National Databases Integration (Closed): There are a number of national databases that are operating independently in Sri Lanka and they belong to different departments. As claimed by intelligence communities of Sri Lanka, such data is the most reliable and credible data which is highly important for their investigations. However, depending on the present threats to Sri Lanka, following national databases were selected to be integrated into a single window.

(1)   Registrar General's Department
(2)   Department of Registration of Persons
(3)   Department of Immigration and Emigration
(4)   Sri Lanka Customs
(5)   Vehicle Registration and Driving Licence Issuing System
(6)   Police Inquiry/ Complain System
(7)   National Voting Registration System

c. Offensive information gathering (Classified): As claimed by intelligence communities of Sri Lanka, there are many situations that demand the gathering of information covertly and offensively. Thus, offensive information gathering could be taken as the most effective and important mechanism. However, by considering the nature of present threats to Sri Lanka, following offensive information gathering mechanisms were selected.

(1)   Espionage Activities (Lawful Interception)
(2)   Utilisation of ethical hacking teams for information gathering
(3)   Website Scraping
(4)   Development of Classified mobile apps for public use
(5)   DeepWeb and DarkWeb information collection

Hence, in-line with the characteristics indicated in the secure intelligence collection of the conceptual framework, present threat scenario to Sri Lanka and inputs given by intelligence professionals in Sri Lanka, the following comparison is found in different OSINT collection sources for different type of operations.

Table 1: Comparison of Characteristics According to the Conceptual Framework

Indicator	OSINT Software Tools	Integrating with National Databases	Offensive Intelligence Gathering
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Speed	High	Moderate	Low
Reliability	Moderate	High	High
Credibility	Moderate	High	High
Compliance	High	High	Low
OPSEC	High	Moderate	Low
Deception and Bias	Moderate	Low	Low
Linguistic Conversion	Yes	No	No
Relevancy for Investigation	Moderate	High	High
Infrastructure Requirement	Low	High	High

Source: Author

SECURE INTELLIGENCE PROCESSING

The data collected through the different sources are still not ready in producing intelligence. Those must be pre-processed while thoroughly checking the reliability, credibility and validity. This process is called as Data Mining / Data extraction. Thereafter, the generated information need to be securely stored in a sophisticated Database Management System (DBMS) for further analysis when required. After an in-depth study, the following suitable mechanisms were found for DBMS and Data Mining process as shown in Figure 6:
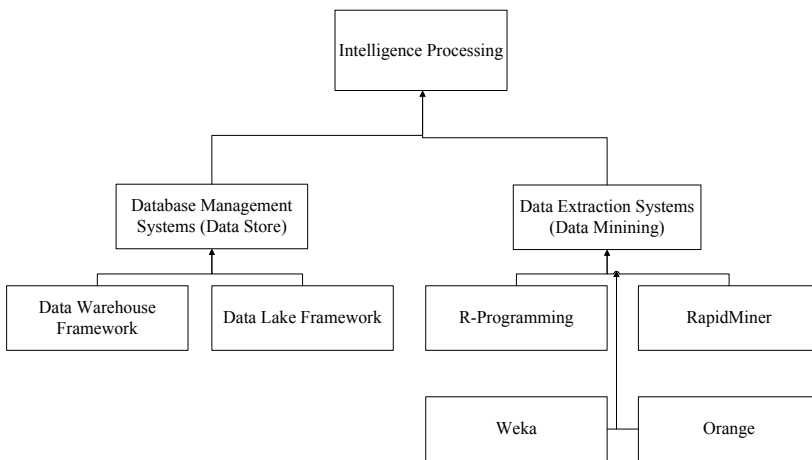

Figure 6: Data Processing Mechanisms
Source: Author

a. Database Management System (DBMS): Database Management System is pivotal and central to intelligence applications which are stored and integrated into several diverse data sources. Further, it would support for systematic data retrieval when and where required. It was found that, the Data Lake technology is the most suitable mechanism for the data store.

Table 2: Comparison of Characteristics of DBMS Technologies According to the Conceptual Framework

Measurements	Data Warehouse	Data Lake
(a)	(b)	(c)
Speed	Moderate	High
Feasibility	Moderate	High
Collation Capability	Moderate	High
Evaluation Capability	Moderate	High
Processing Volume	High	Moderate
Analysis Skill	Low	High
Security	High	Low

Source: Author

b. Data Extraction System (Data Mining): Data Mining is the process of extracting patterns from information gathered with the support of various analysis, techniques and algorithms. The comparison of the characteristics on database mining systems according to the operationalisation concepts is as follows. Accordingly, it was found that, the RapidMiner technology is the most suitable mechanism for the data mining process.

Table 3: The comparison of the characteristics on database mining systems according to the operationalisation concepts

Measurements	R-Programming	RapidMiner	Weka	Orange
(a)				
Speed	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Feasibility of implementation	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Collation Capability	Medium	High	-	-
Evaluation Capability	Medium	High	Moderate	Moderate
Processing Volume	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Analysis Skill	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Source: Author

SECURE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

After the completion of the intelligence processing, those should be systematically analysed with different algorithms in order to derive the hidden meaning of those information. This process is the most complex and time consuming. Therefore, a powerful data analysis mechanism such as Big Data Analysis is highly required. Thus, it would be able to simultaneously analyse millions of data during any investigation. However, as per the literature it was found that there are two major technologies of big data analysis (see Figure 7)
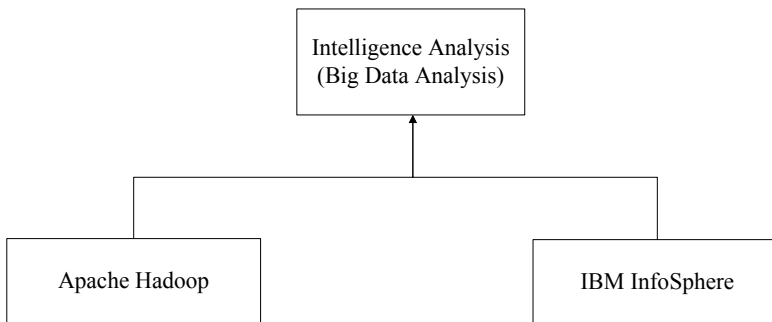
Figure 7: Types of Big Data Analysis
Source: Author

The comparison of the characteristics of two big data analysis technologies according to the conceptualisation concepts is as follows. Accordingly, it was found that, the Apache Hadoop technology as the most suitable mechanism for the data analysis process which most of the intelligence organisations presently operationalise on.

Table 4: Comparison of the Characteristics of Two Big Data Analysis Technologies According to the Conceptualisation Concepts

Measurements	Apache Hadoop	IBM InfoSphere
(a)	(b)	(c)
Speed	Moderate	High
Feasibility of implementation	Moderate	Low
Supporting Algorithms	High	High
Analysis Skill	Moderate	Moderate
Process Volume	Moderate	High
Cost	Low	High
Visualisation	Moderate	Moderate

Source: Author

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The emergence of terrorism and non-traditional threats have become a concern for any nation to develop their national security strategy to meet any challenges from any type of threat. Thus, the establishment of a sophisticated intelligence system should be the prime concern of the national security strategy which helps streamline the decision-making process and reduce the response time during any emergency situation. Therefore, it will increase the opportunity to counter or mitigate any type of threats against the national security at the initial stage.

Therefore, the study explored knowledge and the feasibility of the-state-of-the-art cyber technologies in order to customise and utilise along with the intelligence cycle to establish a technology-driven intelligence system. Thus, the study found that the induction of cutting edge OSINT and cyber technologies at different stages of intelligence cycle through a systematic model is the most viable solution for above enhancement. As a result, the present intelligence capabilities would be significantly multiplied by exploiting opportunities to anticipate any threats to national security in Sri Lanka.

In fact, this paper proposed a secure and viable technology-driven model which gives significant advantages in the process of the establishing a sophisticated national intelligence system in Sri Lanka. More importantly, the proposed model is meant to align with the present intelligence ways and means with advance OSINT technologies in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of current intelligence operations.

Therefore, based on the finding of this study, the following model is proposed as per the Figure 8. The proposed model comprises of the most suitable mechanisms found during the study for each step of intelligence collection, processing and analysis.
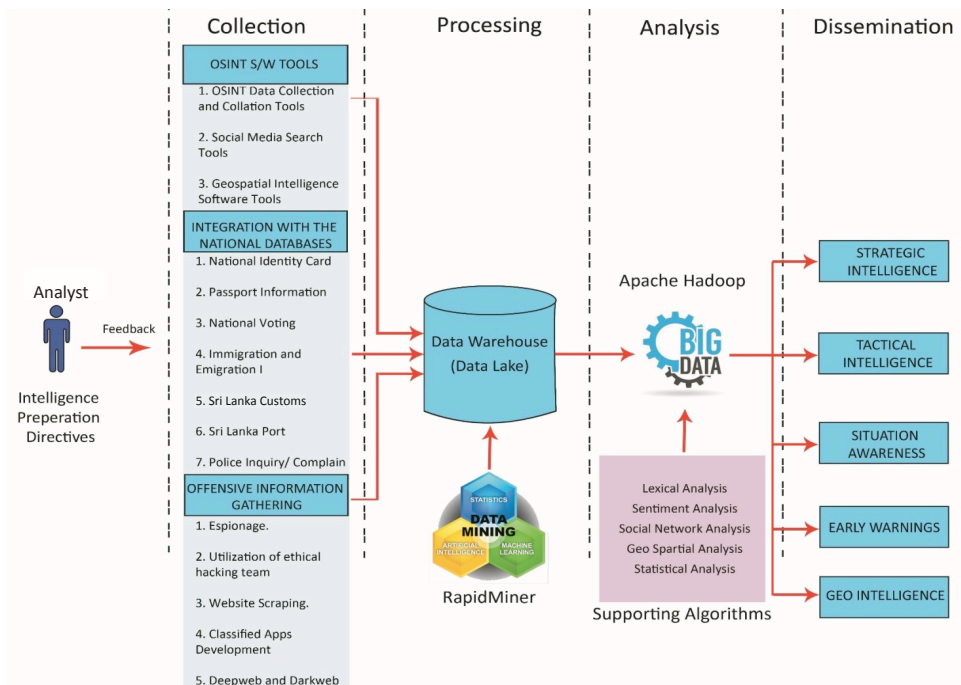
Figure 8: Proposed OSINT Model for the Sri Lankan Security Context
Source: Author

Further, it is recommended to implement this model as a Research and Development (R&D) project to further validate the above conceptual model. For that, Commercial off-the-Shelf (COTS) software on experimental basis can be initially used and then it can be tasked to develop an indigenous product after gaining sufficient experience. The use of OSINT as an operational intelligence force and resource multiplier should be reconsidered and the doctrine of the particular entity should be revised to get maximum utilisation of OSINT source analysis process. Further, it is necessary to initiate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the IT industries of Sri Lanka, R&D institutes and academia in universities to share knowledge, algorithms and to conduct more research on special area model is highly recommended in order to be on a par with the latest developments in the field. Moreover, national level information systems are to be computerised and they need to be integrated into a single window for better information sharing. Finally and more importantly, national level policies and guidance need to be revised, so that it supports the implementation of such model in order build a secure and prosperous country.

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CORE VALUES OF DSCSC

Learning Organization: DSCSC identifies itself as a catalyst for learning which seeks expansion of knowledge through realizing the full potential of its personnel. It is expected to uphold excellence in staff roles through dynamism, integrity, devotion, and the ability to learn from both mistakes and accomplishments.

Honour: DSCSC expects that all its members will strive to preserve self-respect, honesty and honour in all their deeds. Members are encouraged to put honour to the test by upholding the honour of the College.

Respect: DSCSC values mutual respect and recognizes uncompromising commitment in the achievement of mutual respect by fulfilling official obligations.

Decorum: DSCSC propagates itself as a pre-eminent defence establishment which upholds rules of decorum which is a fundamental core value of the services. Therefore, the College strives to maintain the highest, yet simple and practical standards in military decorum encompassing ethics, customs and traditions.

Excellence: DSCSC strives for excellence in all its endeavours at all levels which will ultimately contribute to the overall accomplishment of the College's objectives.

Innovation: DSCSC believes in pursuing new creative ideas leading to meaningful innovations by its members in conformity with the principles of high standards.

Punctuality: DSCSC holds punctuality as the bedrock of College's core values.

Professionalism: DSCSC holds professionalism in high esteem and fosters highest standards in professionalism within the establishment.

Mission Command: DSCSC encourages mission command at all levels and recognizes its value as a tool for problem solving and optimizing efficiency. Mission Command facilitates commanders at all levels to exercise their initiative.

Pristine Environment: DSCSC subscribes to serene surroundings of the College providing a conducive learning environment for its officers.

DRIVING TENET-Common Sense: Common Sense permeates the ideals of the Core Values of the DSCSC and it is a testament to the solid foundation the DSCSC inculcates on its officers.

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