VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDA

Seeking Ha

HOME   ABOUT US   AREAS OF STUDY   EVENTS   PUBLICATIONS   TEAM   MEDIA   CAREER   CONTACT US

Language

The Phenomenon of Urban Terrorism in India

22 Apr, 2013   Dr. N Manoharan, Senior Fellow, VIF   View3321   Comments 0

Recent bomb blast in Bangalore (17 April 2013) and twin bomb blasts that took place in Hyderabad in February 2013 have reiterated th of urban terrorism has taken firm root in India. In less than a decade, the Indian urban areas like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkotta, Guv Bangalore, Jaipur, Varanasi, Pune, Kanpur, Coimbatore, Srinagar, Jammu and Ahmedabad have witnessed over 20 major attacks. Ther scale casualties, material damage and disruption of life and economic activity as a result.

The Phenomenon

The phenomenon of urban terrorism is relatively new to India, but it has a long history in the international arena. The Irish Republica British forces in Northern Ireland for several decades mostly in urban areas. The Baader-Meinhof gang, a communist urban guerrilla gro for several acts of terrorism in Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of the terror groups in Latin America are urban-based. Palesti managed to launch numerous urban terror attacks on Israeli civilians despite Israel's vigorous pre-emptive measures and a pro-active Members of Aum Shinrikyo, a cult group, carried out five coordinated sarin gas attacks on several lines of the Tokyo metro in March 19 have been fighting Russia since the 1990s mostly in the urban set-up.

As terrorists are rational in their choice of terrain and targets, evaluating strengths and weaknesses and costs and benefits, urban terr advantages. As is the characteristic of urban areas, population is not only high, but also densely concentrated. Unlike in rural areas, inha towns are more heterogeneous that gives more space for anonymity. It is this posture of anonymity that enables the terrorist fish excellent place for camouflage. For terrorists, logistical support like arms, medicines, food, and lodging are readily available in an av Manoeuverability of terrorists is guaranteed by the presence of public and private transportation facilities that are both dependable a urban areas, a terrorist group may find it easier to recruit prospective terrorists in a predictable manner, for it is the city that nurtures di

Cities are the nerve centres of any country. It is in urban areas where targets are most varied and abundant: laymen, officials, foreign r heavy weights, government buildings with symbolic/strategic value, bus stands, railway stations, airports, markets, foreign missio centres etc. By attacking high profile symbolic targets, the terrorists wish to make a point that if a government fails to protect high obvious that it may not be in a position to protect the normal ones. As a result, the credibility of the government of the day is undermine and quantity of terrorists' 'defined enemy' is high in cities, the impact of a destructive act is more widespread. This also gives an a terrorists to prevent any kind of indiscriminate counter-terrorist operation by the state that could maximise collateral damage. For the s aerial bombardments against the terrorists becomes difficult. Urban operations for terrorists also often demand less in the way of brut and endurance than do operations in mountainous or rural terrain. And they do not need sophisticated long-range weapons to inflict desir

Since terrorism is 'propaganda by the deed' the attention seeking goal of terrorists is well served in the urban environment where the imi greatest and where representatives of print and electronic media are readily available and quite eager to report. The media coverage attacks exemplify this. Such coverage also magnifies the fear-generating capabilities of terrorists. If the general population begins to fea terrorist group may have been achieved. Overall, an urban landscape facilitates terrorists in realising their goals: surprise, maximum dan risk, hyper media attention and subsequent disappearance. As the 26/11 experience has shown, well-armed terrorists are not easy to fig as tall buildings and narrow lanes and alleys provide inherent protection to them and make the security forces easy targets. The pr further complicates military or police operations. Similarly, IED attacks and suicide bombings are extremely difficult to detect or prevent i

Counter-measures

The key to success in fighting urban terrorism lies in obtaining accurate intelligence about impending attacks and the neutralisation of t they can launch their planned attacks. Since the threat of urban terrorism is transnational in nature, there is an urgent need for region networking of friendly intelligence agencies. Most importantly, the Central and state intelligence agencies should share information meth

trickle down in real-time to the user. While electronic surveillance, including the interception of communications, is no doubt use importance to penetrate the networks and sleeper cells of the terrorist organisations so as to gain actionable intelligence.

Since the terrorists usually choose high-profile soft targets, where the presence of 'defined enemy' is abundant, they should be pu surveillance and protection. The staff manning these places should be trained in rendering first aid, evacuation techniques, and rescue an Surveillance cameras, metal and explosive vapour detectors and X-ray scanning machines should be installed at key access points. Techn alert for suspicious activity such as loitering by an individual or vehicle should be made use of. Security personnel should be sensitis segregating suspicious objects that are left behind.

The success of counter-terrorism operations, especially in the urban domain, depends to a considerable extent on a speedy response by is trained, armed and equipped suitably for the job at hand. As the National Security Guard is India's primary strike force for counter-ter must be given the wherewithal to respond swiftly to urban terror attacks to minimise casualties and deny the perpetrators the ability Central Government's recent decision to locate NSG echelons in the cities that have been targeted most frequently will enable the force t manner. The NSG, however, must also be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and equipment to enable the commandos to enhan performance and minimise their own casualties. Where necessary, the Indian Army's elite Special Forces should be employed to counter urban areas. Every state, in fact, should have a NSG-type of commando force to counter lethal terror strikes. Rehearsals should be peri for search-and-rescue operations after large-scale terrorist strikes. Different contingencies should be simulated and practised. Future t cater for tackling terrorist attacks using WMDs.

Without the eyes, ears and intuition of the general public, it is difficult to identify a terrorist who is anonymous and blends seamlessly in in which he is living and operating. An effective battle against terrorism can be waged only by involving members of the public. Th societal awareness to keep a steady eye on tentative or errant behavior in the neighbourhood and sharing of information of suspiciou point persons in the police and intelligence agencies. For instance, on every New York City subway train, the message to passengers attacks of 9/11 has been clear: "If you see something, say something." For this purpose, urban Indians must organise themselves into ne committees through community consensus mechanisms based on genuine concern to prevent future terrorist attacks. All communities sh counter-terror measures instead of perceiving some as the "other". The community of Indian fishermen should keep a constant tab Awareness creation among people should also include 'golden rules' to be followed by the people in case of a terrorist attack. Such far only minimise the lethality of terrorist attacks, but also reduce the consequent panic. In short, unless a comprehensive approach is ad stake holders of the society, it is difficult to counter urban terrorism.

Published Date: 22nd April 2013

Post new comment

Your name: *

Anonymous

E-mail: *

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Comment: *

Message*

Input format

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms

Save   Preview

Related Articles

जनता और वस्तुओं के सीम�

वैश्वीकरण ने लोगों की आक�

Perspective on Minimising Risks in Cross Border Movement of

Globalisation has not just raised the aspirations of

Some Lessons fr

While the res Doklam s reported by

people, but

Doklam Crisis:
Settlement

(Ambassador
Kantha was
to China bef

The Coast Guard Action on 31st
December 2014: Need for Conse

Two small vessels,
probably trawlers, slipped
out of Keti Bandar,

Mountain Strike Corps along
Indo-Tibet Border and Strategic

"Begin, be bold and
venture to be wise" –
Hor

Need for Enhan
Surveillance in

Indian Ocea
largest ocea
the world ac

Why Mountain Strike Corps
Along the India-China Border is
Im

Following the
government's recent in-
principle clearance to rai

Punish the Pakistan Army for
Repeated 'Rogue' Actions

In recent months, the
Pakistan army has been
behaving in a rather

About Us

The Vivekananda International
Foundation (VIF) is a New Delhi-based
think tank set up with the collaborative
efforts of India's leading security
experts, diplomats, industrialists and
philanthropists under the aegis of the
Vivekananda Kendra. The VIF's
objective is to become a centre of
excellence to kick start innovative ideas
and thoughts that can lead ...

Read More

Contact Us

Name*

Email Id*

Phone Number*

Message*

I'm not a robot
reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms

Submit

Tweet With Us

VIF India
@vifindia

'The organs are the horses, the
rein, the intellect is the chariotee
the rider, and the body is the ch
master of the household, the Kir
of man, is sitting in this chariot.'
#SwamiVivekananda

Home   About Us   Area of Study   Events   Team   Media   Career   Contact Us   VISITORS: StatCounter - Free Web Tracker and Counter