

INTEGRATING CIVIL AND MILITARY APPROACHES TO COMBAT TERRORISM IN BANGLADESH

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INTRODUCTION

The countrywide bomb blasts on 17th August 2005 came as a shock to the nation when all the districts but one was attacked simultaneously. Caught in a surprise, the government responded immediately and brought the masterminds of the attack into justice. However, the problem is far from over. Bangladesh's political mainstream has long understood the danger but the measures were relying mostly on the use of hard power.

Bangladesh Armed Forces has been trained and equipped to safeguard territorial integrity and sovereignty. Therefore, it has developed some core capabilities that would also equally be applicable in combating terrorism, particularly where Law Enforcing Agencies (LEA) are overwhelmed by the lethality and/or magnitude of terrorist attacks. While combat against terrorism demands an integrated and synergistic application of all civil and military measures, the ongoing combat against terrorism in Bangladesh is insufficient and isolated in nature. Compartmentalized approach by different organizations of the government may provide a temporary relief but is unlikely to develop a capability that would be able to deter, contain or even respond to any crisis arising from a terrorist attack. The solution to the problem lies in a comprehensive Counter Terrorism (CT) architecture that would integrate both civil and military measures to provide a holistic approach to the combat terrorism in Bangladesh.

TERRORISM: BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

What is Terrorism?

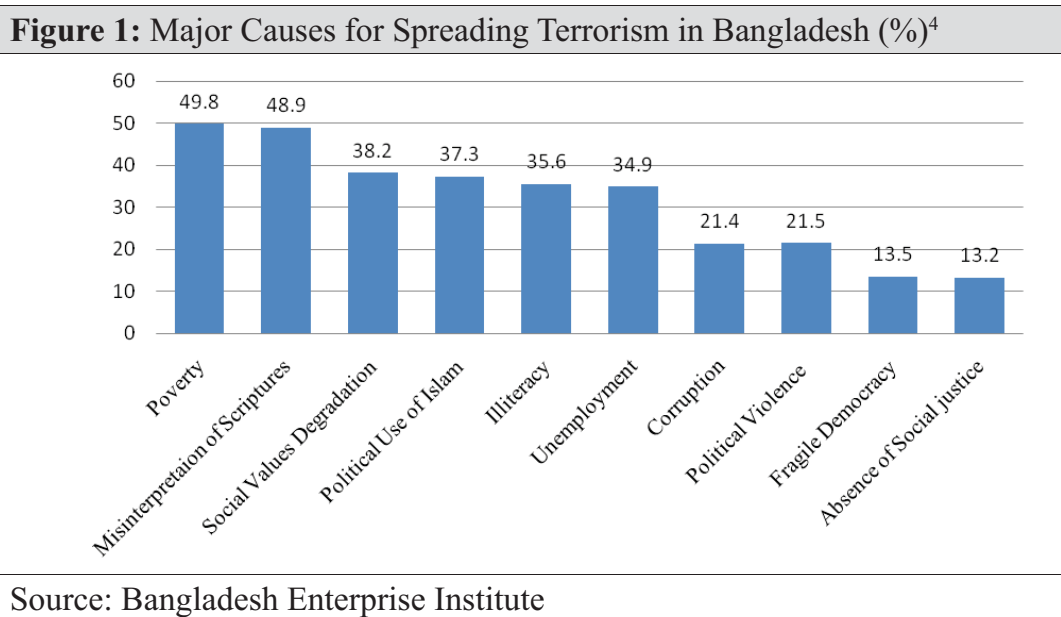
The UN and nation states have been striving for decades to find an expression for terrorism, which narrows down to a specific profile of condemnable violence regardless of the cause which triggers it. Alex Schmid and Albert Jongman analysed 109 academic and official definitions and discovered that 83% of the definitions had elements of violence, political goals in 65%, inflicting terror in 51%, indiscriminate targeting in 21%, and victimization of civilian noncombatants in 17.5%,¹ Anti-terrorism Act 2009, Bangladesh defines terrorism as 'Acts or omissions constituting threats to unity, integrity, security or sovereignty of

1. Shuman, Abdus 2007, 'Counter-Terrorism in Bangladesh: The Imperative for Community-Based Approach,' *BIISS Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3, November, p. 233.

Bangladesh, creating panic among the people, or obstructing official activities and possessing explosives substance, chemical or fire arms for that purpose would be regarded as terrorism'.²

Causes of Terrorism in Bangladesh

Domestic Causes. The root causes of terrorism in Bangladesh have been political, socio-economic as well as ideological.³ The causes are interrelated and one has got deep influence on other. While political violence, corruption, absence of social justice and fragile democracy can be grouped under political; widespread poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and the social values degradation can be grouped under socio-economic causes. The wrong interpretation of religious scriptures and political use of Islam by terrorist organizations are the ideological causes of terrorism. A survey by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) identifies poverty, misinterpretation of Islam, social values degradation and the political use of Islam as the forerunner of the causes of terrorism in Bangladesh.



Propaganda Campaign. It has also been observed that there is a deliberate campaign to paint Bangladesh as a breeding ground of terrorists. The ‘Far Eastern Economic Review’ carried a cover story claiming that Bangladesh was a potential hub for Islamic terrorists.⁵ Even some Indian writers plotted the rumours of a ship

2. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, January 2013, *Towards developing a counter-terrorism policy for Bangladesh*, Dhaka, p. 14

3. *The State of Terrorism in Bangladesh: 2011-2012*, Op Cit., p. 26.

4. *ibid.*, p. 29.

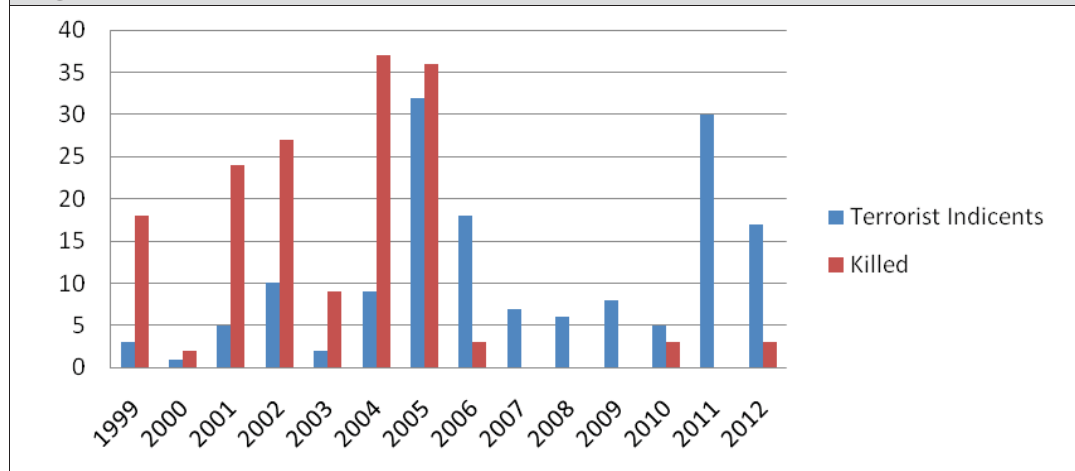
5. Shuman, Op Cit., p. 239.

sailing from Karachi to Chittagong with assorted militants from Afghanistan. Such propaganda aims to portray that ‘Bangladesh is well on the way to become South Asia’s second front of Islamic terror after Pakistan’,⁶ which is purpose oriented and far from the truth.⁷

Trend of Terrorism in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is ranked 39 (Pakistan 2 and India 4; lower ranking indicates higher impact of terrorism)⁸ taking into account factors like number of terrorist incidents, fatalities, injuries and property damage, the index scores 158 countries over the last 10 years. While decreasing trend of fatalities by terrorist attacks, showcase the outstanding performance of the LEA, the upward trend of yearwise number of incidents (Figure-2) as well as number of arrest (Figure-3) provide ample evidence of fresh breeding of the intolerant individuals, which in turn speaks the weakness of anti-terrorism measures taken by the government.

Figure 2: Yearwise Number of Terrorist Incidents and Personnel Killed⁹



Source: Dhaka Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) and South Asia Terrorism Portal

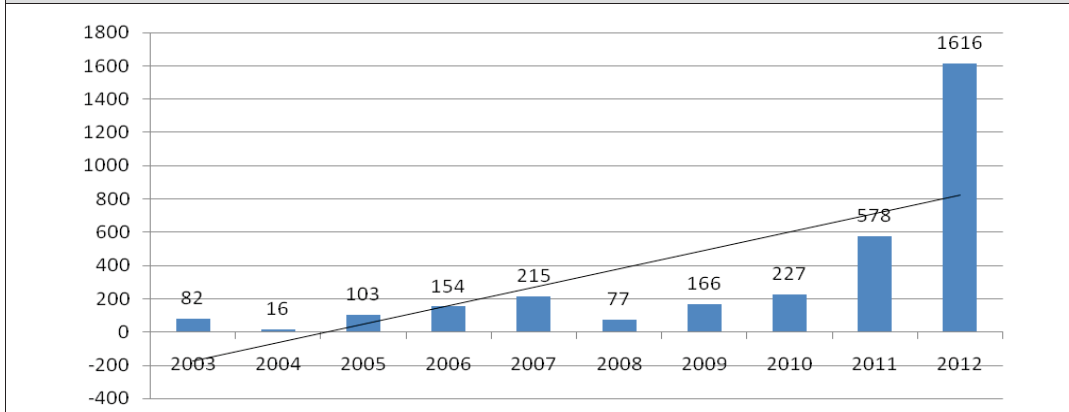
6. *ibid.*

7. *ibid.*

8. Institute of Economics & Peace 2012, *Global Terrorism Index, Capturing the Impact of Terrorism from 2002 – 2011*, p. 4.

9. Dhaka Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA, Bangladesh), December 2011. Published at ‘SSRC_Terrorism_Study_Final_Report_December_2011_ICA_Bangladesh_Initial_Web_Dissemination’ and *Bangladesh Assessment 2013* <<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh>> accessed on 06 July 2013.

Figure 3: Yearwise Arrest of Extremists



Source: Dhaka Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) and South Asia Terrorism Portal

Terrorism Potential of Bangladesh

The globalized nature of terrorism, the politico-economic analysis and the probable nexus of the militant groups of seven sisters of India, Rohingya problem of Arakan and the atrocities of Myanmar government against Muslims are likely to make situation in Bangladesh volatile. Such a nexus may increase the demand of arms and explosives in this region which may in turn fall in the hands of the terrorist groups operating inside Bangladesh. Self radicalization would pose a considerable threat and would become more disastrous if it is linked with the increased demand of weapons caused by the regional situations. As such, though Bangladesh does not have mentionable terrorist activities at present, it bears a very high potential to become one over the years.

COMBATING TERRORISM IN BANGLADESH: CIVIL MEASURES

The National CT Strategy

In compliance with the UN Global CT strategy, the national CT strategy has been directed towards continuous action against terrorism, the cumulative effect of which will initially disrupt, over time degrade and ultimately destroy the growth of terrorism and terrorist organizations in Bangladesh. The strategy has four principal strands as follows:¹⁰

10. M Shafiullah, 'Countering Terrorism in Bangladesh: A Strategy Paper', Sobhan, Farooq (ed.) *Countering Terrorism in Bangladesh* The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 2008, Pp. 22-32.

- a. Prevent (Stopping People Becoming Terrorists or Supporting Violent Extremism).** It includes measures to hinder, deter, mitigate and disrupt terrorist activity, while maintaining readiness to deal with a terrorist incident.¹¹The task of Preventing will only succeed with the active participation of the widest cross-section of society, including central government, voluntary and community groups, regional and local government, policing, the education and youth sector, faith groups, and the arts and media.
- b. Pursue (Stopping Terrorist Attacks).** Pursue includes covert intelligence and police work to detect and disrupt the current terrorist threat, continuing to work to strengthen the legal framework to ensure successful prosecutions of terrorist crimes through criminal justice system – or, where appropriate, deportations; proscription of terrorist groups and exclusion of dangerous individuals; information sharing with allies and partners to support counter-terrorist operations.¹²
- c. Protect (Strengthening Protection Against Attacks).** Protect includes works with partners in the private sector and local government, and others to improve the protection of critical infrastructure, hazardous sites and materials, and crowded places.
- d. Prepare (Mitigating the Impact of Attacks).** Prepare refers to the range of measures undertaken to address the short and long-term consequences of a terrorist incident.¹³Prepare includes measures to improve resilience at national, regional and local level – with the government, the police and emergency services operating in partnership with the private sector, local government, and others to ensure that the communities are prepared for a terrorist attack and able to mitigate its consequences and return to normal life as quickly as possible.¹⁴

Strategy-to-Task: Implementation of CT Strategy in Bangladesh

Religious Preaching. The government had launched a socio-political campaign involving religious leaders, teachers, students and local administration against the militancy.¹⁵Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Islamic Foundation

11. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2006, 'Protecting Australia against terrorism', *Australia's National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Arrangements*, National Circuit, Barton Act 2600, p. 12.

12. Prime Minister 2008, 'The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom Security in an interdependent world', Presented to Parliament, Cabinet Office, p. 25.

13. *Protecting Australia against terrorism*, op. cit., p. 67.

14. *The national security strategy of the United Kingdom*, op. cit., p. 26.

15. ICA Bangladesh, op. cit., p. 84.

conducted a four years Leaders of Influence (LOI) project to train 20,000 young leaders including 10,000 Imams to promote the values of democracy, tolerance, diversity and social harmony.¹⁶ The campaign lacked planning and involvement of the general people. No structured system except some routine reports from Upozilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO) is in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign. Therefore, the contribution of such campaign in the overall gamut of combating terrorism is difficult to appreciate. In general, the religious preaching campaign does not seem to have much effect as an anti-terrorism measure.¹⁷

Community Policing. The community policing initiative was designed to improve police-civilian relations and reduce the appeal of extremist groups.¹⁸ The members of Ansar are trained by Deputy Commissioners (DCs) so that they can engage grassroots people at union level to fight against the militants.¹⁹ Community police units are deployed all over the country and they are working effectively in their role.²⁰

General Awareness through Media. Media can contribute in both ways—helping the cause of terrorism as well as countering it.²¹ The ongoing general awareness programme in Bangladesh includes regular TV talk shows, magazines, booklets, publishing leaflets, short-films etc to create mass awareness against militancy.²² However, a survey on South-East (SE) bordering area of Bangladesh revealed that a little under two-thirds of urban respondents own a television while 42 percent of inhabitants of rural areas have had no form of education and thereby unable to read print media reports.²³ As such, still a good number of people are remaining outside the general awareness net.

Reforming Madrassa Education System. Although reform measures were initiated through the Periodic Education Commissions, the Quami Madrassas remained outside those reforms, as their rigid orthodoxy always resisted any recommended changes.²⁴ A survey by widely distributed national daily ‘ProthomAlo’ on question, whether one support the Government initiative,

16. *The State of Terrorism in Bangladesh: 2011-2012*, ibid., p. 45.

17. HumayunKabir, Mohammad, Senior Research Director, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, interviewed by the author, Dhaka, 29 August 2013.

18. *The State of Terrorism in Bangladesh : 2011-2012*, loc. cit., p. 45

19. *The New Age*, 06 October 2010.

20. Rahman, Mahfuzur, Assistant Inspector General (Confidential & Operations), Bangladesh Police, interviewed by the author, Dhaka, 10 October 13.

21. Ahamed, Imtiaz, op. cit.

22. ICA Bangladesh, op. cit., p. 83.

23. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, 2013, ‘*Safety and security in the South-East border area of Bangladesh: A public perceptions survey*’, held at Dhaka, February, p. 339.

24. Barkat, Abul, et al 2011, *Political Economy of Madrassa Education in Bangladesh :Genesis, Growth, and Impact*, Ramon Publishers, Dhaka, p. 1.

38.63% answered 'Yes', 59.18% answered 'No', and 2.19% did not response.²⁵ This clearly shows the opposing view on the issue and demands a very delicate handling. However, an in-depth analysis shows that though the syllabus of Quami Madrasa at higher education does not include general subjects, but the students opines it to be effective and enjoys better job opportunity than that of Aliya Madrasa.²⁶ On the other hand, most of the Aliya madrasa students aspires to become a government officer and finds employment opportunity to be very much limited²⁷ and the usefulness of madrasa education for employment to be 'almost not helpful'.²⁸ Therefore, reforming the Quami Madrasa Education, would pose a challenge for the government.

Measures by LEAs. CT in Bangladesh has essentially been a law enforcement centric approach where Bangladesh Police have played a crucial role.²⁹ It has got a detailed organization upto the upazilla level. Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) enjoys very strong public support because of many notable arrests and public seizures of extensive Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) checks the trans-border transportation of illegal fire arms, ammunitions, explosives and other contraband items which may be used for organized crime/terrorist activities inside Bangladesh. BGB also has limited capability for transfrontier intelligence.³⁰ Therefore, within the police as well, CT has been a combined task handled by different units. As such, a special coordinating body needs to be created to coordinate the activities of the various organizations and branches of the Police.³¹

Laws, Statues and Conventions Related to Terrorism. The government has enacted the Anti-Terrorism Act 2012 and Anti-money Laundering Act 2012. This act keeps the provision of death sentence as the maximum punishment to control terrorism and abuse of arms and explosives that poses a threat to national security.³² According to the Act, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit can provide Financial Intelligence Units in other countries with information relating to the financing of terrorism, when so required or requested. The Act also included provisions relating to atomic, chemical and biological weapons; to the arms and ammunition used for terrorist activities; and interventions by terrorist

25. *The daily ProthomAlo*, 16 September 2013, p. 1.

26. Barkat, *ibid.*, p. 198.

27. *ibid.*, p. 201.

28. *ibid.*, p. 203.

29. Munir, Shafqat '*A Kinetic Approach towards Countering Terrorism*', held at Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, p. 14.

30. Chowdhury, *op. cit.*

31. Munir, *op. cit.* p 14

32. ICA Bangladesh, *op. cit.*

and subversive organisations in the financial sector.³³In general, the present laws are complementary with the government's efforts of combating terrorism.

Protect. The protection of critical infrastructure, hazardous sites and materials from terrorist attacks are physically protected by both LEA and armed forces. However, hardly there is any clear example where the general people are taken into cognizance within the overall framework of protection. Both Australia and Singapore adequately addressed and depends on the collective capability. It is never possible to provide all round security for whole of the time, purely by government agencies. The protection must include the private sectors, private security companies' alongwith the LEAs and the armed forces.

Prepare. Over the years, Bangladesh has developed a well tested disaster management system integrating civil, military and LEAs. However, large scale manmade disaster caused by the terrorists is likely to take place in a short notice with high casualty where time would be the greatest factor in terms of saving life. The panic that would be created in all walks of life would pose a great threat to the existence of the nation. As such, preparing the people to face such a disaster and bring the life to normalcy would be the greatest challenge to any government. The recovery needs to be planned and managed in a well-structured manner. Bangladesh does not still have any such plan that would prepare her people in mitigating the impact of the terrorist attacks.³⁴ There are many organizations that already have conducted number of seminars on what to do in such a situation but hardly any such plan has been implemented.³⁵

COMBATING TERRORISM IN BANGLADESH: MILITARY MEASURES

Preparedness of Bangladesh Armed Forces in CT Role

Probable Integration Opportunity in Combating Terrorism. Bangladesh Armed Forces maintain certain core capabilities that are required to fulfill her role and tasks. In time of need these core capabilities can be effectively harnessed with civil measures to augment government efforts in combating terrorism.

33. Bangladesh Assessment 2013, op. cit.

34. Rahman, op. cit.

35. Kabir, ibid.

During Peace Time

- Provision of specialized training to LEAs that would be appropriate for combating terrorists. eg. Fighting tactics in built up areas, buildings, rappelling from helicopters, operations at coastal areas, close quarter battle, basic commando training etc.
- Development of a procedure for information sharing between the intelligence organizations.
- Earmarking and training of required number of units as tasked by the government so as to respond at a short notice.
- Conduct of de-radicalization programme as a part of national CT strategy in remote areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) where LEA has got limited or no access.

In Time of Crisis

- Deployment of designated units immediately in aid to civil power once asked by appropriate authority as set during the peace time.
- Provision of Bomb Disposal support (if require) to LEA.
- Provision of carrying out operations in support of LEA.
- Provision of Special Forces of Bangladesh Army and Navy for special operations.
- Provision of providing air and sea transportation support (whenever require).
- Provision of providing engineering support (if require).
- Provision of providing emergency medical support to the victims.

INTELLIGENCE PERSPECTIVE OF COMBATING TERRORISM

Intelligence Landscape of Bangladesh

Intelligence Sharing Between Intelligence Agencies. DGFI is the only military organization which has a separate section namely CT Investigation Bureau (CTIB) to collect, analyse and disseminate intelligence on terrorism.³⁶ Conversely, NSI established a ‘Combined Threat Assessment Centre (CTAC)’

36. Rusho, op. cit.

in 2010, to assess threats in relation to specific people, places, events and sectors.³⁷ The intelligence community has its own deeply embedded culture and value systems. These intelligence units mainly work within the services and have very limited capabilities to carry out any sort of cross border intelligence activities.³⁸ There are no clear guidelines or strategies on the limit of sharing information or cross-departmental exchange of information. The current system of intelligence sharing and methods to obtain information is entirely the product of experience, shaped by the needs and concerns of all agencies.³⁹ Therefore, the threats from terrorism and organized crimes highlight the need for an inclusive intelligence framework that provides more effective threat warning, helps in developing efficient action plans, and better supports national security decision-making.⁴⁰ Considering its operating level, composition of personnel from different organizations and role, NSI would be the most appropriate organization to act as the intelligence hub of CT activities.

Sustainable Intelligence. Community engagement, as a first step in effective security intervention, focuses on developing, empowering and building capacity of the community to create interactions between the community members and the law enforcement and intelligence agencies.⁴¹ There is a lack of proper institutional mechanism to create an enabling environment that provides the technologies, procedures, policies, and standards for sharing terrorism-related information among government and local jurisdictions and with the public in general.⁴² In a survey undertaken by BEI, 98 percent of the respondents indicated that there should be an effective working relationship between the community and law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Fifty three percent respondents identified general people as the best source of information.

National CT Alert Levels

The national CT alert level guides national preparedness and planning and dictates levels of precaution and vigilance to minimize the risk of a terrorist incident occurring. Bangladesh is yet to develop any CT alert level to prepare her citizens. The proposed alert level with corresponding colour code is given below:

37. *The State of Terrorism in Bangladesh : 2011-2012*, op. cit., p. 41

38. Rahman, M Mafidur, Air Commodore, Director Air Intelligence, Bangladesh Air Force, interviewed by the author, Dhaka, 05 October 13.

39. 'Public Information, op cit., p. 15.

40. 'Public Information, loc. Cit., p. 15.

41. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, op. cit., p. 50.

42. Public Information, op. cit., p. 16.

Table 1: Proposed National Alert Level			
Serial	Alert Level	Colour Code	Meaning
1	Low	Green	A terrorist attack is unlikely to occur
2	Medium	Yellow	A terrorist attack could occur
3	High	Orange	A terrorist attack is likely.
4	Extreme	Red	A terrorist attack is imminent or has occurred.
Source: Author			

PROPOSED CT ARCHITECTURE FOR BANGLADESH

The Proposed CT Architecture for Bangladesh

National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC). The NCTC would be the focal point to deal with national crisis with regard to CT. The committee would be headed by the Minister, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)/Security Advisor to the honourable Prime Minister (PM), and would coordinate crisis management and support response mechanisms for CT activities. The committee would be comprised of the representatives of present NCMRP and the appropriate representatives from finance and foreign ministry. NCTC would be mandated to ensure that the development of the national CT strategy is updated and coordinated from a comprehensive perspective. The committee may co-opt any member deemed essential including the members from civil society, academia and NGO's. The committee would be responsible to NCSA and directly to PM in absence of NCSA for its activities. The committee would have three organs, namely CT Prevention Committee, CT Action Committee and CT Policy Review Committee.

- **CT Prevention Committee (CTPC).** This committee would be responsible to develop preventive strategy (mainly the soft power) and for their implementation. The lead agency for this committee may be the Religion Ministry/any other concerned ministry.
- **CT Policy Review Committee (CTPRC).** CT Policy review committee would be formed on requirement basis by the Chairman NCTC. The input for the review would be received from CT Research centre, academia and nongovernment CT research organizations.

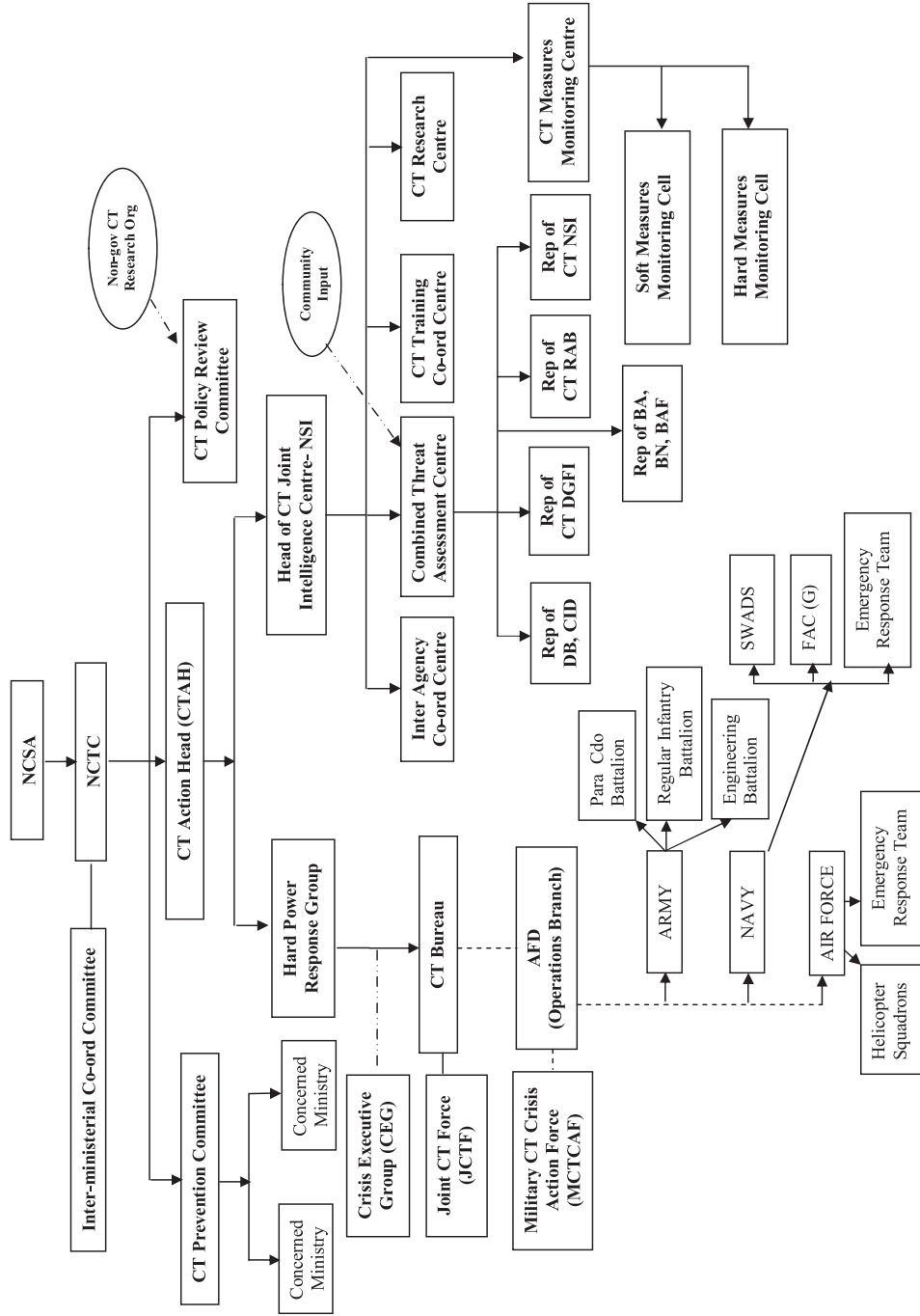
- **CT Action Head (CTAH).** CTAH would be responsible for overall hard power measures. CTAH would be appointed directly by the PM and may be any suitable person chosen from Bangladesh Police, Armed Forces or NSI. It would have two organs; CT Joint Intelligence Centre and Hard Power Response Group comprising of the LEA, led by Bangladesh Police.

CT Joint Intelligence Centre (CTJIC). This would be the apex body for intelligence collection, collation and timely dissemination to the hard and soft power response group. NSI would be the lead agency. The centre would have representative from all the national intelligence organizations to provide a comprehensive threat assessment from ‘Combined Threat Assessment Centre’ (CTAC). CTAC would also be responsible to suggest national threat warning level. CTJIC would also have some other centres namely CT Training Coordination Centre (CTTCC) to coordinate CT training of all agencies, CT Research Centre (CTRC) to suggest policy changes to CTPRC, and CT Measures Monitoring Centre (CTMMC) to monitor the appropriate application of hard and soft CT measures.

Hard Power Response Group (HPRG). HPRG would be consisting of all LEAs. Bangladesh Police would be the lead organization for HPRG. Under HPRG, there would be a CT Bureau (CTB) to coordinate all aspects of hard power application by the LEAs. The composition of CTB would comprise of the representatives from all law enforcing agencies including the armed forces. Whenever required, a laid down call out procedure for armed forces would be followed where AFD would be acting as the coordinating agency for the armed forces. Depending on the threat level there would be a stand by Military CT Crisis Action Force (MCTCAF) consisting of the core capabilities of BA, BN and BAF. Once MCTCAF would be deployed along with the LEA and act as a single entity, the force would be named as Joint CT Force (JCTF), where lead element of HPRG would be in lead role.

The Proposed CT Architecture is shown in Figure 4:

Figure-4: Integrating Alert Level with CT Measures



Source: Author.

It is imperative to integrate alert levels with specific actions of different organizations for a timely response to any terrorist threat. This would help the concerned agencies to raise their activity level whenever required and thereby reducing unnecessary wear and tear at peace time. However, a minimum level of persistent vigilance and readiness to respond to any terrorist attack would always be required by all concerned agencies. For the general people it would provide a basis to understand the government’s actions and their role in particular situation. The lead agency for determining appropriate level would be CTAC of NSI. The proposed specific actions of different agencies alongwith alert levels are given below:

Table 2: Alert Level vis-à-vis Actions		
Alert Level	Actions by LEA and Intelligence Organisations	Actions by Citizens
Low (Alert Colour Green)	General Vigilance. Preventive, Protection and Pursue would continue	Maintain Normal Activities
Medium (Alert Colour Yellow) (Declare in national Media)	Increased intelligence activities Protection and Pursue measures are beeped up MCTCAF is formed and remains standby on 72 hours NTM (Notice to Move)	Maintain Normal Activities
High (Alert Colour Orange) (Declare in national media and broadcast expected actions of general people)	High level engagement of intelligence activities. Beep up the effort from other intelligence organization if required. Protection and pursue measures are beeped up to high level. - JCTF is formed and remains ready on 24 hrs NTM	Avoid mass gathering in suspected locations - Increased vigilance and report any unnatural activities to Comb TAC

<p>Extreme (Alert Colour Red)</p> <p>(Declare in national media and broadcast expected actions of general people)</p>	<p>All out effort of intelligence agencies to unearth probable plot by terrorists.</p> <p>Protection and Pursue measures to maximum.</p> <p>CEG is formed</p> <p>- JCTF on 30 minutes NTM</p>	<p>Controlled movement of general mass at suspected sites.</p> <p>- Increased vigilance and report any unnatural activities to Comb TAC</p>
<p>Source: Author.</p>		

RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed CT architecture may be implemented in three phases:

Short Term

- CTAC within NSI may be strengthened to act as a central hub for CT intelligence. A procedure to integrate general mass in sharing intelligence with CTAC may be developed.
- CTB may be formed within Bangladesh Police to act as a coordinating body for all LEAs. The working relations between CTAC and CTB may be established as soon as possible.
- Armed forces may develop joint CT exercises at AFD level. Subsequently, LEAs would be included in the same exercise.

Mid Term

- A national policy may be developed to integrate general people in intelligence sharing process.
- The hierarchy of the proposed CT architecture may be formed. A review of CT strategy integrating hard and soft measures, may be made to make it exhaustive and effective.
- The coordination among the CTAC, CTB, LEA and Armed Forces may be consolidated and make operational.

Long Term

- Scenario-based regular exercises including all government agencies, armed forces and general people as a part of 'Prepare', may be conducted to make the nation resilient.
- The proposed CT architecture may be implemented and made fully operational.

CONCLUSION

CT demands a clear strategic focus, underpinned by robust and sustainable capabilities integrating civil and military resources at the disposal of the nation. Therefore, Bangladesh needs to develop a comprehensive CT architecture comprising all the LEAs, intelligence agencies, relevant government institutions, civil society and the armed forces to make the present CT regime comprehensive and effective. The role of every stakeholder within a broad framework of CT strategy needs to be clearly defined so as to bring synergy in actions and unity in purpose.

The intelligence organizations of Bangladesh are generally working in isolation which hardly allows the opportunity of developing a coherent picture of terrorism for developing an appropriate response. CTAC within NSI is found to be most suitable organization to act as an epic centre of intelligence. Participation of local communities in information generation and intelligence sharing would be critical in combating terrorism. Moreover there is a lack of proper institutional mechanism to create an enabling environment for sharing terrorism-related information among government and local jurisdictions and with the public in general.

The paper proposes to form a National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC) that would be responsible to develop a national CT strategy, review it at regular interval and oversee its proper implementation. National Security Intelligence (NSI) is proposed to be developed as an epic centre of intelligence, within which Combined Threat Assessment Centre (CTAC) would be formed comprising representatives from all the intelligence and concerned agencies to collate, analyse and develop a clear picture on terrorism to assist subsequent decision making and issue national alert level. Bangladesh Police will be the lead agency for the measured application of hard power. Bangladesh Armed Forces would remain ready to augment the hard power response of Bangladesh Police whenever called for. The alert posture of different organizations with specific preparations to respond at a short notice would be maintained depending on

the alert level issued by the CTAC. Therefore, the proposed architecture would promote a consensus-based national perspective and enhance institutional collaboration streamlining the barriers in countering terrorism. Every CT instrument is difficult to use; using them well together is even more difficult; but using them all in synergy is critical in the fight against terrorism.

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