Fighting Back: What Governments Can Do about Terrorism, edited by Paul Shemella, Delhi: Foundation Books, 2014, INR 795

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The scourge of terrorism is not new. However, its relevance and prominence in public discourse has seen a marked rise after 9/11. While a lot of writings concentrated on the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attack and terrorism as linked with Al Qaeda, it also spurred efforts to look beyond this obvious threat into the larger transnational threat posed to the civilized world.

The last few years have also brought into focus the expanding scope of counter-terrorism endeavours based on the evolving nature of threat. This includes the financing of terrorism and the enlargement of its canvas into the maritime and cyber domains.

Fighting Back, edited by Paul Shemella, as the name suggests, is aimed at understanding the threat of terrorism, as also its countermeasures. The book is well organized and deals with the subject of terrorism in three parts. The first part deals with the phenomenon of terrorism. It provides a comprehensive overview of the nature of threat in the form of both insurgency and terrorism. It further elaborates upon the facets of terrorism to include terrorist networks, terrorist financing, cyber-terrorism, maritime terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction as related to terrorism. The second part of the book suggests government

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responses to some vital aspects of counter-terrorism. This includes risk assessment, tools and strategies to counter-terrorism, institution and capacity building, fighting terrorist ideology, intelligence, ethics in counter-terrorism, and measuring the effectiveness of the counter-terrorism forces. The last part illustrates the challenge posed by terrorism on the basis of case studies. The book enhances its appeal through a wide selection of these case studies ranging from the Tokyo subway attack, Madrid bombings, Mumbai attacks, Irish Republican Army, to Al Qaeda in Somalia. This ensures that the peculiar conditions and state reactions analysed provide a broad-based backdrop for a holistic analysis of both threats and state countermeasures.

Given the wide canvas, the book succeeds in providing an excellent overview of terrorism. The chapter on terrorist finance by Phil Williams follows a logical sequence of explaining methods of raising, transferring and spending terror funds. As an illustration, while dealing with countering the finance of terrorism, even as he emphasizes on its importance, the chapter acknowledges its limitations in the past. It attributes it to the tendency to employ money laundering measures to fight terrorist finance and the inability to successfully pursue money trails. The chapter also provides details of linkage between crime and money laundering. It employs a number of examples of terrorist organizations to explain terror funding, linking traditional methods like *hawala* and *zakat* at one end, and drug funding and charities at the other.

The chapter dealing with cyber-terrorism introduces the threat through a basic understanding of the phenomenon, given its recent emergence and speedy proliferation. Timothy J. Doorey explains cyber threats to include hacking and defacing websites at the low level to mobilization and recruiting and fund raising at the mid level. He links this with the need to set priorities and accordingly allocate resources for countering it. He goes on to explain high-end cyber threats to include cyber-attacks, which have the capability to strike at national infrastructure. While this has remained a future threat, however, given the possibility of private cyber warriors and their expertise, the possibility of terrorists exploiting this option becomes a serious issue for concern.

Paul Shemella's chapter on building an institutional response reinforces the need for a comprehensive government approach to combating terrorism. He indicates that the approach to merely look at counter-terrorism responses through the prism of traditional security and intelligence agencies is likely to produce an inadequate response.

Circumstances could dictate the importance of a state agency, for example, health care, which may normally remain on the periphery of counter-terrorism efforts; however in the immediate aftermath of an attack, could become paramount in terms of its capacity and reactions. Therefore, an effective strategy to counter-terrorism must aim at building a comprehensive response mechanism, which includes foreseeable institutions as part of this comprehensive approach. He also suggests a judicial mix between a 'task force' approach and building strong institutional mechanisms. This, when coupled with a regional and international approach, is best likely to produce suitable results.

Robert Schoultz's chapter on 'Ethics and Combating Terrorism' is an important outline for soldiers and practitioners alike, who at times sacrifice the morally correct path in the pursuit of immediate short-term gains. This can manifest itself in unwarranted levels of violence and violation of rules of engagement. The issue of legitimacy is central to the fight against terrorism. The absence of these guidelines could blur the line between terrorism by non-state and state actors. Not only is this important for countries to ensure international legitimacy but also to retain the faith and confidence of their own people, who are the final determinants of state counter-terrorism measures.

The case study of 26/11 Mumbai attacks is an objective analysis of ensuing events and more importantly, it provides critical lessons learnt therein. The chapter by Thomas Mockaitis highlights the intelligence failure of the Indian agencies prior to the attack. Further, he highlights that 'good consequence management can snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, while poor consequence management makes a bad situation worse.' This, according to him, 'was amply borne out by the Indian response to the Mumbai attacks.' He indicates poor coordination, organization, planning, equipping and responses as some of the fundamental limitations of the Indian actions after the attack. He further contrasts these with the London bombings of 2005, which despite initial mistakes, more than made up by a suitable response.

The concluding chapter of the book outlines measures to improve governmental response mechanisms and capacities to fight terrorism. The recommendations, though generic, are applicable to most countries and provide suitable guidelines to base counter-terrorism efforts. Importantly, this includes the education of the population, thereby ensuring that the strategy of intimidation of terrorists can be best rendered ineffective.

This book should be seen more as a preliminary introduction to terrorism and countermeasures by the government. It is ideal as a textbook for students and those who intend to understand the subject in its entirety. Since the book was conceptualized and written with this aim in mind, it more than meets the intended requirement. It also provides an ideal springboard for those who want to further delve into any specific area related to terrorism.

Amongst the significant omissions in the book is a chapter on perception management, which is a critical factor in the hearts and minds battle between the state and terrorist groups. This has gained greater emphasis with the unleashing of social media, with its impact evident in almost every single major terrorist campaign in the recent past. And, finally, the concluding section could benefit from case studies of successful campaigns, which are equally useful to understand what works, along with what does not, against modern terrorist groups.