

Comparative Assessment of Indian and Israeli Military Strategy in Countering Terrorism

Vinay Kaura

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India recently compared his country's cross-border response against terrorists in Pakistan—following the attack in Uri in Indian-administered Kashmir—to Israel's pre-emptive and retaliatory raids across its borders. This has given rise to serious debate about whether it is desirable for India to adopt Israeli military strategy. A country's history, political culture, and dominant discourse of national security greatly influence policymakers and their communities. With that in mind, in this article, it is argued that the fundamental differences in strategic orientation, diplomatic posture, and military tactics in India and Israel explain their different approaches and priorities in responding to terrorism. Due to the different circumstances in which the Israeli and Indian militaries operate, co-opting Israeli counterterrorism strategies would be very challenging for India.

Keywords: India, Israel, Arab, terrorism, insurgency, civil-military, Israeli military, Indian military, Kashmir, Palestinian, cybersecurity, border

Introduction

Israel as an example to emulate has become an important topic in strategic circles and academia in India since Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, compared the two country's armed forces. Speaking at a public function in

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the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh in October 2016, Prime Minister Modi likened the Indian army's targeted action a month earlier against terrorist launching pads across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan-administered Kashmir to Israel's policy of targeted military actions and assassinations. He said that "our army's valour is being discussed across the country these days. We used to hear earlier that Israel has done this. The nation has seen that the Indian Army is no less than anybody."¹

Whether Modi's observation in Himachal Pradesh was tailored for his political supporters or indicated a decisive transformation in India's strategic culture remains to be seen. But benchmarking Israel as the ideal of military action would certainly situate it within the broader narrative of Indian military strategy. The prime minister's comments and the subsequent widespread resonance in all quarters raise several questions. Does India have institutionalized structure and mechanisms in place that can be compared to Israeli standards? If not, should India aspire to match Israeli standards?

Central to the inherent volatility and instability in the Middle East is the United Nations (UN) decision in 1947 to partition the former British mandate of Palestine into two states: one Jewish and one Arab. In fact, Palestine was the first issue that the UN General Assembly was called upon to adjudicate. Rejecting the partition plan, the Arab states immediately declared war on Israel. Failing to resolve the issue with the 1948 war, the Arab states then maintained a war of attrition against Israel that was punctuated by two wars, the 1956 Sinai War and the 1967 Six-Day War. President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956 and set in motion the events that would lead to war in October 1956, in which Israel attempted to capitalize on British and French anger over Nasser's abrupt and unexpected nationalization move.

In 1967, many Arab states made a concerted effort to eliminate the Jewish state, but were pre-empted by a successful Israeli attack. The Six-Day War fundamentally altered the territorial, strategic, and psychological landscape of the Middle East, with Israel capturing territory from Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. After that, the Arab aim changed from eliminating the Jewish state to recapturing these territories. In the 1973 War, known as the Yom Kippur War, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack to regain the lost territories. Initially the Israeli military suffered heavy losses, but soon the tide turned and the Israeli military pushed the Egyptians and Syrians back to their original

1 PTI, "PM lauds Indian army," *Hindu*, October 19, 2016.

lines. In 1981, Israel invaded Lebanon, with the aim of silencing the artillery attacks by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

Although Israel has signed peace treaties with Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994) and has begun a peace process with the PLO, the conflict has remained intractable. Israel has faced two major Palestinian intifadas in the West Bank and Gaza since the late 1980s. It must not only prepare its armed forces for a major interstate war, potentially against Syria or Iran, but also for counterterrorist and counterinsurgency operations. In addition, the Iranian-backed radical Shia militia, Hezbollah, has maintained guerrilla operations against Israeli soldiers and civilians along the Israeli border, which sparked an interstate war in 2006. Israel's cross-border attack on Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006 can be defined as a case of extraterritorial law enforcement.

Strategic Orientation

Security, survival, and sovereignty are the root of Israel's strategic orientation. Israeli strategists feel a sense of geostrategic vulnerability. Israel's lack of territorial depth has exerted a strong influence on its strategic doctrine. One cannot forget that in 1948, Israel's territory was quite small and narrow, and Jerusalem was not included within its borders, until the city was divided between Israel and Jordan by the 1949 cease fire. The victory in the 1967 War was a watershed event as the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula gave Israel much greater strategic depth than it had at its inception.² It can well be argued that this initial lack of territorial depth made it imperative that Israel fights battles beyond its own borders.

Existential fears also drive Israel's nuclear program, as does the assessment that in the event of military defeat in a conventional war, the nuclear option would come to Israel's rescue. Nuclear weapons are considered an insurance policy in case Israel is faced with extreme military and political exigencies, such as loss of its conventional military edge or acquisition of nuclear weapons by an Arab state. Israel's nuclear program embodies the country's preference to maximize power and freedom of action.³ The Israeli

2 Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Causes of War: Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).

3 Efraim Inbar, *Israel's National Security Issues and Challenges since the Yom Kippur War* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

perception of the Iranian nuclear program as an existential threat should be seen in this context.

The impact of the Holocaust gave new meaning to Zionism and left deep scars upon the State of Israel. The Holocaust is one of the largest mass annihilations of human beings in modern history; thus, the need for security has become a fundamental component of Israel's DNA. The emphasis placed on the exceptional price that the Jewish people paid for its national right is a reference to the Holocaust, which is used as both a source and justification for Israel's offensive security doctrine. It was by force of this doctrine that Israeli planes bombed the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq in June 1981 as well as a suspected Syrian nuclear site in September 2007. The justification for the 1982 Lebanon War was also based on the lessons of the Holocaust, as the Israeli leadership understood them.⁴

Analysis at this level implies that Israeli strategic planning has realized three important objectives: securing Israel's existence; defending Israel's territorial integrity; and gaining an upper hand in terms of power vis-à-vis Israel's enemies. Indeed, Israel has substantially advanced its relative position of power because it has managed to distance key Arab states from coalitions that seek to attack it. Moreover, Israel has several times withstood the test of war.

India's strategic perspective also has been shaped by historical and geographical factors as well as by the geopolitical realities it has faced at different periods. Beginning with independence in 1947 until the end of the twentieth century, India responded to the regional and global geopolitical situation based on its own security perceptions. During this phase, the India's security discourse was most influenced by the Cold War, when external threats in the dynamics of a bipolar world were the primary sources of insecurity; in contrast, nuclear weapons were perceived as providing a security guarantee. Strategic policy making was not institutionalized, and India's charismatic political leaders, notably Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira Gandhi, determined India's strategic vision. The end of the Cold War and India's

4 Guy Ben-Porat and others, *Israel Since 1980* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

nuclear tests in 1998, however, dramatically changed both its security perceptions and strategic perspective.⁵

India's contemporary strategic orientation is shaped by many aspirations and challenges that are quite unique. India is among the world's largest countries, both demographically and geographically, and its industrial and technological base is huge. A declared nuclear-weapon state with impressive space capabilities, India cannot but play an important role both regionally and globally. India is the natural leader in South Asia as it occupies almost three-fourths of the region's territory and population. India's borders, which are land- and sea-based, riverine and mountainous, are long and porous, making neighborly relations extremely difficult to manage. Most importantly, the borders have not been completely delineated and demarcated.

India is locked in an enduring conflict with its smaller neighbor, Pakistan.⁶ The core dispute remains Kashmir, which Pakistan claims on religious grounds. Since 1947, India and Pakistan have fought three major and one minor war. India has also been fighting terrorism in several parts of the country and carrying out an asymmetric war in Kashmir. Pakistan increased its support for insurgency in Kashmir as it acquired nuclear capability. The introduction of nuclear weapons to the arsenals of both adversaries has since increased the potential costs of conflict. Nonetheless, both India and Pakistan have engaged in frustrating, intermittent, and ineffective peace talks aimed at settling their border disputes. The India-China dyad constitutes another rivalry in the region.

The challenges India faces from outside forces, such as Pakistan and China, may not be existential, but are still daunting. Until India reaches an understanding with Pakistan, peace and stability in South Asia is not possible. Growing instability and insecurity in Afghanistan has far-reaching implications for India. Effective international cooperation on terrorism is still a major challenge. The emergence of violent non-state actors confronting the Indian state has seriously affected national security. The internal threats to India in the shape of communal and social violence are also formidable.

5 C. Raja Mohan, *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Viking, 2003).

6 Sumit Ganguly, *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Military Tactics

Israel's security situation is precarious. Israel is surrounded by states and non-state entities that it has fought since its creation in 1948. Such conflicts include the War of Independence in 1948, the Sinai War in 1956, the Six-Day War in 1967, a war of attrition with Egypt in 1970–1971, the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the First Lebanon War in 1982, the First Intifada in 1987–1993, the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000–2005, the Second Lebanon War in 2006, and the Gaza War in 2014, also known as Operation Protective Edge. Iran, which does not share a border with Israel, has also expressed open aggression toward Israel. As far as non-state adversaries are concerned, Israel faces threats from Hamas and Fatah in the West Bank and Gaza; in Lebanon, Hezbollah continues to pose a danger to Israel.

The foremost priority of the Israeli military is to protect the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Israel has responded to its adversaries by building a military that relies on quality rather than quantity. It invests heavily in high-tech weaponry, recruits its armed forces through mandatory national service, and maintains a reserve force comprised of a significant portion of the country's population. The most salient trait of the Israeli military distinguishing it from most other national armies is the extraordinary impact it has had on the country's social structure.

There are two aspects of Israeli military operations. The first is covert operations that are designed to foil terrorist strikes and deter assaults on Israeli citizens. The second is a series of wars and military operations. Israel has been involved in direct military action for decades now. Israel's military's performance against its external adversaries like Egypt and Syria has been outstanding. The destruction of the Egyptian air force on the eve of the Six-Day War in 1967 was a coup that led to the imbalance of the Arab front. Israel's capacity to withstand the shock of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and even turn the tables by launching a counterattack across the Suez Canal and over the Golan Heights was a stupendous military feat.

After years of adapting to the challenges of the intifadas, the Israeli Army also has become highly competent in addressing what it calls low-intensity conflict threats. Nonetheless, Israel found itself struggling to fight what its strategists refer to as high-intensity conflict (HIC) in Lebanon in 2006. The Israeli experience in Lebanon demonstrates that intense combat is not so much about scale as it is about the qualitative challenges posed by hybrid

adversaries. Based on their experiences, the Israelis have reoriented the focus of much of their training in HIC with greater success.⁷

India has primarily geared its military strategy to wage interstate wars with both conventional and nuclear arsenals. Pakistan, India's arch rival, has focused its military strategy exclusively on waging a war against India. Nevertheless, Indian policy is far more complicated as it focuses on interstate wars with an emphasis on containing local insurgencies and small-scale border wars. However, recent experience does not provide any strong evidence that the Indian military has shifted away from interstate warfare.⁸ This analysis finds credence in the argument of Rajesh Rajagopalan, who writes that "the Indian Army has been able to adapt to counterinsurgency to a limited extent, and that the primary limitation has been the strong conventional war bias in the doctrine."⁹

The ambiguity and controversy surrounding the Cold Start war doctrine is a stark reminder that India faces huge gaps between its doctrinal aspirations and its capabilities. At its core, the Cold Start doctrine, which emphasizes rapid mobilization and limited territorial objectives, is designed to attack and destroy Pakistan's military forces in "punishing blows" in retaliation for terrorist attacks against India, without triggering wider conventional or nuclear escalation. Although India's new army chief, General Bipin Rawat, has referred to the existence of this doctrine in a recent interview,¹⁰ others have said that "there is still no evidence that India has the required capabilities to implement anything resembling Cold Start."¹¹

Comparative Assessment

Many Indians have mentioned on numerous occasions that India can use Israel as a model on issues involving military operations. It can be argued that both

7 David E. Johnson and others, eds., *Preparing and Training for the Full Spectrum of Military Challenges: Insights from the Experiences of China, France, the United Kingdom, India, and Israel* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2009), pp. xx, xxvi.

8 Norrin M. Ripsman and T.V. Paul, *Globalization and the National Security State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 126.

9 Rajesh Rajagopalan, *Fighting Like a Guerrilla: The Indian Army and Counterinsurgency* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2008), p. 29.

10 General Bipin Rawat, interview by Sandeep Unnithan, "We Will Go Across Again," *India Today*, January 16, 2017, pp. 13–14.

11 Vipin Narang and Walter C. Ladwig III, "Taking 'Cold Start' Out of the Freezer?" *Hindu*, January 11, 2017.

India and Israel face strategic environments that require their armed forces to prepare for a mix of internal and external threats. These threats demand militaries that are trained, organized, and equipped for conventional and low-intensity operations. Adapting their militaries to low-intensity conflict or small wars has been a gradual process as organizational dynamics have led them to prefer preparing for conventional war; nonetheless, in several areas they have made efforts to adapt to the new situation, with varying degrees of results.

The fact that Israel must prepare its military for a variety of threats makes the country a good point of comparison with India. As the Indian military has learned in Kashmir and in Northeast India, violent, non-state actors—despite being labelled “low-intensity threats”—can be very difficult to handle. In addition to low-intensity threats, India’s military must also prepare to deal with state adversaries who are armed with nuclear weapons. Thus, Israel’s recent experience in dealing with both an insurgency in the Palestinian Territories and a well-equipped militia in Lebanon—while maintaining its readiness for operations against Iran and Syria—can be a useful model for the Indian military.

On the macro level, India’s military certainly can learn from Israel’s methods for homeland security. When it comes to specific issues, however, Israel’s experience may not be relevant in terms of augmenting India’s security environment. The following factors are worth noting for making any comparison between operations and campaigns undertaken by the militaries of India and Israel.

Offensive vs. Defensive Strategies

Much of Israel’s military behavior has been derived in part from long-term military conflicts and partly from Israel’s geographic and demographic limitations. Consequently, the Israeli military has developed a military doctrine that involves fighting battles outside Israel’s borders. In simple terms, Israel’s national defense is offensive; it uses preemptive strikes as an important factor in its military strategy. On the other hand, India’s military posture has been largely defensive. Although its military plans have catered to offensive actions against Pakistan, executing these plans has been difficult. Even when there was sufficient evidence that the terror attacks against the Indian parliament in 2001, in Mumbai in 2008, and the Pathankot airbase in

2016 were planned and masterminded by terrorists in Pakistan, the Indian government did not take punitive actions.

Israel's land mass and population is less than 1 percent of India's. Israel has fought wars with all its neighbors, and its relations with these neighbors have been tense due to territorial disputes. Israel lacks not only strategic depth, but also faces a real sense of geopolitical insecurity. This is an important reason for the country to push its defensive front beyond its borders, including offshore and into foreign territory. India, on the other hand, has sufficient strategic depth against its adversaries. After the Indian military's recent surgical strikes across the LoC, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that "India has not attacked anyone. It is neither hungry for any territory."¹²

Israeli leaders tend to publicly threaten Israel's neighbors with military action, which are often reinforced by Israeli actions. The credibility of Israel's determination to use its military power increased significantly after Menachem Begin came to power in 1980. His hawkish image abroad obviously enhanced Israeli deterrence. Begin was more willing to use force than his predecessors to achieve political ends beyond Israel's borders.¹³ Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu, a vocal critic of his predecessors' so-called dovishness, also enjoys the reputation of being extremely tough on Hamas and Hezbollah. Despite his seemingly hardline orientation and aggressive public posturing, India's Prime Minister Modi has not yet acquired a hawkish image. He has yet to come up with an equivalent of the "Begin Doctrine," which holds that Israel would act pre-emptively to counter any perceived threat to its existence.

Civil-Military Relations

A symbiotic relationship exists between Israel's citizens and its armed forces, with the latter acting as a unifying force for the whole of Israeli society. There is near unanimity among researchers that the military has had a central, if not dominant, role in shaping Israel's security policy. Although the military is subordinate to the political leadership in Israel, it is an equal partner in the security and foreign policy-making process. The uniqueness of Israeli civil-military relations is demonstrated by the fact that the military, which

12 "India has never attacked or been hungry for territory, only fought for others: PM Modi," *Indian Express*, October 3, 2016.

13 Inbar, *Israel's National Security Issues and Challenges since the Yom Kippur War*, p. 16.

is “deeply involved in the political process, influences both the political echelon and the public by its knowledge and persuasive argumentation, and still obeys the political echelon.”¹⁴

The very foundation of the concept of a “nation in arms” or a “citizens’ army” is rooted in Israel’s almost universal conscription policy, which was implemented due to Israel’s early numerical inferiority relative to its Arab neighbors. This policy fosters a strong bond between society and the military. While undergoing the compulsory military service, all Israelis learn to live together and share a common aim of defending their homeland. Even after becoming civilians, the Israelis continue to remain “soldiers on eleven months’ annual leave,” as Yigal Yadin, Israel’s second chief of staff had remarked.¹⁵ An analyst has critically noted that “Israel is not so much a state that has a military; rather, it is a leading example of a militarily fueled society that codifies and mobilizes a state in its image.”¹⁶ Because of the dominance of the military establishment in Israel, the distinction between civilian and military leaders is hard to determine. Military leaders, both retired and serving, continue to exert substantial influence on aspects of Israel’s politics, society, economy, and culture. Upon the conclusion of their military career, military leaders often seek second careers in the civilian sector. It is no accident that Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon, and Yitzhak Rabin, all top military leaders, rose to the position of prime minister.

Paradoxically, the preponderance of Israel’s security establishment has often made it easier for top generals and spymasters to challenge the inflexible and tough policies of some prime ministers. Prime Minister Netanyahu has been gradually marginalizing the security establishment, which has been critical of some of his policies. The appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as defense minister in May 2016 has been perceived as an act of retaliation against the security establishment. Hardliner Lieberman is known for his harsh

14 Kobi Michael, “The Dilemma behind the Classical Dilemma of Civil-Military Relations: The “Discourse Space” Model and the Israeli Case during the Oslo Process,” *Armed Forces and Society* 33, no. 4 (2007): 518–546.

15 Ahron Bregman, *Israel’s Wars: A History Since 1947* (New York: Routledge, 1947), pp. 46–47.

16 David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* (Victoria: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 137.

criticism of the Israeli military's conduct, and always demands aggressive measures against the Palestinians.¹⁷

Since Moshe Dayan's appointment as defense minister in 1967, the post of defense minister has been given to politicians with significant security background, apart from Menachem Begin (1980-1981), Amir Peretz (2006-2007), and now Avigdor Lieberman. However, Lieberman's appointment—likely to be a temporary phenomenon—should not be perceived as the end of the military establishment's dominant role in the Israeli political process.

On the other hand, India's civil-military framework is heavily tilted in favor of the civilian leadership. The military is discouraged from participating in the political process and is isolated from civil society. India's civilian bureaucracy almost completely dominates the security processes and top positions in the national security structures. The military leadership usually does not communicate its differences of opinion with the civil leadership to the media and the public.

The contours of the civil-military interface in independent India were formed during the tenure of Prime Minister Nehru when his controversial defense minister, V.K. Krishna Menon, set in motion several organizational changes, which the armed forces vehemently opposed. Given the way that India's political leadership handled the operational planning before and after the disastrous 1962 war with China, it became amply clear that purely operational matters must be left to the military's discretion. Since then, a tradition seems to have been established where broad operational directives are laid down by the political leadership, and the actual planning of operations is left to the military leadership.¹⁸ Thus, for example, the military has continued to exercise its veto on operational issues such as withdrawing from Siachen Glacier and revoking the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in some contentious areas.

Although retired Indian military leaders have been appointed as ambassadors and governors of states, unlike in Israel, they rarely become active in politics, and when they do, they do not play a significant role. General V.K. Singh, a former army chief, was elected to the parliament in 2014. This is only

17 Isabel Kershner, "Naming of Israeli Defense Minister Augments Netanyahu's Alliance," *New York Times*, May 25, 2016.

18 Harsh V. Pant, "Indian Strategic Culture: The Debate and its Consequences," in *Handbook of India's International Relations*, ed. David Scott (London: Routledge, 2011).

the second time when a former army chief has entered the parliament since the appointment of General Shankar Roychowdhary. Moreover, General Singh holds the position of a junior minister in the government and not in the Ministry of Defense.

Growing demands have been made to give the military a prominent role in the decision making of India's national security. Those advocating for the enhanced role for the military strongly criticize India's dysfunctional civil-military relations and lack of initiative in reforming the defense acquisition processes. It is argued that Indian democracy has been successful in maintaining a system of strong civilian control over the military, but has adversely affected the quality of strategic decision-making.¹⁹

Diplomatic Environments

Israel and its opponents in the Middle East rarely interact as Israel only has diplomatic relations with two of its neighbors, Jordan and Egypt. Israel has not established diplomatic relations with Syria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Iraq, or the other major regional powers—much less Iran—as its relationship with these countries is marked by long-standing hostility. For example, Israel often threatens air strikes on Iran, which is an obvious expression of Israel's perennial search for security. In contrast, India has always maintained formal diplomatic ties with both its rivals, Pakistan and China; even during military conflicts, India did not expel their ambassadors. Similarly, India reduced its diplomatic presence in Beijing following the Indo-China war in 1962, but did not terminate its relations. Indian leaders must consider this overall foreign policy situation before considering any punitive action against state and non-state entities across its borders.

Israel remains the most important and capable nuclear power in the volatile Middle Eastern region. Israeli military strategists are aware that Israel's cross-border raids or pre-emptive strikes in Palestinian territory, Lebanon, or Syria would not invite superior military response or a nuclear attack. The maximum damage that can be inflicted on Israel could be guerrilla attacks and rocket launches by Hezbollah and Hamas. Such asymmetry gives Israeli military a stupendous safety valve. In contrast, India has two neighbors with nuclear power. It is neither possible nor desirable to replicate Israeli provocations.

19 Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming: India's Military Modernization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2010).

India's policy toward its immediate neighbors has a strong domestic impact, particularly in its border provinces. Sporadic tensions in Sri Lanka impinge on Tamil Nadu in southern India, which has close ethnic links with the Tamils of Sri Lanka. As shown by India's military intervention in Sri Lanka, political considerations in Tamil Nadu influenced New Delhi's policies toward the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. This holds true for India's policy on Bangladesh, where strong domestic input from the West Bengal is clearly visible. Even India's policy towards Pakistan is not insular, and is affected by political developments in Kashmir. In this way, India's policy toward its neighbors is shaped primarily by domestic political dynamics rather than by strict foreign policy calculations. In contrast, similar considerations do not constrain Israel's foreign policy.

Relative Military Strength

In terms of the quality of its weapons and its manpower, Israel continues to hold a decisive advantage over its Arab neighbors. Besides sophisticated weaponry, Israel has distinct psychological and strategic advantages over its rivals. In contrast, although India enjoys a certain military lead over Pakistan, it does not have any overriding strategic and psychological advantages over Pakistan. Moreover, India does not have any advantage over China. Although India has buttressed its offensive capabilities and has been acquiring new power projection capabilities, it does not have credible indigenous defense-manufacturing facilities.

The Israeli military rectified most of the deficiencies revealed in the 1973 War and subsequently managed to attain several stunning achievements. The most famous special operation was executed in July 1976, when the elite special forces unit, *Sayeret Matkal*, rescued Israeli passengers who were held hostage at the Entebbe airport in Uganda after Palestinian terrorists hijacked their plane. Destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981 was another successful special operation. Although condemned in international circles at the time, the preemptive strike almost neutralized Saddam Hussein's nuclear weapons program. These multiple triumphs have confirmed Israel's military superiority beyond its borders. On the other hand, the recently executed "surgical strikes" across the LoC in Kashmir is one of the few notable achievements of the Indian army beyond India's borders. The Indian army has continued to pursue defensive capabilities to enhance

deterrence. Indian leadership has so far failed to display the political will to overcome policy paralysis in the defense sector. One swallow does not make a summer. It will take some time for India's military to develop capability to act beyond its borders.

No discussion of the Israeli military strength would be complete without commenting on the role played by the United States. Israel regards the United States as its principal supporter and ally, and the United States views Israel as a vital regional partner. The common interests of both countries are much greater than their so-called differences. As a result, the United States provides Israel with its latest weaponry, while Israel applies its capacity for innovation in science and technology to manufacture new weapons. Over the last few decades, Israel has become a leading exporter of defense equipment and has emerged among the top ten arms exporters in the global market. These trends provide explanations for the powerful Israeli military. On the other hand, India has neither access to first-rate military hardware nor critical diplomatic support from the world's leading superpower for any of its military actions.

Legal Structures for Counterterrorism

Police, intelligence, and military organizations all contribute to counterterrorism efforts in India. India's closest structural equivalent to Israel's Ministry of Public Security is the Ministry of Home Affairs, which oversees national police, domestic intelligence, and paramilitaries. The major legislation that deals with terrorism in India is the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Some Indian provinces such as Maharashtra and Karnataka have laws that are used to prosecute suspected terrorists. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), the first anti-terrorism law to define and counter terrorist activities, lapsed in 1995.²⁰ The subsequent Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was repealed in 2004, after several allegations of misuse were made in applying the anti-terror law. An amendment to the already existing UAPA then followed. India's experiments with TADA, POTA, and UAPA have failed to deliver the desired results. There have been allegations of designing the anti-terror laws in order to shield or harass particular communities or

20 "The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987," South Asia Terrorism Portal, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/actandordinances/TADA.HTM#7A>.

religious denominations. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) of India opined in its report in 2008 that “a comprehensive and effective legal framework to deal with all aspects of terrorism needs to be enacted. The law should have adequate safeguards to prevent its misuse.”²¹

One of the major deficiencies in India’s institutional approach to counterterrorism is the gross divide between how the central and state governments view counterterrorism. This is the reason that the proposal to create the National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) has not been successful. Some state governments vetoed its formation on the basis that its functioning would undermine the federal structure of India’s constitution.²² The need to bifurcate the internal security function of the Ministry of Home Affairs into a separate ministry, just like Israel’s Ministry of Public Security or the Department of Homeland Security in the United States, has been felt for a long time, but no action has been taken in this direction. The National Investigation Agency, which came into being after the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, also lacks teeth in its present form.

Although both India and Israel are parliamentary democracies, the nature of their governing systems is different. Unlike India, Israel is a unitary state. This fact gives it certain advantages which are denied to India because of its federal character. Thus, the Israeli government does not feel constrained by the presence of another constitutionally-mandated executive authority that can confront its writ in creating legislative and institutional mechanisms for dealing with public safety and security, including counterterrorism. In June 2016, Israel enacted new legislation, expanding the state’s counterterrorism powers and the definitions of terrorist organizations and terrorist acts.²³ The new anti-terror law is an amalgamation of most of the provisions of the existing counterterrorism law, while it replaces several defense regulations enacted

21 Government of India, Second Administrative Reforms Commission, “Dealing with Terrorism: Legal Framework,” ch. 4, in “Combatting Terrorism, Protecting by Righteousness,” Report no. 8, http://arc.gov.in/8threport/ARC_8thReport_Ch4.pdf.

22 Gurmeet Kanwal, “India’s Counter Terrorism Policies are Mired in Systemic Weaknesses,” Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, May 14, 2012, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/IndiasCounterTerrorismPoliciesareMiredinSystemicWeaknesses_gkanwal_140512.

23 Jonathan Lis, “Knesset Passes Sweeping Anti-Terrorism Law,” *Haaretz*, June 15, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.725225>.

by the British Mandate. Though intended to strengthen both the security and the legal establishments in their fight against terrorism, the new law's implementation, in practice, is going to be tough, particularly regarding the "checks and balances necessary to safeguard against unreasonable violations of individual human rights."²⁴

Cybersecurity

Israel has developed world-class expertise in cybersecurity to counter terrorism and other emerging threats. As the Israeli government institutions and military are under constant attack from cyberterrorists and jihadist hackers, Israel's law enforcement and the intelligence agencies have created a robust and secure communications architecture, with both defensive and offensive capacities in the domain of cybersecurity. It has been rightly observed that Israel's "cyber revolution is the third revolution after the agricultural and industrial one."²⁵ Other countries are adopting the Israeli approach in their national cybersecurity policy.

On the other hand, India has yet to develop appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that global best practices in cybersecurity are translated into a suitable doctrine. India's security agencies and armed forces lack a specialist culture; there are no cyber specialists or information warfare specialists who would continue working in their area of specialization after their limited tenures. The paramilitary and the military continue to be led by generalist officers, as they are often called. Even when these officers develop a degree of specialization in the cyber domain, their next appointment often takes precedence over retaining domain expertise.²⁶

India's cyber capabilities lag significantly behind global players, and due to "little control over the hardware used by Indian internet users as well as the information that is carried through them, India's national security architecture

24 The Legal Counseling and Legislation Department (International Law), "The Counter Terrorism Law 5775–2015," http://www.justice.gov.il/Units/InternationalAgreements/HumanRightsAndForeignRelations/Faq/CounterTerrorismLaw5775-2015_BackgroundDescriptionJune2016.pdf.

25 John Reed, "Israel Cyber-Security Expertise Lures Growing Share of Investment," *Financial Times*, January 12, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/dfa5c916-b90e-11e5-b151-8e15c9a029fb>.

26 Vivek Chadha, *Even If It Ain't Broke Yet, Do Fix It: Enhancing Effectiveness Through Military Change* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2016), p. 129.

faces a difficult task in cyberspace.”²⁷ The Information Technology (IT) Act, enacted in 2000, has long been considered outdated and in need of a complete overhaul. Several agencies have been entrusted with cybersecurity management at various levels, but overlapping organizational charters, the duplication of efforts, and obstacles in coordinating cyberoperations among various stakeholders are all challenges that have yet to be addressed.²⁸ Despite having a national cybersecurity policy in 2013 and a national cybersecurity coordinator in 2014, the overall cybersecurity ecosystem in India has not improved much.²⁹ India ranks 96 and 105 in terms of download speed and average bandwidth availability respectively.³⁰ India is still at least ten years behind Israel and other developed countries in the field of cybersecurity.

One recent example would suffice to explain India’s serious shortcoming in the cyber front. In tune with global trends, cyberspace has provided Islamist extremist and jihadist organisations in Kashmir with a psychological platform through which they can transmit their message of propaganda, indoctrination, and recruitment to ever-expanding audiences. The rising use of internet and smartphones has added fuel to the fire.³¹ The ways in which the security and intelligence agencies handled the recent turmoil and violence in Kashmir, in the wake of eliminating a terrorist on July 8, 2016, left much to be desired. Instead of effectively countering the cyber insurgency waged by local militants and Pakistan-based jihadist cyber networks, the Indian government responded by closing down mobile networks and internet connectivity in Kashmir, depriving its security agencies of vital clues, trends, and information in cyberspace. According to an analysis of social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp during the week of

27 Arun Mohan Sukumar, “Upgrading India’s Cyber Security Architecture,” *Hindu*, March 9, 2016.

28 Arun Mohan Sukumar and Col. R.K. Sharma, “The Cyber Command: Upgrading India’s National Security Architecture,” ORF Special Report 9 (New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, March 2016).

29 Subimal Bhattacharjee, “Too Casual an Approach to Cyber Security,” *Business Line*, October 3, 2016.

30 Chittaranjan Tembhekar, “Demon in the Details: India has Low Cyber Security, Bandwidth,” *Times of India*, December 22, 2016, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/demon-in-the-details-india-has-low-cyber-security-bandwidth/articleshow/56112036.cms>.

31 Justin Rowlett, “How Smartphones are Shaping Kashmir’s Insurgency,” *BBC*, July 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-36771838>.

July 8–14, 2016, out of a sample of 126,000 responses, 45 percent was from “unknown” geographical locations; 40 percent was from Indian locations; and about 8 percent was from Pakistan.³² This is hardly surprising. As long as the Indian government does not develop sophisticated cyberintelligence-gathering capabilities, militants will continue to exploit various social media platforms to incite terrorism.

Conclusion

This article has looked at the Israeli strategic orientation, providing a brief history of the Israeli army’s handling of the conflict, and has examined different circumstances in which the Israeli and Indian militaries operate. For Israelis, the asymmetric conflict with the Palestinians is about recognizing their right to live in a Jewish state, free from external threat. Those Palestinians who advocate and apply violent terrorist methods of resistance, including suicide bombings and rocket attacks, for overcoming this asymmetry further cement Israel’s siege mentality.

This paper attempted to comparatively assess Indian and Israeli military strategies to show the differences in the way their militaries respond to terrorism and other forms of asymmetric warfare. It must be acknowledged that military responses to asymmetric warfare pose several moral, legal, and strategic difficulties. Israel has offensively and proactively responded to acts of terrorism, but India has preferred to remain defensive and reactive in its response. Terrorist attacks have occurred in India with alarming regularity. In the current geopolitical circumstances, there does not seem to be much hope of reducing the jihadist terror threat in the future. Every time an attack occurs in India, there is clamour for retributive action against the perpetrators; but India’s approach to counterterrorism remains as defensive and unimaginative as ever. If India does not overcome the several strategic and geopolitical challenges outlined above, its military will not be able to counter terrorism in the ways that Israel does. There is an urgent need to devise new preventive measures against such attacks. Although the Indian army conducted retaliatory action after the Uri terror attack, it is difficult to predict with certainty that this offensive posture will continue.

32 Himanshi Dhawan, “Pakistan May be Waging Proxy War in Cyberspace Too,” *Times of India*, July 19, 2016, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Pakistan-may-be-waging-proxy-war-in-cyberspace-too/articleshow/53273657.cms>.