



IDEOLOGY AND MILITARY PLANNING IN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIC AWARENESS

Dr. Al-Sadiq Al-Faqih

Sudanese Diplomat and Former Secretary General of the Arab Thought Forum (ATF)

This article highlights the ideological vision of military strategy and strategic awareness, which is one of the major planning approaches in attack and defense, in the context of military ideology as a frame of reference, and high command vision building that practically affects this strategy development. Strategic awareness as knowledge entails taking a distinct approach to sensory information organization and interpretation, variable and update adaptation, trend and development prediction, and strategic reconstruction of practical cognitive standpoints and frames of reference.

Defense Strategy

Knowledge is the essence of thought that brings performance change, its constant updates based on intellectual prowess, which is positively manifested in making right decisions at the right moment. Strategic awareness is an unusual recognition, given how it is linked to innovative and strategic thinking when handling situations. It is also correlated to the challenging decision-making process, and requires situational awareness. This article explores some fundamental principles of strategic awareness in the military domains, relevant practical concepts, and the positioning of counter-terrorism in the knowledge system to ensure human security.

Military leaders describe counter-terrorism as an “active defense strategy”. This strategic concept combines proactive measures taken to anticipate, address, and prevent conflicts, with concepts of wartime operations, which aim at achieving military supremacy, undermining the opponent’s capacities, as well as imposing terms of victory, thus eliminating potential threats. The strategy asserts the integration of all operations: defence and attack, defensive maneuvers, and counterattacks within the war on terrorist hotbeds, in order to prevent terrorist organization, cripple terrorists’ movements, continuously clash with them in all theatres of operations, and dismantle terrorist infrastructure and ideologies. Eradicating terrorism requires destroying its

military assets, cutting off its financing at source. This is a war of a particular nature unlike ground attacks in regular wars that seek the acquisition of territory.

Relationship Controversy

The controversial relationship between the principles governing military planning and strategic awareness is considered the basis of variable analysis and assessment within the framework of counter-terrorism decision making. The USA and the West are driven by concerns resulting from ideological residue that precludes providing an all-encompassing definition of terrorism. On another note, this relationship is clearly manifested between major powers with ideology-based armies, such as Russia that inherited the Soviet Union, and China which is racing against time to build a striking military force. Military philosophy is closely linked to the political philosophy of the government. This stems from cognitive wiring, which aligns with and reinforces such a philosophy. It is an innovative creation of the mind, based on the information at hand and the analytical capacity of mental perceptions, and acts as a mental reference based on understanding performance variables. The military institution becomes evidently dynamic based on how it can develop and change its basic structure in terms of armament, training, organization, and deployment in line with the threats posed to national security and interests.

Strategic awareness incorporates awareness of the optimum use of military resources, such as human potential, ordnance, and intelligence, in order to attack, undermine, and eliminate opponents, forcing them to surrender. Such awareness develops through focused training and keeping up to date with military sciences .

Modern military theory classifies warfare into three main levels:

1. strategic ;
2. operational ;
3. and tactical ;

This classification is based on ancient warfare, with a modern formulation brought about following the Franco-Prussian War, including the five main military strategies: extermination, exhaustion, annihilation, intimidation and subversion. These bases are incorporated together within a theoretical framework to develop a strong, cohesive military strategy. The controversy over these strategies is no longer in place, since the

military staff of experts and professionals are capable of formulating these strategies based on their theoretical knowledge and expertise.

The Nature of War

War for those aware of its reality is based on various levels, including:

- Physical Level: Includes the size of arms and how far they are sophisticated, number of soldiers, and the power of logistic support .
- Psychological Level: Includes intangible things, such as the morale of leadership and soldiers, courage, and prowess .
- Analytical Level: Involves the ability of leaders to assess the situation on the battlefield, make right and effective decisions in due course, and formulate perfectly tactical plans to implement those decisions .

In this context, strategic philosophy refers to personal individual views related to organizational strategy that is based on the mind, expertise, and intuition. Philosophical views can be influenced by a number of personal factors, referring to a set of beliefs, personal views, or rules related to the nature of strategy. Military leadership utilizes these beliefs, values, and rules in the strategic decision-making process to provide guidance, coherence, mission, and the motivation to pursue the strategic objectives of the state or alliance sharing a common goal .

Thus, in the Cold War, the distribution of US military forces across the world was based on the threats posed by the Soviet Union and its socialist bloc and their military representation in the Warsaw Pact. The ideology of the enemy was publicly declared, and the threats were clear. This is clearly manifested in the current Chinese situation, where the USA and its so-called allies are assessing a situation that relies on firsthand knowledge of the staunch opponent. Thus, China was not left with any potential locations for any cold or heated war. This was manifested in the US resolution of joining the trilateral AUKUS security pact with Britain and Australia .

The strategies of Washington's Cold War with Moscow are now being applied to Beijing by reassigning areas where US forces are based. Thus, the Cold War strategy is to deploy well-equipped forces in specific locations to deal with a known enemy. This strategy requires a comprehensive knowledge of enemies to restrict their military movement, which is believed to threaten the interests of the United States and its allies.

Active Defence

Military leaders describe the current counter-terrorism strategy as an active defense strategy. This military concept dates back a long time. It evolved from a practical discussion to a strategic ideological framework, particularly in the late Soviet Era. In Russia, military strategy is the highest military art. It provides general principles of the theory and practices of warfare, preparation for national defence, ways to prevent conflict, wartime force management, and the identification of strategic operations .

Military strategy and the relevant practical concepts show the “Russian way of war” and the implications of mainstream ideology. This means that military strategy shows the ideological planning options, operational concepts of organization, the hierarchy in operations and their achievability. Accordingly, the concept of activity in military strategy describes both proactive measures taken to deter conflict and principles of war management as an emergency threatening society, or a rising conflict in certain countries. Thus, precautionary measures are taken to neutralize their danger and threat, including utilizing limited forces. The defence strategy asserts how maneuvers and counterattacks are perceived as constant engagement in all theatres of military operations. Thus, counter-terrorism military strategy consists of defensive practical concepts and offensive structures, without clear differentiation. Active defence in the war against terrorism undermines the strategic value of lands under attack while possessing a space field advantage in defence and maneuvering .

Counter-terrorism military strategy is the highest military art, given how it provides general principles of the theory and practice of warfare, starting with preparation for defence and attack, and ending with infiltration, explosions and surprise attacks. Military strategy must therefore be developed in response to the changing environment that leads to focusing on the maneuver warfare approach, which has been recognized as a viable combat philosophy over the past decades. Maneuver warfare arose in the last decade given how adequate it is for the current counter-terrorism situation. Even though this approach is designed for the battlefield, it presents a new creative way of thinking regarding counter strategies for addressing other military threats. This allows politicians to make use of them rather than submitting to challenges and difficulties they face in the war against terrorism.

Conclusion

Despite the similarities between the types of warfare in military operations, the organization of armies, and terrorist acts, which are often cited in political discourse, it is impossible to apply military warfare principles as a whole to different environments, such as counter-terrorism. These other types of war do not take place in specific locations; civilians become endangered; and moral standards governing armies during war cannot be guaranteed under hit-and-run tactics. Yet, armies continue to compete over developing well-established, feasible strategic plans in a world of chaos as the one created by the war on terrorism .

Although developing plans for regular military battles may seem easy, counter-terrorism is directly related to strategies of intellectual work in particular since they are developed according to the given circumstances in maneuver warfare. Accordingly, such an approach can help leaderships to gain a decisive advantage, with minimum force deployment. This awareness is particularly important within an environment of terrorism, where states designate their resources to counter-terrorism.