

a. Technology: The one of the few single most important things that helped the troops 'during the final war was technology.

Definition: Force Multiplier-a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment or else a force multiplier refers to a factor that dramatically increases (hence "multiplies") the effectiveness of an item or group.

Technology, Morale, Training, Experience, fearsome reputation, deception, military strategy, military tactics, weather, geographical features and recruitment through diplomacy are examples of force multipliers.

i. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: The GOSL managed to obtain or purchase UAVs or 'drones' (unmanned aerial vehicles) from a friendly nation. It was a terrific force multiplier. You know now how UAV footage helped to locate the LTTE strong points, earth bunds and ditches, bunkers, fighters, artillery pieces or boats being towed, and the concentrations of human shield. And counter lies and propaganda by LTTE sympathizers overseas. The UAVs could be used to do the BDA (battle Damage Assessment) after an aerial attack or to call in an airstrike again. (Remember the bombing of Soosai's suspected safe house, no sooner it was bombed an excavator was seen being rushed to the scene to rescue the buried. What happened next? The fighters scrambled and took the excavator out with the operator.

These UAV platforms can vary from hand launched 'Ravens' to armed 'Predators' and their role from acting as an ISR (Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance) platform for a platoon engaged in ground combat to firing a missile by remote control at an HVT. They can down link real time FMV (full motion video) to a special operations team. Full Motion Video will allow much broader access to relevant video imagery throughout the fielded armed forces. A LRRP team using ROVER (Remotely Operated Video Enhanced Receiver) could have eyes on the target and ensure Zero Civilian Casualties (ZCC) or no collateral damage. I do not want to go into specific details of the individual capabilities of UAVs as they are classified but I can tell you as a person who has access to live footage day in day out whether you are wearing 'BATA', 'De Samson industries' (DSI) or Dasa Industries (DI) shoes!

Israel developed the first modern UAV (as Syrian missile batteries in Lebanon caused heavy damages to the Israeli fighter jets during the Yom Kippur War), the images provided by these UAVs helped Israel to completely neutralize the Syrian air defenses at the start of 1982 Lebanon War resulting in no pilots downed. So Sri Lanka Army used UAVs in the final battle to achieve desired effects without incurring losses, men or materials and to increase the efficiency using UAVs as force multipliers.

UAVs can be used in a disaster area to survey the damage or to find out where the survivors are so that search and rescue (SAR) teams with relief supplies or paramedics with medical supplies can be rushed. As an example during the recent earthquake in Haiti a ScanEagle UAV was deployed to survey the damage, to find out where the looters and refugees were.

ii. MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System): Formerly known as the General Support Rocket

System (GSRS), and famously known in Sri Lanka as 'multi barrels'. You know now the shameless offer of help by India to evacuate the besieged troops from Jaffna and what turned the tide against the charging and surging wave after wave of tigers; quick introduction of MLRS purchased/given by Chechs and Pakistan into the northern battle field! The shock and awe effect provided by those MLRS left tigers dead, dazed or confused. It was the first time tigers or soldiers saw it in action.

After a salvo or launch from MLRS one could see the scattered bodies of dead tigers all over the square target area. The photos of heaps of human flesh and mangled bodies were too graphic to publish in the media for public to see. The soldiers arranged the mangled bodies of dead tigers, dress right dress, in rows to take photos and disseminate among troops to boost otherwise sagging morale, to motivate the rank and file and let them know that gains can be made, sustained and maintained if you fight hard, even though gains are reversible. The sheer numbers of dead tigers gave a ray of hope to the infantrymen that this time the war was winnable if they pressed on a little bit hard. In other words they saw for the first time after a while that the tables or the tide could be turned on tigers. Morale is a force multiplier.

It has proved itself as a practical and effective weapons system. It is a very mobile unit, thus well suited for the so called shoot and scoot: it can fire its rockets very rapidly and immediately move away to avoid returning counter-battery fire. We derive so much solace knowing it takes out a 'click'. For starters, when we say a 'click' in the military it means a kilometer, in this case a salvo practically destroys anything in a square kilometer. One launcher firing twelve rockets can completely blanket one square kilometer with submunitions. For this reason, the MLRS is sometimes referred to as the "Grid Square Removal Service". That is the destructive power of an MLRS M270 or equivalent.

iii. Gun Cameras and Onboard Cameras: In eighties when SLAF aircraft dropped bombs, shall I say the veritable powder kegs or barrels they had no way to record the effect for Battle Damage Assessment (BDA), After Action Review (AAR) and/or Information Operations (IO) purposes (to hurt the enemy's and his sympathizers morale, boost the morale of soldiers and garner the popular support for the war efforts by releasing to the TV stations, Internet websites these gun camera video clips so that they could be rerun days after days till the next hit. These clips went 'viral' on popular Internet video sites such as YouTube and Lanka Tube, especially among overseas Sri Lankans and Sri Lanka watchers.

In 80s when COMNORTHS, Commander(s) Northern Naval area were more interested in collecting the pilotage in dollars for bringing in the cargo vessels into the KKS (Kankasanturai) harbor (to the vicinity of A525 – the non-seafaring floating logistic platform and passenger hub for the Army and Navy). They did not have time or interest to give an ear to a young naval officer's suggestion that engagement TTPs used by FAC squadron needed to be re-evaluated. Immediately after an engagement, a stricken or distressed FAC could not conduct a thorough After Action Review. Because everyone onboard from OIC, normally a Lieutenant, 2IC (a sub-lieutenant) and crew of 10-15 were dazed and confused in the fog of sea battle just took place. Their memory was hazy or worst still was the incoherent description of the event. So introduction of the onboard cameras were helpful to derive the results I have mentioned above with respect to the fighter plane gun cameras.

iv. Small Boats Operations: The young naval officer I have mentioned elsewhere was watching sadly, helplessly and angrily the unfolding situation. The more and more bad news and sad news came from the FAC squadron of losing their multimillion dollar craft with young men on board due to sea tiger attacks. He looked at the situation and found the problem lied in the way FAC engaged a cluster of sea tiger boats. A FAC is a very big silhouette or target compared to the small dinghies the sea tigers were on. Simply put, which one is very easy for you? Throwing a rock to strike a raging elephant, or a raging bull? That was simple thinking, not rocket science. His concept was if sea tigers used small boats, SLN should fight with small boats, no two words about it. Then the enemy cannot use 'swarming tactic' (military swarming- a maneuver in which forces and firepower converge on a target force simultaneously from all directions).

This was in 80s and the young naval officer in question had NOT heard of 'what happened' at the siege of Samarkand where Spitamenes used Scythian horse archers in effective swarming attacks against a relief column sent by to Alexander the Great or how the Mongols under Genghis Khan did practice an equivalent of, partially because their non-electronic communications were still advanced for the time, within the limitations of communications by flags, horns, and couriers.

But he intuitively knew how to counter the 'swarming tactic' of sea tigers. But the powers that be were/ are not willing to accept 'home grown solutions' unless they came/come from foreign experts, think tanks like RAND corporation or Global Risk Solutions or local top brass as they want to spend millions of dollars unnecessarily to boast about the 'price tag' of the solution they introduced. Unfortunately it might not be the right solution even after the millions of dollars unnecessarily spent!

To sarcastically put, that is the way some times powers that be receive a message very well, one has to hurt their feelings or pride; if a Service Commander on assuming duties decided to pay a courtesy call to 'Tissahami' at Binthanne before his passing away rather than rushing to the religious dignitaries in Colombo or Kandy ,who travel nothing but by an air-conditioned Benz, he would have explained the swarming tactics the way he knew it best: "Swarming is not limited to the pure human military realm. As the name suggests, it comes from insect behavior, although social insects (e.g., bees, wasp, and ants) also use some of its principles in nest building, food gathering and reproduction".

v. Base Defence Cameras: I do not have to explain about this camera. You saw its capability to zoom in and track a target when the TAF's Czech-built Zlin Z-143 single engine plane came to Colombo for one final time to be incinerated in a heap of rubble. You saw how these cameras installed and operated by SLN to defend the Colombo harbor could zoom on the aircraft and keep a very good track. Later SLN made the footage available to public through the media. The camera operators could send an island-wide alert, warn and indicate the location of enemy aircraft to the anti-aircraft batteries in the city and in turn alert SLAF planes and helicopters to scramble.

Aren't you thankful to these cameras for them watching for you by day or by night while you were day dreaming or sweet dreaming (or having nightmares)? These cameras do not fall sleep but only the ones who operate them!

a. 'Joint' Operations or 'Inter Agency' Cooperation: During the first gulf war things did not go right for the US military as all the forces were not on the 'same wavelength'. This was true across the board or there were systemic problems; policies; computer systems, software and programs; type of gas (petrol) used on vehicles; radio frequencies and whole host of issues. There were fratricides-blue on blue situations. There were delays. There were frustrations. At times Situation was Normal but All F**ked Up (SNAFU)! The US military conducted a re-evaluation of its Tactics Techniques and Procedures. It was found that the only solution for this issue to operate as a 'joint' force, not only among army, navy and air force but with the other government agencies (OGAs) such as CIA, FBI, Customs and Border Patrol and DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency). After 9/11, the 'joint operation' concept expanded to include private contractors to include security contractors such as Black Water (now Xe) or LOGCAP (Logistics Augmentation Program) services provided by Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR). This 'joint operation' concept or 'mantra' was a success in the second Gulf War and has been put into effect in every war since then.

i. The 'Sordid' Past: There was a sordid time period in Sri Lanka where sister services and police did not see to eye to eye but were at each other's throat at the slightest provocation. Everyone except police was suffering from sort of the superiority complex. Police were suffering from the inferiority complex. Those were the times or the days the police Echelon Barracks were burned to the ground and millions of rupees worth, the newly installed communication equipment went up in smoke, witnessed by Tissa Induka Weerathunga of SLA, later the first Supreme Commander- Jaffna appointed by JR.

Those were also the days Major Lucky Nadarajasinghem, an international shooter, from SLA Field Engineers (the Army 7th Intake Under Officer) witnessed shameless firing by army personnel on a group of police personnel from Trincomalee police station at Fort Fredrick killing innocent police personnel(at the entrance to Koneswaram or the Swami Rock area).

Those days Police could be brow-beaten, faced down, man-handled or rough housed at will as they only carried a .303. With tiger terrorism looming, not only police but home guards (Gramayas as they were derisively called), now CDC (Civil Defence Corps) were armed with T-56 fully automatics. Now services no longer challenge each other for a 'duel'! Besides automatics, police carry RPG launchers and grenades and 60mm mortars and tubes. Now everyone knows misplaced personal ego or a silly folly can result in irreparable damages on both sides, and no one will be a winner!

Can you remember the rash incident at the last UNP rally at Kotahena area once upon time? Late Gamini Dissanayake (GD) and JR were on the same stage. The GD's personal security detail consisted of army commandos and JR's of STF personnel. The protocol is such the President's (VVIP) security detail is the command element and then Prime Minister then Defence Minister and so on. Unfortunately at this instance, the superiority complex of commandos was about to transcend the protocol, a commando wanted go near GD, the ASP in charge of the inner cordon of JR politely asked the commando to stop, turn around and leave. The commando thought he lost his face in public and felt his manhood was challenged, instead of being humble and saying sorry, Sir, to that Gazetted Officer and turned around, he felt his pride and ego badly hurt, the commando retorted "What are you going to do if I proceed?" The

ASP, again, politely and sternly said "If so you will be stopped by force!" The next thing the commando said was "Go ahead, if you dare!" The next thing happened was a KO (Knock out) by the ASP in question, with the commando losing some teeth! Then everyone started running helter-skelter as both sides cocked their weapons and chambered a round. JR ordered to wrap it immediately and returned to the Ward Place. Elena was relieved!

There are other instances I can write but the moral of the above real story is to tell you 'Be humble and be respectful and know who is in charge! To tell you the truth when I go to hospital I just follow the instructions of the attendant as I know doctor is there to diagnose, the nurse to take vitals and the attendant to do crowd control. I operate on that principle wherever I go, in government offices or at public places such as airports. I have had no issues. But when I am in uniform and on duty I am in charge and take no 'Sh*t' from anybody!

ii. Luckily They are Grownups Now! I just wanted to tell you that real story to tell you how far Sri Lanka military and police have come, and not to arouse sad memories. I would like to tell you how friendly they are now and how 'joint' operations conducted by them have helped to defeat tigers. Here are some examples; when tigers were roaming freely and unloading lethal cargo at will SLN wanted to find solutions. SLN did not have a lot of FAC to keep deployed at sea all the time. With introduction of SBS (Special Boats Squadron) and ABS (Arrow Boat Squadron) SLN did not have to deploy resources at sea unnecessarily for days for an enemy not in sight. SLN did the smart thing by stationing the radar teams and SBS and ABS craft at STF camps along the east coast. STF commandos and SLN officers and ratings ate, slept and played beach volleyball at the 'joint' camp.

One could see the camaraderie and team building in action, which was spontaneous. At camp parties for team building, the fish for bite and duty-free liquor were provided by SBS and ABS and the wild boar and red meat by STF. There was no ill-will, antagonism or hating each other or each other's service any more. When the navy personnel went on leave and got into some trouble at some 'massage clinic' they did not call a lawyer first but the STF friends in their 'joint' camp to find a police point of contact! Isn't it nice to see how they, both parties, have matured or grown up, from the days they wanted to kill each other?

Here is another fine example; when commandos wanted to infil and exfil their teams in the east to take out some targets, where did they go? They went to the STF camps that were scattered across Batticaloa and Ampara. They stayed with STF for weeks and lived very amicably with them. The commandos learnt some Bomb Disposal TTPs from the STF inspectors who were trained in a 'sweet Albama Police Academy' and STF also provided 'quality claymores to the commando teams. Are not you proud to see in your life time the two groups of people who locked and loaded their weapons to kill each other at a political stage in Kotahena bear hug each other, shake hand and wish them good luck when STF drop the commando team at the dead of night at a named point of interest (NPI)? The tears of joys welled in commandoes' eyes when they saw STF was there at given time at a given point to exfil and take them to safety of their camp and give them a stiff drink to relive their body pain and mental stress rather than offering Panadol and aspirin!

b. 'Modified' 'Combined Squad' Structure in Small Unit Tactics (SUT): SUT can define as the

application of military doctrines for the combat deployment of platoons or smaller units in a particular strategic and logistic environment. The SUT is mainly talked about or taught in Special Forces Qualification Course, commonly known 'Q' course. Since a US Army SF team or an ODA (Operational Detachment Alpha) is a self-sufficient unit of eight members we have to analyze the tactics used by SLA in the final war with LTTE taking into consideration 'small teams' the Sri Lanka Army Commander, General Fonseka, was talking about when he said he changed tactics from Force-on-Force to small team operations. I believe he was definitely talking about squads. In SUT, squad structure can be one of three-Classical, Balanced or Combined.

My observation has been, during the final war Sri Lanka adopted 'modified' 'combined' squad structure. The combined squad is composed of dissimilar fire teams; an RPG team, a fire team and a sniper team. The RPG team consists of two personnel; one armed with an RPG launcher and the other porting extra RPGs and providing protection with an assault rifle. The fire team is composed of two personnel; one carrying a machine gun and the other porting its ammunition. The sniper team consists of one or two persons; one deploying the weapon, often a semi-automatic designated marksman rifle opposed to a true sniper rifle and the other acting as spotter and providing close protection.

I believe SLA modified 'combined squad' structure by introducing a 'claymore' team into 'combined' squad structure which turned the tide on LTTE. If you have carefully watched and listened to, right throughout the final war, the on camera interviews of soldiers how many times you have heard this "Corporal A and I went around the bunker and set up the 'claymore' charge while Corporal B and his team covered our movement..." Many a time, isn't it? Now you see that this 'modified' combined squad structure was a real 'force multiplier' and use of which provided SLA another 'tipping point'!

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