Cyber Terrorism

With the mushrooming growth of Information Technology application in the critical functioning of various infrastructures, associated closely with appliance and our everyday life, the focus has been sharpened on the security of Critical Infrastructure Protection by nations around the world.

Common among such infrastructures are the essential services like electricity, telephone connectivity, vehicular and railway traffic control and gas/oil transportation. As such infrastructures are dependent more on IT, their vulnerability has increased manifold.

Today, with cyberspace becoming an easy medium for disturbance by hacker-both individual and state sponsored, as well as terrorist organization whose main aim is to sabotage and disrupt facilities, high priority protection of such infrastructures are on the top of the agenda of the countries.

As a concept, Critical Infrastructure Protection or CIP was projected first in USA in 1996 by the then president Bill Clinton, as a result of a high-level commission report. The report proved the susceptibility and necessity of taking a closer look at protection provided to high priority infrastructures. George Bush had set – up a special board after the September 11 attack, when he realized the urgency of the situation with New York Practically paralyzed and vital systems sabotaged.

Most of the developed and developing nations all over the world have woken up to the situation now and several countries like Canada, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Holland and Switzerland are falling in line with US initiatives. These are under a specially created wing under defense and intelligence ministries or a special task force has been created for the purpose. Some of these nations have multi-lateral agreements with other countries for sharing the resources. Although there is no global forum to tackle such issues but our country has an exclusive one to USA to fight the menace of CIP and counter Cyber Terrorism. But the European Union countries have a common federation.

Our country had earlier faced the problem with Pakistan backed defense hackers jamming our troop movement communication system giving false commands and creating a situation of uncertainty. Taking this as a small example, we need to set-up an action plan on a war –footing. The National Security Council is already in touch with server ministries like home, defense, communication, oil and natural gas, etc. to draw up plans. But our planning and implementation gap has always been unpardonably long. Instead of waiting for some incident and regretting later,

a strong independent body directly under the Prime Minister should be set- up having implementation, intelligence and research functions.

Cyberspace surveillance is absolutely on top priority and a para-military force allotted for training in computer security, information security and communication security. They should also be trained to provide security to agencies developing critical software application besides personnel security as foreign intelligence agencies like ISI of Pakistan have always been targeting such staff and development bodies. The vulnerability of cyber-attacks and the cascading effect of critical interdependent infrastructures falling prey to this menace need to be securitized. All such organizations need to coordinate their physical, satellite and cyber protection security to work in tandem and not separately

We are a country which has already left its mark in the software world and our software world and our software prowess should be geared up for research and analysis. An emergency response strategy should be worked upon, to be activated case of need. We have a very advanced set-up in Pune- Center for development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) which has successfully developed a high general-purpose parallel computer by using off the self-hardware and industry standard interface, the param-9000, successor to param-8000 and Param-8600. This setup should be made the modal agency and given charge for developing critical software to tackle cyber terrorism. The efficiency of this recommended organization has been proved by their latest Param-10000 which is now Asia's second largest computer and at contemporary levels with Super – Computer in USA.

The countries which faced the holocaust of the World War II and reduced to rubbles once again have risen like the Phoenix to the top of the list of developed nations. Look at Japan, Israel, Germany and their remarkable progress. It is only due to the inculcation of discipline in their blood. They have the natural sense of responsibility and they know their obligations to their nation. This results in discipline in every field of life. A visitor from the Third World countries stares aghast at the orderliness and neatness in develop countries. Trains run on time, essential services are of high standards, cleanliness is their motto, queuing up is an inherent trait, officials are polite and do their jobs.

Compare this with our country and we can understand where and why we are lagging behind. Is it the whip we need? how is it that the much-maligned promulgation of 'Emergency' by a former Prime Minister transformed our nation, national, nationals and the bureaucracy into a disciplined, well- oiled task force?

A singular case may be cited. Once a journalist, from a leading newspaper of our country, asked an important leader in U.K., "We believe that discipline is in the very

blood of your people." The leader smiled and shook his head in negativity, "No, it is not inherent. It is a cultivated quality. From family to society, from society to nation, it is a very long and arduous process. Efforts are made to let this quality of discipline flow like the blood in our nation's body!"