STRATEGIC ISSUES

BANGLADESH SCENARIO

Meeting the challenge of religious militancy

MAJOR GENERAL (Retd) AMSA

T can no longer be business as usual or politics as usual. August 17 explosion of 500 time bombs at 350 targets in 63 out of 64 districts has changed all that. Countrywide synchronised detonation within 30 minutes timeframe is an unprecedented event. Little or no mishaps bear the hallmark of great skill of the operators in handling explosive devices

The geographic expanse, meticulous planning and well-coordinated executions are comparable to military precision and proficiency. Selection of administrative headquarters, courts banks and commercial areas as targets are significant. Striking terror amongs the people, jeopardising SAARC conference in November, derailing development process, simply destabi lising the country or diverting attention cannot be the end objective of such reading too little into it. This particular operation must have taken months of painstaking preparation. They had to work outside law and prevent detection. In all probability there was government insider support. Any meaningful investigation cannot overlook this point.

Looking at it in totality, it will not be unreasonable to argue that it is not just a threat to national security, it is much more. The scale of operation amounts to a declaration of war against the state: the constitution, the democratic dispenjudicial system. Such a huge operation must have a great purpose, a great cause. And they have made a great beginning. Small casualty rate should not mislead any one. Probably it was part of the plan to keep it low. Probably it was a test run - keeping the size and load light for the first run to check out how many can do it, in how many districts. May be Munshiganj was the only failure! They have now assessed determine their next move. They also need a breather, consolidation and assessment of the public mood. Bangladesh today, beyond any doubt, is at the door step of grave crisis.

Rhetoric will take us nowhere, but take the militants further ahead. The entire episode has to be put in a perspective. Truly this event has put Bangladesh at political cross roads, that of democracy and extremist Islam. It squarely demands an in-depth study. A cursory glance will not do. Implications need to be understood and explained in detail. One must not be opinionated. Due to space limitation, these aspects will be touched upon briefly in this column.

Militant organisation and strength

On August 17, there was no overt attempt to capture state power, true. But it may be showing only the tip of an iceberg. Their future actions are likely to unfold gradually according to their plan timings. Failing to gathe information, process professionally, determine correct intelligence and take effective preventive measures, we will repent again. We will have to learn the hard way what lies deep underneath. For now the numbers can be estimated Each of the three hundred fifty targets would need 2-3 people action team and 2-3 more as covering troop. Reasonable guesstimate of minimum deployment amounts to: 5 per target x 350 targets equals 1750 very well trained explosives and time-device experts. An army needs about 9 soldiers to support a front line infantryman. Going by that

rule 1750x9 equals 15,750-trained

fighter. This is a colossal number, of

course there can be some ifs and buts. it

is not so straight for an underground

force

However, the base of recruitment is wide and the religious education is an open process. Media reported Kuwait based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society operating 800 mosques madrasas and orphanages, each having 300 students or so. Saudi based Al-Harmain also operated in a similar way. Children are picked up very young and they go through 10-12 years of molding and motivation to take part in jihad as a sacred religious duty and become a Shaheed or a Gazi for the cause of militant Islam, to establish Islamic constitution and Sharia laws. So the number is bound to be large by any estimate. Militant activities have come to light from the nineties.

How about the weapons? We have known about the recovery of nearly a hundred thousand-ball ammunitions. 10 truckloads of automatics, grenades. explosives and even antitank rockets and launchers. Police officers are caught smuggling and selling Kalashnikovs. Bangladesh is both a smuggling route and an end user. How much is in the hands of the suspected insurgents is anybody's guess. Not much is known and why doubt that thousands have not been trained who can be armed for major anti-state operations, sooner than later? They had at least 15 years to prepare.

About the organisation, its structure, its armaments and its political and military leadership -- not much is known except few names. And some of these leaders are Islamic University and higher level madrasa educated people, both from home and abroad. Many of them have combat experience in Lebanon and Afghanistan. These numbers are not known. One can be certain that they must have studied literature on insurgency, counter insurgency and guerilla warfare as well. If they have not, they will do it now. Underestimating them to be ordinary mullahs can be a grave error. Undoubtedly they have set for themselves a great task for a great cause according to their own belief. They are working seriously to change this society, and by violent means if needed, not just for going to power. To challenge them one has to be equally dedicated and committed.

Islamic values

Islam by itself is not a militant religion at all, though many see it that way. The truth is that any religion can be turned militant given the enabling environment. Islam basically is a religion of peace, forgiveness, magnanimity and tolerance. Humanity, freedom of worship, secularism, democracy, equality, fellowship and social justice, are all part of the glorious Quranic message. Bangladesh always had a long tradition of such liberal and tolerant Islam.

Rise of militant Islam in Bangladesh is a recent phenomenon. It has both internal and external dimensions. A major external factor is creation of Israel as a theocratic state at a tremendous cost to the Arabs. Sustaining the conflict over generations added fuel to the fire of aggrieved Muslim sentiment all over the world including Bangladesh. Militant Islam was also boosted and sustained by the US fighting against communism and the Soviets. Reportedly some Bangladeshis alongside Pakistanis took part in the then Afghan war against the Soviets

the Soviets.

US policy of creating the Taliban and Saddam Hussein and later destroying them for oil and hegemony has caused the spread of militancy worldwide. Is it really Samuel Huntington's clash of the Muslim and Christian civilisations or US policies and moves that are responsible? Currently the ongoing hate campaign against Muslims, in the US and British press and television is adding fuel to the fire. Islam is not the only religion that wants a role in the state. Christianity has a

These are difficult times, as difficult as the war times. War council or security council type of organisation will be needed. This is not the time to worry about the next election. Instead, the parties must put faith in the people. The ruling party has but one option -- breakup the alliance, put the blame of failure where it must. Keeping the Islamist alliance intact, no one can hope for opposition cooperation. Rather BNP's own existence could be at stake.



PHOTO: STA

recognised role in the USA, Hinduism in India, and still they are secular countries. How about the role and status of the Vatican in world politics? The point is, no believer can accept discrimination and dishonour of his religion. Anti Islamic propaganda will further strengthen the already hard resolve of the fanatics. Secular forces in these powerful countries need to strongly address such issues. Moderation of public opinion and conduct will help putting down religious

Vulnerability of Bangladesh

Internally, over the decades, Bangladesh has become a weak state, a state vulnerable to militancy of any viable variety – religious or non-religious. Fundamental weaknesses are socio-economic: over population, abject poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, continuous price hike and underdevelopment. People see no hope, no light at the end of the tunnel. Annual growth gravitated below 5 percent. Serious political weaknesses have further aggravated the situation. These stem from bad governance, ineffective parliament, tamished image of the judiciany, and politics of power mongering, confrontation and violence.

Democracy has a hundred years of history in this region. Unfortunately, democratic values and practices have yet to grow its roots. There is a great divide among the democratic progressive forces. Basic to any democracy is rule of law. It is missing here. Policing system is breaking down. They are not free to carry out even the Prime Ministerial orders, like in the case of arresting Bangla Bhai. They are openly used for party interest. Feelings of insecurity are widespread amongst the people. There is no progress of investigation of attack on diplomats, major bomb and grenade attacks including one on the life of Sheikh Hasina, the Leader of the Opposition, Instead, involvement of

elements of the alliance-government and cover up by them is commonly suspected.

The civil administration is politicised, serving party and not national interests. Even the higher judiciary is having a crisis of popular confidence. Party interests rule even here. The state of the country is so bad that the politicians, civil society leaders and political analysts are regularly debating if the country is soon becoming a failed state. Recent world survey puts Bangladesh at a high risk rating of 17 among the vulnerable 60.

The election process has been corrupted by black money, muscle power and unethical official influence. The leadership it throws up fails to create a viable parliament. Practice of internal democracy within the parties is weak. They are suffering from ill discipline, internal strife and grouping. On the other hand extremist Islamic parties are monolithic, well organised and disciplined. It is not an overstatement to say that people, as a whole, are fast losing respect for politicians and confidence in the democratic process. The higher, leadership has not yet been able to grapple with major organisational problems and foster clean politics. All these are undermining the democratic process and aggravating the crisis of democracy. Amajor political crisis is now brewing over the government brushing aside the opposition reform proposals for the Caretaker government, the election process and independence of the Election Commission for truly free and fair

The state has become highly vulnerable because of present political weaknesses.

Government weaknesses

That is how in a nutshell, liberal Islam and liberal democracy are losing

ground to militant ideology, which is successfully building up its case against democracy, modern legislature and the judicial process -- in one word, the constitution and its core values. Their cause is to establish Islamic rule, as they understand it. They know that it can not be done through the electoral process. Popular support is absent. But it is important for them to make full use of modern democracy to establish a foothold. Some Islamic parties are doing that successfully. These Islamic parties have placed their people in every part of the state apparatus including the law enforcement agencies. They are taking full advantage by sharing state power within the BNP -- Jamaat-e-Islam alliance government. It is important to note that BNP is not an extremist Islamic party. It is not a secular party either, although their leadership includes a large number of former leftist leaders. Despite being a minority and not having more than 5-6% popular vote, the Islamists have a disproportionate influence in the government. This is one of the reasons why the party in power and the party in opposition are failing to have reasonable political

relationship and help democracy work. Primacy of party interests over national interests and unethical pursuit of power politics is a measure of weakness in our body politic. It is widely believed that the government is failing to deal with the bomb and grenade attacks, investigate, arrest the killers and uncover weapons and ammunition smuggling cases etc. due to likely involvement of extremist partners in power. Government has so far failed to take any significant step regarding August 17 - because some of these leaders are opposing stern measures and have openly warned that BNP must not forget that they will need these Islamic parties support to go to power in the next parliamentary elections. Here lies the major weakness of the government, which have been failing to take principled stand in public interest.

Recruitment, training and preparedness

Underneath such a massive countrywide operation lies a high state of
preparedness. Organisation and
readiness of a large and well-trained
force possibly matches military standards. August 17 signifies that this force
is ready for military action anywhere and
everywhere in the country. They know
that it is easier to capture power by a
short sharp putsch, but difficult to keep
without a large organisation spread
countrywide.

Since when are they at it? An

informed guess could be that recruitment, weapon training, ideological motivation and education must have gone on for long. It takes about 10-12 years to prepare a child of madrasagoing age to become a good militant worker. At such a tender age they get these young innocent children from poor parents in the name of housing, feeding and teaching of the Holy Quran. This is an ongoing process since long all over rural Bangladesh, Of course, not all madrasas and maktabs should be suspected. Substantial funds from Arab sources and return of the fighters from Afghanistan must have given a boost to the training process. Small violent actions to evaluate the training started probably from early nineties. Tabulation and dating of violent events with extremist religious contents like killing of progressive and secular intellectuals, politicians and cultural personalities; hombing cultural events, cinema halls religious shrines can help firmly establish the period. That is how they must have grown and gained experience.

In this light the grenade attacks of

August 21, 2004 was a major operation and a milestone for them. Role of the police before, during and after remain suspect. Their aim possibly was to eliminate secularist democratic Awami League leadership and remove the party from the political scene for a long time. Thereafter, these forces could take on the ruling BNP at ease from inside. Failure must have made them rethinkthe plan.

Purpose of the militants

Groping in the dark about the militant's purpose is unnecessary. The overall scenario does point to a clear purpose: capture state power to make Bangladesh a Sharia based Islamic state having Wahabi core values. Successful operations, big and small must have raised the morale of the militant rank and file and made them confident about their capability. How much more can these forces do? We do not know, nor can one underestimate their capability. Possibly they can carry on sustained guerilla operations at places of their choosing for as long as they need. Hit and run phase may start soon. Are they trained enough for raids and ambushes? When will they engage the police and the military? Can they engage in urban guerilla war? What are their major weaknesses? Answers to these and many more military questions must be found by the intelligence to judge if their purpose could be achieved. Vital question like, which way will popular support go, will remain. Here lies a great hope that the purpose may not succeed. Bengalis have along history of liberal attitude to religion and religious tolerance. Democratic forces will need to combine, coordinate and appeal to these sentiments relentlessly and effectively to defeat the militant.

Strategic factors

Geopolitical dimension of Bangladesh crisis has also to be borne in mind. Despite being small and poor, Bangladesh has a strategic position in the region. Bay of Bengal overlooks the eastern sea-lanes. It is in Bangladesh interest to maintain good neighbourly relations with SAARC countries and Mayanmar. Recent developments in US, India, Pakistan and China relations have multiple dimensions. The relationships have become volatile, undergoing historic changes. We need to understand where does our interests lie, and how best to preserve it.

It's not only Saudi or Kuwait influence

Irag. Afghanistan, Palestine, Svria and Iran all can impact on the rise of Islamic militancy some way or the other. Increase of international militancy may see proportional rise of internal militancy here. It was not so before. Recent developments and reports on the rise of Maoists in Nepal, West Bengal, insurgency in Northeast India and Mayanmar has definite implications to our situation. We have our own problems in the Chittagong hills, southwest and northwest. This must not be lost sight of. As the left militant forces feel threatened, in all probability, they will fight back. They may develop their safe bases in certain areas of their advantage and spread out. In this regard one needs to keep in mind the global interests of USA and how they see the role of Bangladesh in their scheme of things. This by itself demands a detail study.

Government inaction

How does one meet these challenges? It is a very intricate question. The leader of the opposition has proposed a set of reforms for free and fairs elections. The government has not made any serious attempt to contact the main opposition. No heads have rolled in the Prime Minister's secretariat, the Home Ministry, the police or the intelligence agencies. The government has taken no significant steps other than few arrests. Intelligence agency reports regarding a

number of militant organisations were not paid any attention to due to political considerations. Reportedly, Islamic partners sharing power have prevented the government from taking strong measures against Jamatul Mujahidin, Ahle Hadis Andolan Bangladesh, Harkatul Jihad, Jagrata Muslim Janata, Jamiate Ulamae Islam, Shahadate Hikma and so on. The leadership is engaged in rhetoric.

Police is continuing business as usual, arrests and release and the people are getting worried. Only media is keeping the issue alive. Journalists will be coming under serious threat. Secular intellectual leaders, political activists, socio-cultural workers, civil societies, teachers, lawyers and so on will come under serious threat as well from the militants. How will the government provide security? People in general will live uncomfortably under continuous threat. It is frightening to imagine that next time casualties may not be so small.

Meeting the challenge

The government alone cannot meet this gigantic challenge. The police, the intelligence, the military, cannot succeed by themselves. They will need bold political direction with unwavering commitment to safeguard the constitution and its values: the secular, progressive, democratic order. At the same time the liberal Muslim traditions must not be undermined.

The combination, to some, may sound odd. Bangladesh reality demands an ideology based on such thoughtful creative blend. Can the Four Party Alliance do that and salvage the nation from dire consequences? No, surely they need full support and cooperation of the opposition parties. Otherwise they will remain a part of the problem. Look at their track record of last four vears! Have they not failed to address the issue of rising extremist religious militancy for so long and brought the country to this pass? The answers are as clear as daylight even to the democratic, progressive, liberal rank and file

These are difficult times, as difficult as the wartimes. War council or security council type of organisation will be needed. This is not the time to worry about the next election. Instead, the parties must put faith in the people. The ruling party has but one option breakup the alliance, put the blame of failure where it must. Keeping the Islamist alliance intact, no one can hope for opposition cooperation. Rather

BNP's own existence could be at stake. Opposition cooperation is essential, there is no other viable option. All those who matter in this country, all those who really love this country has this historic task - close ranks and unite the people to salvage our great traditions and values. Organise and put all the pressures it can to bear on the government to take this historic decision. The entire democratic, progressive and secular forces must be united to meet the challenge. Cost of failure will be great - the country may lapse into a state of insurgency, a state of guerilla warfare, outcome of which is unpredictable. August 17 has sounded the warning bells loud and clear.

May be we still have time. Complacency, procrastination and political indecision will keep on increasing uncertainties and torturing the worried people and the thoughtful patriot. Nothing short of historic changes in the political scenario can assure the people of peace and progress in the country. Let us hope our democratic progressive political parties prove themselves equal to the task. But the time is definitely short.

The author is a free lancer.

Military occupations: Why they succeed or fail

MUMTAZ IQBAL

NE of the more delusional arguments Bush acolytes peddled in 2002 about invading Iraq is that the US occupation would be a blessing for Iraqis as it was for Germans and Japanese post 1945.

Any middle aged Bangladeshi experiencing the delights of the Pakistani Occupation of 1971 could have told the Bushies that this expectation was a pipe dream.

And so it has come to pass The

And so it has come to pass. The US occupation has been a blistering experience for Iraqis and a searing one for Americans. Why did the Allied (read US) occupation of Germany and Japan succeed while the one in Iraq failed? In analyzing this subject, references to Bangladesh/Pakistan are also made to substantiate points.

Good vs Bad War

The heart of the matter is to adjudge the character of the 1939-1945 fighting. Germany and Japan launched wars of aggression, incurred international odium, lost the high moral ground and became perpetrators of a "bad" or unjust war.

Conversely, the Anglo-Saxon powers and the USSR fought a "good" or just war in self-defence of their territory and values. They mobilised men and material to become nations-at-arms, waged total war that enjoyed domestic and international support and vanquish their enemies, who had to accept their defeat resignedly because,

arter all, they had started the wars.

By contrast, the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq was based on lies manipulated by an unprincipled US administration against extensive and intensive worldwide opposition. It was a "bad" or unjust war of aggression waged by militarily stronger parties against a weak foe.

after no WMDs were found the reason for invasion-- and Bush started changing the war's rationale (fostering democracy; fighting terrorism, honouring the Gls sacrifice et al) faster than you could cry "uncle."

Pakistan's occupation of Bangla-

This badness became evident

Pakistan's occupation of Bangladesh in March 1971 was a one-off affair arising from the state's novel features. There, an ostensibly national army turned on the majority of its own citizens, lost their loyalty and became burdened with an illegitimate and unwinnable war.

Acceptance of Occupation The vanquished population's acceptance of enemy occupation is correlated to the magnitude of

defeat incurred.

Utterly devastated Germany and Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Powers in May 1945 and August 1945, respectively. Their scale of defeat forced the Germans and Japanese to conclude that their survival depended on the Allies' goodwill, accept the

cooperate with the occupiers.

There was some ineffectual resistance in Germany after the surrender. However, the existence

Occupation as a necessary evil and

of a Nazi redoubt in alpine Bavaria manned by "werewolves" (fanatic Nazis and Hitler Youths) was a chimera.

In Japan, imperial army soldiers

with fixed bayonets with their backs to the road lined the route of the first planeload of US soldiers that landed in Tokyo to begin the Occupation. The US and Japan have the dubious distinction of being the only countries with a 'nuker' 'nuker'

dubious distinction of being the only countries with a 'nuker'/ 'nukee' relationship. (Eisenhower considered using nukes in Vietnam in 1954 to save the French at Dien Bien Phu and Kennedy against PRC in the event of another India-China war after 1962).

The conventional war in Iraq

lasted just over three weeks, with not much physical damage since the US wanted to be able to use those assets after Occupation.

What's surprised the Bushies in sociality and the world in general.

particular, and the world in general, is the resistance by the Iraqisnot known for their military prowess-against the US military Occupation that has dented Washington's ability to impose its will.

This performance is especially noteworthy as Iraq's flat terrain is

This performance is especially noteworthy as Iraq's flat terrain is not really suitable for partisan warfare. The resisters lack any worthwhile muscular state sponsor or sanctuary, two inputs, apart from motivation, considered essential to wage prolonged resistance.

The validity of this conclusion isn't diminished by the resistance now targeting largely the foot-soldiers of the Americans Iraqi collaborators

and, at one remove, Gls when they deign to venture on patrol from their heavily protected bases.

The Pakistan Army's crackdown on 26 March 1971 was a nasty affair. Islamabad was able to reestablish its control by end- April. But this was a Pyrrhic victory. It set the stage for a war of national liberation.

Exit Strategy

Where the occupier and occupied agree on and share a common external threat, the conditions for a successful occupation are enhanced, especially if the countries concerned are important geostrategically.

Thus, most Germans and Japa-

nese regarded the USSR as a serious threat, willingly embraced the Americans security umbrella and tolerated the Occupation. The Bundeswehr and Self-Defence

Bundeswehr and Self-Defence Forces made Germany and Japan armed front-line states in the Cold War. Japan became the base from which the US fought the Korean War.

The reconstruction of both these countries was facilitated by their large stock of knowledgeable and skilled manpower which lessened the costs of Occupation. Despite becoming sovereign nations, Germany and Japan still host large numbers of Gls.

No threat scenario similar to the

one perceived by Bonn and Tokyo

existed for Iraq. In fact, Washington

was the external threat as far as

Baghdad was concerned. The US

made its hostility to Iraq quite open

with debilitating sanctions and intrusive inspections under UN auspices.

Most Iraqis consider that the

main reason US invaded is because it covets Iraq's oil especially its huge reserves. Getting back at an Arab state and, at one remove, Muslims for 9/11 and making things even safer for Israel are other factors.

That the Iraqis, out of sheer self-

respect if nothing else, would resist the US Occupation was inevitable. But Iraq resistance's defining characteristic is that the majority of IraqisShias and Kurds--are tacitly cooperating with the US to reclaim their country back from the invaders. Washington is complicit in this

exit strategy, boxed as it is into a corner and tarnished by the smelly odour of a "bad" war.

Thus, unlike Bangladesh or Vietnam, Iraqi resistance is not quite like a conventional war of national

liberation. It's a project driven mainly by Sunnis inspired as much by patriotism as by the actual and prospective loss of privileges and status as the ruling class.

This has sharply polarized Iraq into contentious ethnic and sectarian factions as manifested in the

ian factions as manifested in the ongoing fight over the draft constitution. The prospect exists that a federal Iraq with an anemic centre will emerge from the ashes of US invasion that will be radically different from Saddam's unitary state.

Whether such an Iraqi state sticks together, becomes a de facto confederation or breaks up into

three parts remains to be seen. Iraq is essentially a construct manufactured at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 by the imperialist Europeans.

Since its present structure, like the former Yugoslavia, doesn't have natural sanctity, none of these three possibilities can be ruled out. If Iraq like Yugoslavia were to disintegrate, it would be ironic indeed that an edifice built by British colonialism was torn asunder by its transatlantic cousin, American imperialism, and that the with help from London.

that too with help from London.

Whatever outcome eventually emerges may not be entirely displeasing to US (or Israel, for that matter) since it'll keep the Iraqis looking inwards for many years to come, and give Washington (and Tel Aviv) plenty of opportunity to fish in troubled waters, especially amongst Kurds.

For example, expect talks on the reactivation of the Mosul/Haifa oil pipeline, built in early 1930s but closed since 1948, to start in due course, particularly if a de facto independent Kurdistan is established.

But whether the new cartography will make the Americans more palatable or acceptable in the MEand what kind of legacy this will leave for Bushis very much up in the air.

In Pakistan, Islamabad's civil and military rulers' had an abysmally poor knowledge of history. This is evident from their inept and inapt policies over many years and especially in 1971.

Their cumulative impact was to

drive the conservative and pious Bengali Muslimswhose predecessors one defining experience was the exploitation at the hands of the Hindu landed and professional eliteinto the arms of Delhi and generated forces that split Pakistan.

It's a moot point whether a small but influential section of Pakistan's ruling military junta together with its civilian allies concluded by 1971 that things had reached such a pass between the two wings that a breakup of the country would be in West Pakistan's basic interests.

Pakistan's basic interests.

This would avoid a flow of resources from west to east and make Pakistan's nightmarish security problem more coherent and thereby better manageable. Circumstantial and anecdotal evidence points to this possibility but hard or empirical data are lacking. This is a subject that awaits further historical research.

But if this hypothesis has any validity, then Niazi's surrender on 16 December 1971 would seem to suggest that Dhaka experienced a sense of liberation and Islamabad a feeling of relief from a stifling relationship that had degenerated into unrelenting bickering.

Summing Up

Military occupations are undertaken to secure the occupying powers interests and to prevent the occupied territory becoming a source of instability. The goals of the occupiers may be nation building, fostering democracy or promoting free market economies but these remain

subordinate to security considerations.

Fighting a "just" war and extensive devastation that breaks the will of the vanquished populations promote resigned even willing acceptance of the occupation, especially when the subjugated share or acquiesce in a common external threat.

Measures to promote economic

reconstruction at first under direct rule and later through local proxies can yield favourable results and form the basis of an exit strategy provided they are carried out over a fairly long duration. A major factor contributing to a successful occupation is the skill levels of the occupied population that reduce the burden on the occupiers.

These factors were present in Germany and Japan. Hence, US military occupation was successful in those countries.

Because these factors were conspicuous by their absence in Iraq, the American occupation there has not achieved all the goals the Bush Administration had set for itself. In that sense, the US occupation of Iraq is a failure.

This outcome is in keeping with

the historical record. More occupations fail than succeed.

The author is a freelancer