Learning to Live with Bombs



Site of the Boston Marathon where mayhem broke out after two bomb blasts. PHOTO: AFP

Grace and peace, long associated with the city of Boston, were shattered when two bombs went off at its popular marathon. Waves of awe and shock swept through America and the world.

The ghosts of 9/11 and other horrific terrorist attacks returned to haunt those who try and understand those who sow hate. A key strategy against terrorists, who aim to confuse and confound the government and people, is termed "hard security".

National security and intelligence organisations are expanded and a security fortress is built around the country. It is an expensive exercise where billions are spent to defeat an enemy with inferior resources.

The terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks in the United States are said to have spent about US$500,000. Compare this to the more than $1 trillion the Americans have spent on homeland security in the last 10 years or so. Despite these expenses, terrorists continue to inflict damage.

Another less expensive strategy is called "soft security". It's about living with security as a way of life. It's the power of an individual, community and country to stand up to the terrorists.