



*Occasional Paper - June 2013*

# India: Internal Security Challenges and Responses

***Prakash Singh***



## **About The Author**



**Prakash Singh** has been a very distinguished police officer of the country with an excellent track record for combating terrorism/insurgency in the most turbulent theatres of the country - Nagaland, Assam, Punjab, J&K, and (in the Terai area of) UP.

Singh was Police Chief of two of the largest states of India – Uttar Pradesh and Assam. He also commanded India's premier paramilitary outfit, the Border Security Force.

The Government of India, in recognition of his contribution to national security, awarded him the *Padmashri* in 1991.

A prolific writer, he has written six books and about 300 articles for the national dailies. His book on *Naxalite Movement in India* has been translated in French also.

Prakash Singh is also the architect of Police Reforms in the country.

He is presently Member, National Security Advisory Board. He is also Associate Fellow of the Joint Special Operations University (US). He is a Member of the Advisory Board at Vivekananda International Foundation.

## India: Internal Security Challenges and Responses

Kautilya wrote in the *Arthashastra* that a state could be at risk from four different kinds of threats – internal, external, externally-aided internal and internally-aided external. The internal security scenario in India has a mix of all the shades of threats visualized by Kautilya. It is indeed a dismal scenario. According to an estimate, 252 of the country's 640 districts are presently affected by varying intensities of subversive, insurgent and terrorist activities. Out of these, Maoists are creating mayhem in 173 districts, Pakistan-backed separatists stirring trouble in 15 districts of Jammu & Kashmir, and various separatist and secessionist outfits are active in 64 districts of six north-eastern states.

Terrorists have spread their tentacles all over the country. J&K continues to be on the boil with Pakistan continuing to push infiltrators from across the border and refusing to dismantle its infrastructure of terrorism. The separatist movements in the north-east have been somewhat contained largely due to the cooperation extended by Bangladesh, but the region on the whole continues to be in a state of turmoil. Save for some sensational strikes occasionally, the Maoist insurrection appears to be ebbing in Central India, but there are disturbing signs of its expansion in the north-east and some southern states.

### Internal Security – A New Threat Every Decade

In the wake of India's partition, the major problem facing the country was of dousing the communal fire and rehabilitating the huge population which had moved from across the border. One would have expected that this would be taken care of within a couple of years and after that the country would embark on a process of national reconstruction and consolidation. Not that this did not happen, but the progress was greatly hampered by the challenges which the country found itself confronted with in the different theatres.

If one were to take a panoramic view of the internal security situation as it has evolved since the dawn of independence, we find that every decade saw a major problem being added to our internal security kitty. The fifties saw the north-east going up in flames. Phizo raised the banner of revolt in Nagaland in 1954 and, in due course, the sparks flew to Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. The sixties saw the

beginnings of the Naxalbari movement, starting from a small village at the tri-junction of India, Nepal and what was then East Pakistan, which has today spread across 173 districts of the Union. The seventies saw turbulence in Assam with the formation of the United Liberation Front of Assam to liberate Assam from India's "colonial regime" through armed struggle. The eighties witnessed one of the most lethal terrorist movements in Punjab, aided and abetted by Pakistan, and there are attempts to revive it. The nineties saw the beginning of insurgency in Kashmir, though the seeds of trouble were there in the wake of partition. The current decade has been marked by the onslaught of international terrorism in the hinterland. What was so far confined to Jammu & Kashmir has gradually become a pan-India phenomenon.

## Lack of Strategic Vision

Why is it that the problems instead of getting resolved are getting multiplied, is the big question? An important reason for the deteriorating internal security scenario has been, as George Tanham said, that India lacked a tradition of focused strategic military thought and analysis. There was no coherent military tradition handed down from the ancient past. The view is contested by some Indian writers who equate Kautilya's *Arthshastra* with Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. It is also true that *Mahabharata* has chapters – Bhishma and Shanti Parva – devoted to the principles to be followed during war. However, taking an overall view, the country placed far greater emphasis on spiritual values and moral traditions with special emphasis on *Shanti* (Peace) and *Ahimsa* (Non Violence) rather than on statecraft or the art of fighting. No wonder, the Mughals and the British were able to conquer the country in the absence of a strong central authority and any long-term strategy by its rulers. As Clausewitz said, "wars are lost or won by their strategists, even before they are begun".

Even today, our leaders are obsessed with the present and, at the utmost, with the next elections. The parliament hardly ever has any serious discussions on matters of defence and security. As observed by *The Economist* in its issue of March 13, 2013:

"Apart from the always-vocal press and New Delhi's lively think-tanks, India and its leaders show little interest in military or strategic issues. Strategic defence reviews like those that take place in America, Britain and France, informed by serving officers and civil servants but led by politicians, are unknown in India. The armed forces regard the Ministry of Defence as woefully ignorant on military matters..... The Ministry of External Affairs which should be crucial to informing the country's strategic vision, is puny. Singapore, with a



population of 5m, has a foreign service about the same size as India's. China's is eight times larger."

At the highest political level, there is hardly any vision or planning to elevate India to the big league.

## Neglect of CNP

Another important factor has been our neglect of, what has been described as Comprehensive National Power. Four civilizations – Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China – enjoyed a head start in the global competition for wealth and power. Down the line, all these civilizations got derailed and their position was taken over by Western countries. Significantly, both China and India are in the process of re-asserting their power and influence. According to the Chinese, Comprehensive National Power (CNP – *zonghe guoli*) is the combined overall strength of a country in numerous areas. It is the aggregate sense of all factors such as territory, availability of natural resources, military strength, economic clout, social conditions, domestic government, foreign policy and its initiatives, and finally the degree of wielding international influence. Thus, CNP is "an evaluatory measure done both qualitatively, as well as quantitatively of the current and future strengths of all these above factors". The United Service Institution (USI) study of Comprehensive National Power has given the following ranking to the various countries:

1. United States
2. Germany
3. Japan
4. China
5. Russia
6. India
7. South Africa
8. Brazil and
9. Indonesia.

However, in this context we have to take note of "the paradox of unrealized power", that is the inability of a state to translate potential power into actual power. This is essentially caused by the lack of political will and the unwillingness or the reluctance to take risks and make sacrifices. We have seen this in the conduct of our policy towards Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

## Major Challenges

The major emerging challenges in the area of internal security are:

- the threat of terrorism, international and domestic;
- the possibility of jihadi elements fanning the flames of insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan;
- China fishing in the troubled waters of the north-east; and
- Maoist insurgency spreading to other areas largely due to absence of a strategic plan to deal with the problem.

The UK *National Security Strategy* (2010) defines the “priority risks” to the country in three tiers, each tier mentioning four to seven risks in detail. Our policy makers have identified the threats but not in the form of a strategy document and there has been no attempt to prioritize the threats.

## Terrorism

International terrorism poses the greatest challenge to the security and stability of the country. It was until recently confined to the state of Jammu & Kashmir but has gradually spread across the length and breadth of the country. The terrorists are opposed to the very idea of India; they want to destroy its icons and its symbols. They have been repeatedly causing explosions in Delhi because it is the political capital of India; they have been repeatedly attacking Mumbai because it is the commercial hub of the country; they have been perpetrating incidents of violence in places like Ayodhya and Varanasi because these are the holiest places of the Hindus; they have been active in Bangalore because it is the IT hub of the country. In other words, they want to destroy India politically, economically and culturally. This mindset is best illustrated in the speeches of Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, the chief of Lashkar-e-Toiba. Speaking in Lahore on November 3, 1999, he said:

“The jihad is not about Kashmir only .... About 15 years ago, people might have found it ridiculous if someone had told them about the disintegration of the USSR. Today, I announce the break-up of India, Insha-Allah. We will not rest until the whole (of) India is dissolved into Pakistan.”

On another occasion, speaking at the Al Qudsia Mosque in Lahore on February 5, 2007, Saeed said:

“Jihad in Kashmir will end when all the Hindus will be destroyed in India.... Jihad has been ordained by Allah. It is not an order of a general that can be started one day and stopped the other day.”

Nasr Javed, a trainer of LeT suicide attackers, delivering a speech after the evening prayer at the Quba Mosque in Islamabad on February 5, 2008, said that “Jihad will spread from Kashmir to other parts of India” and that “the Muslims will be ruling India again”.

Terrorist modules are active in several urban conglomerations. The security forces and intelligence agencies of the country are quite capable of handling the terrorist threat, but they are hamstrung by government policies. We have no comprehensive anti-terror law even though the country has been facing different shades of terrorism for the last nearly fifty years. Other countries like USA and UK, which faced the brunt of terrorism during the last decade only, have stringent laws to deal with the menace. It is a great pity that the government is shy of tackling terror as terror and that it prefers to deal with terror as “unlawful activity” only. It is also unfortunate that we have not been able to codify our anti-terror policy. US, UK and France have been very clear in enunciating their policies. The US State Department has laid down the following four principles which guide the American policy:

- make no concession to terrorists and strike no deals;
- bring terrorists to justice for their crimes;
- isolate and apply pressure on states that sponsor terrorism; and
- bolster the counter-terrorist capabilities of countries that work with the US.

The US *National Security Strategy* document of May 2010 clearly says that the US would “disrupt, dismantle and defeat Al-Qaida and its violent extremist affiliates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and around the world”.

The principles guiding British counter-terrorism policy are:

- terrorism is a crime : acts of terrorism are unjustified and unacceptable in all circumstances, whatever the motives of the perpetrators;
- there must be no concessions to hostage-takers or other terrorists;

- the fight against terrorism needs close international cooperation and coordination; and
- in the fight against terrorism the highest standards of human rights behaviour must be applied and the rule of law applied to suspected terrorists also.

The UK *National Security Strategy* document of October 2010 also recognizes international terrorism as the “principal threat” to the country.

The basic principles of the French policy are:

- unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, regardless of the identity and motives of those involved;
- the need to take into account the grave human, political and social problems upon which terrorism feeds;
- the struggle against terrorism must take place in a context of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in all but a few exceptional cases, judicial and security measures remain the best response to terrorism.

Our policy-makers have, however, been shy of enunciating their policy. Successive governments have preferred to deal with terrorist situations in an ad hoc manner depending upon their own perceptions.

The government had, in the wake of 26/11, initiated a number of steps to strengthen its anti-terror capabilities. National Security Guard (NSG) hubs were set up at Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai. Twenty counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism schools are being raised. The state governments were advised to augment their police manpower. Coastal security is being beefed up. Multi-agency centre for collection and collation of intelligence was activated. A National Investigation Agency (NIA) was established. However, we have still a long way to go. The counter-terrorism apparatus needs a lot more strengthening.

During 2013, there have already been two terrorist strikes so far: in Dilsukhnagar area of Hyderabad on February 21 in which 16 persons were killed and 117 injured, and in Bangalore on April 17 near the BJP office in which 17 people including 11 policemen were injured. The country thus remains vulnerable to terrorist attacks essentially because of the half-hearted approach of the government to tackling it and the inherent weakness of the law enforcement apparatus. In fact, India is considered



one of the countries worst affected by terrorism and political violence in terms of the number of incidents and casualties. The recent incidents have exposed the chinks in our armour.

A Jaish-e-Mohammad leader, Asmatullah Muawiya, said in March 2013 that India will become a major target of terrorist assaults once the US withdraws from Afghanistan. Muawiya, who had earlier served in Al Qaida, disclosed that attacks on India will increase as the jihadi groups will shift their focus from Afghanistan to Kashmir.

There are, meanwhile, disturbing indications of Pak Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) putting pressure on militant groups of Punjab like the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF), Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) and their collaborators in European and North American countries to revive militancy in the Punjab. According to a recent report, the supporters of the Khalistan movement have formed a Sikh Congressional Caucus in US and about 30 US lawmakers have signed up for the Caucus. It is also disturbing that the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) held a special function on January 6, 2013 to pay tribute to the assassins of Indira Gandhi. The Khalistani elements have also raised a memorial for Bhindranwala and other terrorists killed during *Operation Bluestar* within the precincts of the Golden Temple. These are ominous developments. Cyberspace has meanwhile emerged as a fertile source of recruitment for Khalistani activists. There are over 40 websites and 200 groups on Facebook dedicated to keeping the movement for an independent Sikh homeland alive.

Economic terrorism is yet another dimension of international terrorism that the country has to contend with. Pakistan has been flooding the country with counterfeit currency with a view to subverting its economy and funding terrorist activities in different parts of the country. It is estimated that Pakistan pumped in 16 billion worth of Fake Indian Currency Note (FICN) into India in 2010, a figure that rose to 20 billion in 2011 and 25 billion in 2012. There was, according to intelligence and security agencies, 300% increase in terror financing cases during 2012. Pakistan's High Commissions in Dhaka and Kathmandu are fully involved in these operations. The crime syndicate of Dawood Ibrahim is also exploited for the purpose.

The following aspects would require immediate attention to deal with the threat of terrorism:

- i) *Anti-Terror Policy: It is a sad commentary on our handling of the terrorist problem that while we have been grappling with it for the last nearly fifty years, we have yet to codify our response to it. Every government follows a policy which would be most expedient in a given situation. We need to clearly lay down that there shall be no compromise with terrorism, that sponsoring terrorism would be treated as hostile activity, that those involved in supporting, overtly or covertly, terrorist activities shall be dealt with severely, that those engaged in funding terrorist activities shall be stringently dealt with and their accounts frozen and confiscated, and that the country would not hesitate to make necessary sacrifices in the battle against terrorism.*
- ii) *Anti-Terror Law: The country must have a stringent anti-terror law. It is a great pity that every successive government debunks the legislative approach of the earlier government. We had the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA) followed by Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) while currently we have the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. There should be a consensus on the law required to deal with the challenge of terrorism and this law should not be tinkered with by any successor government.*

## Jammu & Kashmir

The Government of India has been committing blunders in Jammu & Kashmir from the very beginning. Some of the major blunders have been as follows:

1. Referring the matter to UN when the Indian Army was in the process of flushing out the invaders
2. Nehru's uncalled for assurance that the wishes of the people of the State would be ascertained
3. Bartering away the territorial gains of 1965 at Tashkent
4. Indira Gandhi could have dictated settlement of the Kashmir question in 1972: following the liberation of Bangladesh
5. Release of militants in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed by VP Singh on Dec 13, 1989
6. Not crossing the LOC after clearing the aggression from Kargil

7. Handing over three militants (Masood Azhar, Omar Sheikh, Mushtaq Zargar) at Kandahar on Dec 31, 1999

There has nevertheless lately been a decline in the level of violence in the state, as the following figures show:

**Casualties in J&K**

Year	Civilians	Security Forces	Terrorists	Total
2010	36	69	270	375
2011	34	30	119	183
2012	16	17	84	117

Source: SATP Portal

There is, however, no room for complacency with Pakistan continuing to nurture snakes in its backyard. It has been stoking the fires of insurgency through non-state actors. According to an estimate, about 2500 terrorists are believed to be waiting in some 42 training camps across the border to infiltrate into India. The Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen appear to be gearing up for a fresh offensive in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The Harkat-ul-Ansar is planning to resume operations under a new name Jabbar-ul-Mujahideen, which is said to have close links with the Haqqani network fighting against US-led NATO Forces in Afghanistan. Besides, Pakistan has been violating the ceasefire with impunity. The Defence Minister stated in Lok Sabha on March 4, 2013 that there have been 188 instances of ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Line of Control in J&K between 2010 and 2012. The separatist organizations within the state have meanwhile formed a coordination committee, Muttahida Majlis-e-Mushawarat (Joint Consultative Council), to coordinate their agitational activities.

It has been rightly said that peace in J&K is “fragile”, and that “the separatist constituency, its handlers in the ISI, and its terrorist associates principally located across the border, continue to look for an opportunity for escalation”.

The Government of India passed a unanimous resolution on March 15, 2013 reiterating that “the entire state of Jammu & Kashmir including the territory under illegal occupation of Pakistan is and shall always be an integral part of India” and that

“any attempt from any quarter to interfere in the internal affairs of India will be met resolutely and with complete unity of our nation”. A similar resolution had earlier been passed in 1994 also.

If the government really means what it has said, it would be necessary that the following steps are taken to deal with the internal security situation in J&K:

- i) *integrate gradually the state of Jammu & Kashmir with the rest of India in all matters;*
- ii) *deal with the separatist elements with a heavy hand and place a blanket ban on their conspiratorial confabulations with the Pak authorities, both in Delhi and in Islamabad. Any contacts with the terrorist outfits active in J&K should be dealt with under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. (Seven separatist leaders led by Chairman of all party Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, met the ISI Chief as well as Chiefs of LeT and HM in Pakistan in December 2012);*
- iii) *ensure comprehensive economic development of the State, ensuring accountability in the utilization of funds;*
- iv) *initiate appropriate measures to bring back and rehabilitate the Kashmiri Pandits who were dislodged from their homes and forced to seek shelter in other parts of the country.*
- v) *Keep the issue of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) alive and put pressure on China to withdraw from the areas it has occupied in J&K.*

## North-East

North-east has been convulsed with separatist and secessionist movements of different hues. These movements could broadly be attributed to:

- a feeling of neglect by the central government;
- false propaganda by leaders of the area;
- alienation of tribals;
- changes in the demographic pattern caused by the influx of people from across the borders;

- availability of sanctuaries in Myanmar and Bangladesh;
- assistance to rebel groups by countries inimical to India.

Nagaland has been the epicenter of armed insurrection in north-eastern India. The sparks later flew to Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. Assam also witnessed upheaval due to the large scale influx of foreigners into the State.

The government policy has, broadly speaking, been to:

- assure the tribals that their rights on land would be protected and that their social customs and cultural traditions would not be interfered with
- take counter-insurgency measures, wherever unavoidable
- implement schemes for the economic development of areas even if these are witnessing insurgency
- engage the separatist/secessionist groups in political dialogue
- enter into suspension of operations agreements with the insurgent groups
- meet their legitimate aspirations by granting them autonomy or even statehood
- have understanding with neighboring countries (Bhutan, Myanmar) so that the insurgents do not get any shelter there.

Nagaland has been having suspension of operations since 1997. About 60 rounds of peace talks have been held, though there is no agreement on the substantive issues yet. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Issac-Muivah) (NSCN (IM)) has taken full advantage of the cease-fire period and violated the terms of agreement with impunity to augment its strength and build its finances.

Manipur has about 15 militant groups operating in the Valley and the Hill districts. Three of these – People's Liberation Army (PLA), United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) have combined to form a Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF). There is another body called CorCom (Coordination Committee) of six Valley-based militant outfits to bring unity among revolutionary groups to free Manipur from India's "colonial regime".

In Assam, the sharpness of ULFA has been blunted, thanks to Bangladesh's cooperative attitude. Besides, the leaders of the insurgent outfit have shown willingness to negotiate with the Government of India and abandoned their insistence

on recognition of 'sovereignty' as the pre-condition for talks. Paresh Baruah, commander of the armed wing of ULFA is, however, opposed to any talks with the Government of India until the "core issues" of sovereignty and independence of Assam are also discussed. Baruah has about 150 armed cadres with him along the China-Myanmar border.

A disturbing development in the north-east is China's renewed interest in the region and culpable involvement with the insurgent outfits. NORINCO or the China North Industries Corporation, a state owned weapon manufacturing company, has emerged as the largest supplier of arms to the underground of the north-east through Myanmar and Bangladesh. It has office in Bangkok and operates through a network of agents spread over south-east Asia. The charge sheet filed by the National Investigating Agency (NIA) against Anthony Shimray, chief arms procurer of the Issac-Muivah faction of the NSCN, specifically mentions NORINCO, and states that the NSCN-IM rebels had allegedly paid \$ 100,000 to NORINCO to buy 10,000 assault rifles, pistols, rocket propelled grenades and ammunition. Shashadhar Choudhury, ULFA's 'foreign secretary', after coming overground, stated that "the Chinese sold ULFA weapons but indirectly". He also disclosed that Pakistan's ISI had trained the ULFA armed cadres. The Chinese are also reported to have asked the UNLF leaders from Manipur about the location of India's nuclear tipped Agni missiles in the north-east and details of the deployment of Indian Army in the region. G.K. Pillai, former Home Secretary, Government of India, is on record as having said that "there is a lot of smuggling by Chinese arms agents who come to India mainly through Myanmar and Bangkok". The Minister of State for Home Affairs said in the Rajya Sabha on December 7, 2011 that the insurgent groups in the north-east were getting arms through "smugglers" from China's Yunnan province, Myanmar and south-east Asian countries. The Minister, speaking in the Lok Sabha on March 12, 2013, again confirmed that "the insurgent groups of operating in the north-eastern states of India have been augmenting their armoury by acquiring arms from China and Sino-Myanmar border towns and routing them through Myanmar". The Chinese strategy seems to be "to keep the north-east on the boil and simultaneously profit from arms sales".

The continued unrest in the north-east is to be attributed essentially to the following factors:



- an impression among the tribes that the Government of India could be blackmailed into giving concessions by perpetrating violent incidents;
- widespread corruption among the ruling elite;
- active involvement of foreign intelligence agencies; and
- connivance/helplessness of neighbouring countries in permitting insurgent groups to set up training camps and allowing them to procure arms and supply the same to the insurgent outfits.

The Government of India's internal security doctrine on north-east will need to take care of the following aspects:

- i) *dialogue is to be preferred to armed confrontation but the period of peace talks should be utilised for meaningful exchange of ideas and the insurgent outfit must not be allowed to use this period to enhance its strength in terms of following and weaponry;*
- ii) *the terms of suspension of operations must be strictly enforced and the insurgent outfit restrained from indulging in extortions, collection of taxes, forcible recruitment and other unlawful activities;*
- iii) *there should be accountability in the utilisation of funds allotted for development;*
- iv) *people from the north-east should be given greater opportunities of cultural interaction with the rest of the country.*

## **Maoist Insurgency**

The Maoist problem has been described as the biggest internal security threat to the country.

The salient features of the movement today are as follows:

- Spread over a large geographical area
- Increase in potential for violence
- Expansion in north-east
- Nexus with other extremist groups

*Geographical Spread:* The movement which started from a small village in 1967 has spread over a vast swathe of the country during the last over 45 years. Presently, about 173 districts across the country are affected by incidents of Maoist violence; out of these 26 have been identified as highly affected. These are mostly in the seven states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, and West Bengal. The Prime Minister, while addressing the State Governors on Feb. 12, 2013, claimed that the Left-Wing Extremism's (LWE) geographical spread was showing a shrinking trend.

*Potential for Violence:* The Naxals' potential for violence has increased substantially with their acquisition of sophisticated weapons and expertise in the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The armed wing of the Maoists - the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) - is estimated to be about 8,600 strong; besides there are 38,000 jan militia armed with simple weapons who provide logistical support to the PLGA.

*Expansion in North-East:* The Maoists are spreading their tentacles in the north-east and there are disturbing reports about their trying to forge links with the insurgent outfits active in the region. As noted by a parliamentary panel recently, "the foray of Maoist into sensitive Northeastern States is fraught with serious strategic implications, since it has potential trans-border possibilities of connection, activities or interaction". The panel went on to say that "the presence of LWE in north-eastern parts of the country can derail the socio-economic developmental projects of the Central and State Governments as a result of which, efforts of the Government could go in vain."

*Nexus:* The Maoists' nexus with the other extremist organizations has added to the complexity of the problem. The PW (People's War) cadres received training in the handling of weapons and IEDs from ex-members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Besides, they have *entente cordiale* with the NSCN (IM). Some batches of Naxals received arms training from the ULFA. Besides, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) has fraternal relations with the Communist Party of Nepal. Pakistan's ISI is also trying to reach out to the Maoists.

Chhattisgarh is one of the worst Maoist-affected states in the country today. The state government launched an *Operation Green Hunt* to dislodge Maoists from their areas of influence, but the Maoists have been inflicting heavy casualties. Besides the recent attack in Darbha Ghati where they wiped out the entire state Congress leadership, the

Maoists killed 75 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel in one single incident in Dantewada district on April 6, 2010. Jharkhand has witnessed maximum incidents of violence this year so far. Naxalism has flourished in the state essentially because of corruption at the highest level. Bihar is in bad shape because the political leadership is unwilling to confront the problem head on. In Orissa, a lackadaisical administration has enabled the Maoists spread their wings. In Maharashtra, only Gadchiroli district is badly affected but there are reports of Maoists trying to spread their influence in what they describe as the “Golden Corridor” stretching from Pune to Ahmedabad. In West Bengal, the Marxist government blew hot and cold in tackling the Maoists. Mamta Bannerji had a soft corner for the Maoists but she was gradually disillusioned and has now given full latitude to the security forces.

The Maoists have recently suffered considerable attrition in their top leadership. Out of the 16-member politburo, two have been killed while another seven are in custody; and out of the 39-member central committee, eighteen have been neutralized, with five killed and thirteen in custody. That the Maoists are in some kind of tactical retreat is shown by the decline in the number of violent incidents. According to MHA figures, the number of incidents decreased from 1760 in 2011 to 1415 in 2012, and the casualties of the security forces fell from 142 in 2011 to 114 in 2012. The number of civilians killed in Maoists violence has also gone down from 469 in 2011 to 301 in 2012. These figures should not, however, generate any sense of complacency because there is no clarity in government's policies and there is a huge gap between Centre's perceptions and States' actions. Every Chief Minister has a different take of the Maoist threat and his own brand of response to the problem.

The Maoists have been meanwhile taking steps to regroup and reorganize themselves. They have set up a Buniyadi Communist Training School (BCTS) in the Dandakaranya region to transform tribal cadres into communist professionals equipped to handle tasks related to the Central Committee, the outfit's apex decision making body. The School is churning out professionally trained Communists with basic military skills and knowledge of science, mathematics and social studies. They are also refining their skill in rocketry. The Minister of State for Home Affairs informed the Lok Sabha, on May 6, 2013 that the Maoists were “manufacturing improvised hand grenades and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) in units that have come up in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh”.

The socio-economic dimensions of the problem are recognized and handsome grants have been released by the Planning Commission for the development of the affected

areas from time to time. The unfortunate experience so far has been that the benefits of these schemes are not reaching the poorest segments of population due to rampant corruption. As Minister Jairam Ramesh recently said, “We are combating not just a destructive ideology, but are also confronted with the wages of our own insensitivity and neglect”.

The Maoist problem requires a comprehensive approach with emphasis on the following aspects:

- i. The development paradigm pursued since independence, the benefits of which have been disproportionately cornered by the dominant sections at the expense of the poor and which has aggravated the prevailing discontent among marginalised sections of society, deserves to be given a second look and reviewed.*
- ii. The PLGA will have to be neutralised through sustained counter-insurgency operations. It must, however, be ensured that there is minimum collateral damage.*
- ii. Socio-economic development of the areas affected will need to be ensured through sincere implementation of the plans.*
- iii. The grievance redressal machinery will need to be activated at different levels. Justice must be seen to be delivered.*
- iv. Land alienated from tribals must be restored to them.*
- v. Tribals’ rights over forests must be recognized. The provisions of the Forest Rights Act should be enforced.*
- vi. There should be genuine attempt to win the hearts and minds of the people.*
- vii. The door for peace talks should always be kept open.*

## Illegal Migrations

One of the biggest problems facing India and having a direct bearing on the country's economy and security is that of the continuing illegal migration of Bangladeshis into India. The factors which have been encouraging the influx from Bangladesh side are:

- steep rise in population with increasing pressure on land and mounting unemployment,
- recurrent natural disasters like floods and cyclones, uprooting large segments of humanity,
- better economic opportunities in India,
- religious persecution of Hindus and discrimination of tribals,
- Islamic interests encouraging expansion of territory,
- organized immigration by touts and anti-social elements, and
- porous and easily negotiable international borders.

The bulk of the Bangladeshi immigrants are in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Delhi and the north-eastern states. The Task Force on Border Management, which was headed by Madhav Godbole and submitted its report in August 2000, contained the following indictment of the political establishment:

“There is an all round failure in India to come to grips with the problem of illegal immigration. Facts are well known, opinions are firmed up, and operating system is in position. But the tragedy is that despite this, nothing substantial happens due to catharsis of arriving at a decision in this regard due to sharp division of interest among the political class.”

The Task Force estimated the total number of Bangladeshi immigrants in India to be 1.5 crores. Considering that twelve years have elapsed since then, the figure must have reached at least 2 crores.

The Supreme Court of India, in a landmark judgment (July 2005), while repealing the notorious The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal ) (IMDT) Act, observed that “there can be no manner of doubt that the State of Assam is facing ‘external aggression and internal disturbance’ on account of large scale illegal migration of Bangladeshi nationals” and directed the Union of India “to take all measures for

protection of the State of Assam from such external aggression and internal disturbance as enjoined in Article 355 of the Constitution”.

A parliamentary panel expressed the view (April 2008) that “the large presence of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants poses a grave threat to internal security and it should be viewed strongly”. The Government of India unfortunately continues to drag its feet in the matter and has not initiated any definite measures to throw out the illegal migrants.

According to Myron Weiner, the global immigration crisis should not, and cannot, be ignored, specifically because it presents serious challenges to states and the preservation of human rights. There are three possible options :

1. *Accommodation Control – It involves expanding the level of legal immigration and accepting a chunk of the illegal immigrants. This option is based on the neo-classical economics, which argues that economic benefits accrue from the free movement of the factors of production.*
2. *Greater Border Control – This would involve increasing the deployment of police and paramilitary forces to effectively check trans-border movements. Besides, physical barriers like border security fencing may also be erected to prevent unauthorized movements of people from either side. Identity cards could be issued to the citizens so that the detection of illegal immigrants becomes easier.*
3. *Intervention – This involves changing the economic, political and social factors in the sending countries which lead to migrations. Such efforts have been made in a number of countries. Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and Haiti, are three prominent examples. Economic assistance, coercive diplomacy, sanctions, and military interventions are the possible tools.*

As Weiner has said, it is important to take “perceptions and fears seriously and not dismiss them as irrational, xenophobic, or paranoid”. India will be ignoring the dangers to its communal harmony, economic well being and, above all, security at its own peril.



## Other Threats

There are threats to internal security from certain other factors also. These include:

- Regional aspirations
- Inter-state disputes
- River water sharing issues
- Communal problems
- Caste tensions
- Demand for reservations, etc.

These factors also, from time to time, pose a formidable challenge. Thus, the demand for a separate state of Telengana led to normal life being disrupted in several areas of Andhra Pradesh for 42 days during September-October, 2011. Inter-state disputes between, for example, Assam and Nagaland or Nagaland and Manipur also throw up problems. There is a boundary dispute between Assam and Nagaland. The lifelines to Manipur, NH-2 and NH-37, are choked by the Nagas whenever the latter have a grievance, real or perceived, and that results in great hardship to the Manipuris.

There are river water disputes over the sharing of Cauvery and Krishna rivers. These were referred to Tribunals in 1990 and 2004 respectively. The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) passed orders in April 1992, December 1995 and February 2007. The party States have however filed Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) in the Supreme Court against the decision of the Tribunal and the matter is *sub judice*. The disputes is between the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT) passed orders in June 2006 and has framed twenty-nine issues for adjudication. The dispute between the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka remains pending. There are inter-state disputes over the sharing of Godavari and Narmada rivers also. These disputes occasionally lead to local agitations.

Communal confrontations take place now and then. There were riots in several parts of the country following the demolition of the disputed shrine in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. Gujarat witnessed riots in different parts of the state following the Godhra incident in which pilgrims travelling in a railway coach were roasted alive. Caste tensions between the higher and lower castes in certain areas are a serious

problem for the district administration. Demand for reservations manifests itself in the form of ugly agitations. The Gujjars of Rajasthan held the state to ransom, blocking the important Delhi-Jaipur highway.

## National Security Doctrine

The internal security situation is grim. It is best captured by the Sanskrit shloka, “*Agnina dahyamanastu shatrumadhye gato rane*” (when there is fire all around and you are surrounded by enemies in the battlefield). The challenges can, however, be effectively dealt with and contained if we have a proper internal security doctrine, and the same is implemented in letter and spirit irrespective of the sacrifices the nation may have to make in the process. It has been rightly said in the US *National Security Strategy* that “what takes place within our borders will determine our strength and influence beyond them”. President Obama also said that “our strength and influence abroad begins with the steps we take at home”.

The internal security doctrine of the country must have the following components:

1. Political – Whether the challenge is secessionist, separatist or regional? Reasons for the same will have to be analysed. If the demands are genuine, whether any constitutional amendment is called for? A secessionist movement, as a matter of principle, will have to be put down with a heavy hand. The country must have a clear policy and stringent laws to deal with such elements. Separatist elements would also have to be dealt with firmly. Regional aspirations would require a comparatively softer approach. Ethnic demands should get a sympathetic response unless that leads to excessive fragmentation.
2. Socio-economic – Is the challenge due to genuine socio-economic grievances of the people? Are they suffering from acute poverty, unemployment or displacement? In such cases, the socio-economic grievances will have to be addressed by planned development, ensuring that there are no regional disparities and the fruits of development are equitably shared by all sections of society. Besides, the spirit of nationalism will have to be fostered and de-radicalisation programs undertaken.
3. Governance – Has the administrative machinery been dysfunctional in certain areas? Has the administration reached out to people in the remotest

corners? If not, governance will have to be improved. Criminal Justice System of the country must be revamped, and the resources and the capabilities of the law enforcement machinery given necessary upgradation and augmentation. The civil services including the police must be insulated from extraneous influences. Corruption will have to be contained because corruption and development cannot go side by side.

4. Police/Paramilitary/Army – The internal and the external dimensions of the challenges have got meshed and they impinge on each other. The country's armed forces, the paramilitary units and the Coast Guard will have to be maintained at the highest levels of efficiency. Government should, however, be careful to use the appropriate force for a specific threat. The police would particularly need to be reformed, reorganized and restructured so that they become professional, people-friendly and are able to deal with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
5. Intelligence - The intelligence agencies must coordinate internally as well as with the agencies of friendly countries. It should have both defensive and offensive capabilities – defensive to forewarn and, wherever possible, neutralize the impending threats and offensive to weaken such assets of the hostile country as are used for trans-border operations.
6. Border Management – The country has land borders with six countries (China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan) stretching over a length of 15,318 kms. Besides, it has a coastline of 5422 kms and, in addition, there are islands with a coastline of 2094 kms. We have already paid a heavy price for neglecting the borders. China humiliated us in 1962 and continues to maintain an aggressive posture. Pakistan has been bleeding us. Bangladesh has been conveniently transferring its population to India. Nepal is no longer the friendly neighbour it was. Land borders, wherever porous and liable to exploitation, will need to be effectively guarded. The force deployed on the borders should have the necessary resources in terms of manpower and equipments. Fencing may be erected to prevent unauthorized human migrations. Coastal security will need special attention; the responsibilities of marine police, Coast Guard and the Navy will need to be clearly delineated and they will all have to operate in harmony.

7. Centre-State Coordination – There should be synergy in any operations undertaken by the Centre and the States. This coordination should be in all areas including sharing of intelligence. An institutional framework should be created to resolve the inter-state disputes within a time –frame.

Taking a broader view, and expanding the doctrine to include the entire gamut of national security, we shall have to adopt a whole of government approach. The US approach includes the following factors: Defense, Diplomacy, Economic, Development, Homeland Security, Intelligence, Strategic Communications, American People and the Private Sector. In the context of India, the following factors would need our special attention:

- Energy Security
- Food Security
- Protection of Environment
- Economic growth with equitable distribution of wealth
- Strengthening the Criminal Justice System
- Gender equality and justice, and
- Respect for Indian values

The external threats to the country emanate from Pakistan and China. It is not possible to go into the details of our strategy to deal with the threats from these countries in this paper. Suffice it to say that we need to convey in unambiguous terms to Pakistan that sponsoring terrorism would be counter-productive, that we are capable of retaliating in kind and that Pakistan would find the game a losing proposition. China can also be dealt with. Those with misgivings need to read the story of David and Goliath. All we need is a proper strategic approach. India needs to build bridges with the South-East Asian countries China has antagonized. We may also think of re-opening the Tibet chapter. China has been repudiating old agreements; we could also revisit our commitments. We must also remember that as a country becomes prosperous and affluent, it becomes proportionately less inclined to accept damages or losses in its mainland.

## Concluding Observations

It is a great pity that our response to the various challenges has generally been feeble. We have a strong military muscle and our economic strength has been steadily growing. And yet, we have been dealing with the multifarious problems confronting the country in a manner which exposes us to the charge of being a 'soft' state. A country-specific report prepared by the Counter Terrorism Committee of the United Nations revealed gaping holes in India's preparedness to tackle terrorism. The report called for adoption of comprehensive counter-terrorism legislation to overcome the menace and highlighted the need to plug the finances of terrorist groups. India has all the resources and the trappings of an emerging great power and there is no reason why we should not be able to deal with the threats to internal security more effectively.

Our problem has been, as analysed by Sri Aurobindo, that "we have abandoned *Shakti* and are therefore abandoned by *Shakti*". The prescription given by the saint-philosopher is relevant to this day:

"What India needs especially at this moment is the aggressive virtues, the spirit of soaring idealism, bold creation, fearless resistance, courageous attack; of the passive *tamasic* spirit of inertia we have already too much..... What we need, what we should learn above all things is to dare and again to dare and still to dare."

The same message is there in the Bhagwad Gita also where Lord Krishna exhorts vacillating Arjuna with the words: "*Kaunteya, yudhaya krita nischaya*" (Stand up and fight with determination).

### Image Sources:

- <http://stockwatch.in/files/National-Security.JPG>
- <http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2008/11/29/Mumb460.jpg>
- <http://media.nowpublic.net/images//14/8/148ac1aadadfa4038a3d0b05fa44924a.jpg>

## About the VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Vivekananda International Foundation is an independent non- partisan institution that conducts research and analysis on domestic and international issues, and offers a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution. Some of India's leading practitioners from the fields of security, military, diplomacy, government, academia and media fields have come together to generate ideas and stimulate action on national security issues.

The defining feature of VIF lies in its provision of core institutional support which enables the organization to be flexible in its approach and proactive in changing circumstances, with a long-term focus on India's strategic, developmental and civilisational interests. The VIF aims to channelize fresh insights and decades of experience harnessed from its faculty into fostering actionable ideas for the nation's stakeholders.

Since its establishment, VIF has successfully embarked on quality research and scholarship in an effort to highlight issues in governance and strengthen national security. This is being actualized through numerous activities like seminars, round tables, interactive-dialogues, Vimarsh (public discourse), conferences and briefings. The publications of the VIF form the lasting deliverables of the organisation's aspiration to impact on the prevailing discourse on issues concerning India's national interest.



### VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

3, San Martin Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi – 110021

Tel: 011-24121764, Fax: 011- 24106698

Email: [info@vifindia.org](mailto:info@vifindia.org), Website: <http://www.vifidia.org>