

CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES (CLAWS)
EMPLOYMENT OF CENTRAL POLICE ORGANISATIONS (CPOs) IN
COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS
SEMINAR REPORT

General

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) organised a seminar on “Employment of Central Police Organisations (CPOs) in Counterinsurgency Operations” on 10 August 2010. Shri Dharendra Singh, former Home Secretary, chaired the seminar. Shri Prakash Singh, former DG BSF, Brig KS Dalal (Retd), Consultant (Training), CRPF, Col Yash Mor, SM, Director PP, Army HQ and Dr N Manoharan, Senior Fellow, CLAWS, spoke on the subject. Serving and retired officers from the armed forces as also paramilitary forces participated in the seminar.

Welcome Remarks: Brig Gurmeet Kanwal (Retd), Director, CLAWS

In the prevalent security environment in the country, there is a need to assess the role and employment of CPOs in Counterinsurgency Operations (CI ops). The army’s present engagement in Jammu and Kashmir and in the North East cannot be stretched to other areas that require attention. As of now, the deployment patterns of CPOs appear to be marked by ad hoc decisions and knee-jerk reactions to emerging threats and challenges, rather than a cohesive long-term approach that maximises the strength of each organisation. There is a need to understand the nature of their involvement and evolve ways through which their efforts can be directed to enable maximum effectiveness in CI ops.

Chairperson: Shri Dharendra Singh

Although the emphasis of the seminar is on the CPOs, CI ops would require the meeting of minds at several levels. The Indian Army has undertaken such operations all over the country and has a high degree of expertise. Consequently, the army has been advising CPOs on conduct of such operations. Civil society would have to be taken on board for successful conduct of CI Ops. There are certain constitutional limitations under which the forces perform and this aspect will have to be kept in mind. Perception management would also form an important constituent of measures undertaken to restore normalcy.

Speakers

CI ops: Indian Army Doctrine: Col Yash Mor

The Indian Army doctrine is an important document which acts as a guide for CI ops. CI ops differ from conventional warfare and have both a military and civil component. As stated in the Indian Army Doctrine for Sub Conventional Operations, December 2006, “In the conflict zone, all actions of the security forces must have a civil face and be directed towards strengthening the hands of the civil authority.” It is important to realise that the Army operates at the request of the state administration and its role is to:

- Restore normalcy and improve law & order situation.

- Permit smooth conduct of civil, political, social and economic activities.

It needs mention that the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) does not displace civil power of the state; it only helps in deployment of the Army in 'aid to civil authorities'.

The centre of gravity in CI ops is the populace and continues to remain so always and every time. Actions that require to be taken while conducting CI ops are as under: -

- Effective Sealing of the Border.
- Establishment of comprehensive CT Grid with focus on: -
 - Denial of population centres to the terrorists.
 - Providing security to the lines of communication.
 - Ensuring security of VAs & VPs.
 - Undertaking civic action programmes to address aspirations of the population and win their hearts and minds.
- Synergise hinterland ops through: -
 - Company Based Area Grid System.
 - Small team intelligence driven operations.
 - Manpower intensive approach rather than firepower intensive.
 - Discriminate use of violence. (Iron fist in a velvet glove).
 - Well planned surrender policy.
 - Extensive Military Civic Action as illustrated by Op Sadbhavana.

The doctrine stipulates a few operational facets that need to be undertaken before, during and after CI ops. The mapping of conflict zone is important for the soldier to have a better idea about the place where operations are being conducted. The following merit attention: -

- Topography of the area.
- Population profile.
- Understanding of the root causes of the problem.
- Profile of terror organisations operating in the area to include facets such as ideology, political and military structure, leadership and local & foreign influences.
- Details of other SFs, Govt, Intelligence agencies and NGOs in the area.
- Media: local, national & international to be used as a force multiplier and in perception management.

Orientation is another aspect that cannot be overlooked as the nuances of CI ops are different from conventional operations. In regard to CI ops, a soldier needs to be oriented towards fighting 'own people' and not an 'enemy'. The operations thus need to be people friendly where the civil face of the military is projected and minimum force is used. Pre induction training is important which is imparted by various Corps Battle Schools & by the Army's premier training institute, Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School (CIJWS) at Vairangte in Mizoram.

During induction and deployment, the pressing need is for reconnaissance and liaison and to deploy in a grid pattern. Intelligence gathering, both human intelligence and signal intelligence is a priority task as all operations will be conducted on 'Hard'

intelligence. The rules of engagement include minimum force, avoid collateral damage and guard against provocation. Additionally, good planning, coordination and precision along with small team action would be the key to success.

Winning Hearts and Minds is the staple tenet of CI ops which include active civic action coupled with passive civic action. Active civic action involves activities such as construction and functioning of schools, assistance in emergencies and natural disasters, providing medical aid, construction of roads and bridges, projects aimed at empowering people and generation of self employment. Passive measures are respect to elders and women, respect for local customs and traditions, good behaviour of troops, minimum population control measures in consultation with state administration and in treating people like your own.

The Ten Commandments of COAS act as the bible for the CI ops undertaken by the Indian Army, which stipulate the following:

- No rape.
- No molestation.
- No torture resulting in death or maiming.
- No military disgrace.
- No meddling in civil administration.
- Competence in platoon/company level tactics in CI ops.
- Willingly carry out civic action with innovations.
- Develop media interaction.
- Respect Human Rights.
- Only fear God, uphold Dharma and enjoy serving the country.

There are certain characteristics of the Indian operational style in Low intensity conflicts which can be emulated for ensuring success in the complex CI ops.

- Sustained Force Deployment – 10 to 20 years and more.
- Psychological exhaustion of terrorists/ insurgents and the population involved.
- Use of minimum force.
- Excellent Human Rights record.
- Synergy in political, diplomatic, social and military efforts and a unified command.

While the Indian Army has successfully handled insurgency, the following issues need to be deliberated upon: -

- What is inhibiting a political solution when the army has brought the situation under control?
- Do we have an exit strategy when the army is called in?
- Do CPOs have any CI / CT doctrine?
- Is the larger issue of police reforms being addressed?
- Why is there no proactive strategy to deal with internal turmoil?

Mr Prakash Singh, Former DG, BSF

In the wake of Kargil, the Government of India appointed four task forces to look into specific issues. Based on the above, it was decided that all CI ops in the country would be handed over to the CRPF. Theoretically, the idea sounds excellent and seems unquestionable, but theoretical solutions do not always filter down to practical feasibility. The CRPF is an excellent force for the kind of job it has been trained to perform i.e. security during elections, *dharnas* etc. However, shifting the CRPF from such role to CI ops is a quantum jump, especially when such a move is embarked upon, without any degree of transformation. The force was not trained to handle CI ops which is why the force suffered and continues to suffer mass casualties. The large expansion of the force did not see a corresponding match in its training and leadership. The dilution of quality to the demand of quantity has consequently resulted in ineffectual operations.

The inadequacy of the CRPF was evident from the Dantewada incident and the retardation factors can be described as lack of leadership, training, motivation and poor command and control. The manpower is competent but the men need to be motivated with the right leadership. Without effective leadership, no force can be successful in the long run. Ad-hoc plans cannot ensure success in handling any CI operation. It is important to discern that effective leadership cannot be made available overnight and building such capabilities takes time. The way out of such lacunas is to give the CRPF the level of training given to Combat Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA), under the command and control of the CRPF. When such a competent force can be built under the command of the CRPF, then why isn't a similar template used for the complete force at large? There is a need to work upon training, work pressure and communication gaps with other security forces and armed forces of the country.

CRPF - An Overview: Brig KS Dalal (Retd)

Since 2001, the CRPF has been the main force designated to take part in CI ops throughout India. Employment of such forces without the requisite level of training and leadership has led to some very heavy losses by the force. The Home Minister has made reference to the situation vis-à-vis Left Wing Extremism, as a 'war-like' situation, and undoubtedly, when men in such numbers are lost the situation does seem to be 'war-like'.

The tasks which the CRPF performs are designated and the force prepares accordingly. However, with the involvement of the CRPF in more and more different circumstances from controlling riots of stone-throwing mobs in J&K to guarding pilgrims during the Amarnath Yatra to guiding shrines in Ayodhya and fighting Naxalism - all very diverse situations, with very little commonality between them does create problems. Their numbers have also increased, with almost 10 battalions being raised every year. 10 have already been raised thus far in 2010, in a force which numbers more than 210 battalions (181 of which are in active deployment, with 160 in CI ops), making it the largest paramilitary force in the world. Statistically, in terms of a comparative perspective, the CRPF has more units deployed in CI ops than even the Indian Army.

When one judges the progress made by the CRPF, it must be kept in mind that the CRPF is seconded to the civil administration, and consequently, to the state police as well. Therefore, if the civil administration and the state police do not have a strategy, it is very difficult for the CRPF to engage adequately as well, despite having the will. This point can be brought home with the example of the CRPF's involvement in the Punjab problem in the 80s, wherein given that the civil administration had a clear agenda, the CRPF was able to take proper action accordingly.

It was raised in 1939 as the Crown Representative's Police, and post-independence, renamed as Central Reserve Police in 1949. Prior to independence, it was primarily used for anti-dacoit operations and random law and order issues. Till the time the BSF and ITBP were raised, the CRPF also manned the borders. It participated in the operations at Hot Springs (Ladakh) prior to 1962, and also took part in the war of 1965, performing admirably in both situations. When it is mentioned as a force particularly catered for Counterinsurgency, it is not a new development. It was actively involved in combating the insurgency in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Tripura. It has also performed well overseas, having taken part in the operations in Sri Lanka as well as Kosovo.

Therefore, while it is not necessarily engaging in situations different from its experiences in the past, the rapid expansion has taken a toll on its strength. Training has not kept up with the increase, and neither has the leadership, and that is where the basic problem lies. There is also the issue that the 160 battalions which are deployed in CI ops have been constantly in the field, rotated between J&K, the northeast and the Naxal belt. This rotation of duties has, unfortunately, led to the development of a sense of self-preservation, which has made them somewhat defensive. Therein lies the conundrum that their counterparts in the CISF are not deployed accordingly, which leads to a sense of disenchantment.

One may conclude on the note that wherever there has been a clear mandate from the civil administration, the CRPF has performed well. Where the same is lacking, the performance has lacked as well. The men in the CRPF are the same as in the Army - the difference lies in the quality of leadership, which is lacking in the CRPF.

Employment of CPOs in Counterinsurgency: Understanding the Larger Issues: Dr N Manoharan

There is a need to understand that there are certain weak links, which are responsible for the lack of complete success, in terms of counterinsurgency operations. India has never lost any counterinsurgency campaign thus far - conflicts may have been protracted, stretching into decades - but without an overarching sense of defeat. And the reasons for the conflicts being protracted are multifarious. Five such issues are being highlighted. These are: -

- **The external linkages of the militants and insurgents.** It is because these movements are being fuelled by outside support. These linkages range from arms to finance, drugs, propaganda, ideology, and the concept of a 'common enemy' (leading from Kautilya's conception that an enemy's enemy is a friend). If one were to take the example of the Maoists, it is assumed that they do not have any external linkages, that the problem is purely an internal one.

But their external linkages run deep. In terms of arms, training, finance, they get significant help from their counterparts in Nepal, northeast militant groups, jihadist groups based in Pakistan, local Islamic groups, and until recently, even the LTTE. It was the LTTE, in fact, which introduced the Maoists, to the external dimension. Many Chinese arms have been found with the Maoists as well, leading to two schools of thought on the issue. One side supports the idea that the Chinese are directly supplying arms to the Maoists, through Nepalese and northeast India connections. The other school holds that while China is not supplying arms directly, these arms are available to the Maoists in other ways. This is the line of thinking of the present establishment as well. In terms of training, it is assumed that towards the last days of Eelam War IV, many LTTE cadres crossed over into India, and are now actively engaged in training the Maoists, even to the point of coaching them in suicide bombing techniques.

- **Intelligence.** It is well known that only real-time and actionable intelligence can make counterinsurgency successful. The Maoists definitely have an edge over the security forces, when it comes to real-time and actionable intelligence. For their purposes, every disaffected, disenchanted individual in the hinterland is a source of information. Conversely, the security forces are mired by problems varying from a proliferation of agencies involved (both at the central and state level), lack of in-house coordination in the CRPF, overall coordination and sharing, technical intelligence and a network of informers, or human intelligence (a vital tool).
- **Coordination.** It is unusual that the governments in all Naxal-affected states are of the opposition, which may or may not be coincidental. However, leaving that aside, there are two levels of coordination which are essential in such circumstances - one between the centre and state/s, and the other, between different states - neither of which is currently at an optimum. There has been talk recently of implementing a military-style unified command and the CI grid in the Naxal-affected areas, which could make the difference.
- **Politico-legal issues.** There are issues in the macro picture of institutionalisation. All the concerns addressed earlier are present because of a lack of institutionalisation, and the means to address such gaps need to be examined. One option is that of amendments to the constitution and certain laws. Another aspect is the 'pillars' of counterinsurgency. Currently, the three aspects of the same are the political, the developmental and the military. But soon emerging is the need of a fourth pillar, in the form of perception management - shaping the public opinion. A fifth pillar is diplomacy - wherein external linkages would need to be tackled. Overall, a comprehensive internal security strategy is the call of the hour.

- **Operational issues.** The Indian CI approach is of limited use of force, with a firm 'no' to any strategy of barbarism. However, such a strategy doesn't prevent the development of special forces, like the COBRAs in the CRPF. In fact, there should be a firm concentration on such an approach, with small-unit operations, both of an overt and covert nature, as the situation may demand. And while currently, deployment of the forces is the mandate of the state police and administration, if there were a unified/cooperative command in place, such powers would be vested with the DG (CRPF), which would be to the benefit of the force.

Discussion

- The unbridled expansion of the CRPF's strength is an issue. In doing so, the proper training, probation period, and the quality of the same is being forsaken. Such an approach is detrimental to the overall objectives. If the objectives could've been fulfilled simply by increasing the number of forces, there would never have been a shortage of officers in all three defence forces. There must be a cap on such expansion - it must not be left open-ended. In not doing so, the force has become unmanageable, with the officers who possess the qualities to rise, not being able to do so, given the logistical issues.
- While the CRPF jawan may be as good as that of any other CPO or even the Army, the resources and direction which it must be given are sorely missing. And in this absence, the performance levels are lacking accordingly. While the COBRA battalions do perform well, they are merely 10 out of 210 - which is not enough.
- The fact that India is a young nation can no longer cover for its inadequacies, when there are younger nations which have achieved far more. It must not be employed as an excuse.
- The fact that the CRPF is a large force does not necessarily translate into ineptitude in its handling by the DG CRPF. After all, India is a large nation - one wouldn't question on the Prime Minister's ability to lead it. One must, instead, stress on the quality of leadership to lead such a force.
- A criticism of the government's handling of a particular situation need not necessarily translate into a criticism of the government itself. One must be able to look on it as a signal to improve standards.
- There is no reason that small-unit operations cannot be carried out by the army, in coordination with the air force, when a situation such as the attack on Dantewada calls for it. The country and its government must not be opposed to it for form's sake.
- It is a considered view that the Army should not be involved in such operations. For one, because it would signal that all faith has been lost in CPOs. With some help, the CPOs can be brought up to standard. They must also be given some time to adapt to such duties, since the nature of their duties is also multifarious. They are the best forces for such situations. Second, the concept of one-off

operations is sound in theory, but inadequate in practice, for the Army would not be able to pull out after such 'surgical strikes'. Third, the possibility of a two-front war is always threatening. It would be best if the Army were dedicated only for their primary duties.

- It is not just the CRPF which is deployed in CI Operations. 30% of the CISF is also involved in CI Operations. The macro picture must be kept in mind.
- The equipment available to the CPOs is similar to those with the infantry, insofar as weaponry is concerned. There is room for advancement, however, in telecommunications equipment.
- Leadership cannot be parachuted - it must grow up the ladder. This is the norm the world over, as also in the Indian Army.
- Regimentation must be brought into CPOs.
- CRPF must be divided into two parts - one part meant solely for CI ops, the second part meant only for law and order.

Closing Remarks: Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch (Retd), Addl Director, CLAWS.

It is important to arrive at an end-state realisation in terms of all CI ops. What is the end-state the government seeks to achieve? Unless this question is answered, these operations will come to naught. The security forces can provide a stable environment through the use of force but thereafter solutions are in the domain of the government.

Problems such as that posed by the Naxals are not new. They have been festering for years with little action having been taken by the state and its bureaucracy to resolve outstanding grievances. We need to put in an element of accountability into the state administration for such problems to be nipped in the bud.

(Report compiled by Samarjit Ghosh, Associate Fellow & Aditi Malhotra, Research Assistant, CLAWS)