



CLAWS

Internal Security Management: Challenges and Policy Options

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In the *Arthashastra*, Kautilya wrote that a state could be at risk from four types of threats - internal, external, externally-aided internal, and internally-aided external. He advised that of these four types, internal threats should be taken care of immediately, for internal troubles, like the fear of the lurking snake, are far more serious than external threats. The most dangerous enemy is the enemy within.

Kautilya's teachings on internal security and his skillful expression of the warp and weft of internal and external security has great relevance in the globalised 21st century. Destabilising a country through internal disturbances is more economical and less objectionable, particularly when direct warfare is not an option and international borders cannot be violated. External adversaries, particularly the weaker ones, find it easier to create and aid forces which cause internal unrest and instability. India's history is full of such experiences. Since Independence, we have faced many such situations, initiated by China, Pakistan and others in the Northeast and even in the western sectors of the country since the mid-60s. But only after the events of 11 September 2001 has the world started looking at these external and internal linkages more seriously.

Presently, almost all the countries of South Asia – India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan and Afghanistan – are experiencing internal security problems, due to insurgency movements, ethnic conflicts, religious fundamentalism, or just cussed political polarisation. India has a unique centrality in the South Asian security

zone. It has special ties with each of its neighbours: ties of ethnicity, religion, language, culture, common historical experience, and of shared access to vital natural resources. However, apart from the advantages that these special ties offer, they often make it easier for external forces to exploit any internal dissent. Within the country, these special ties also tend to encourage Indian secessionist groups in establishing safe sanctuaries across the borders in neighbouring states; trans-border illegal migration, gun-running and drug-trafficking. Situated as we are between the 'Golden Crescent' and the 'Golden Triangle', secessionist groups taking to violence find little difficulty in indulging in drug trade and obtaining small arms within the country.

India is a country exemplified by diversity – over one billion people are spread over approximately 3.1 million square kilometres of territory. The people of the country speak 16 major languages, in over 200 dialects. There are about one dozen ethnic groups, seven major religion communities with several sects and sub-sects, and 68 socio-cultural sub-regions. When a socio-political and socio-economic equilibrium is maintained in such a scenario, there is unity in diversity. But if there is even the slightest imbalance, we have more diversity and less unity. This has been a hallmark of India's history and it has always been exploited by external elements. Even after 62 years of independence, our secular,

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open and pluralistic society continues to be vulnerable to several internal contradictions. Some specific issues that we are faced with, which have an impact on our internal security are:

- Problems of national assimilation and integration, particularly of the border areas in the North and Northeast.
- Porous borders with Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, which enable illegal trans-border movements and smuggling of weapons and drugs. It is presumed that erecting fences on the international borders can stop all illegal trans-border movements. That is not so. First, it is not possible to guard or police every metre of the land, sea and air borders. Second, the construction of a fence along land borders is expensive and requires a tremendous amount of manpower for effective surveillance. Border fencing can assist in checking infiltration to an extent, but it does not and cannot eliminate it.
- Weak governance including an ineffective law and order machinery and large-scale corruption. An ever-increasing section of the population is getting disenchanted with social justice, or the lack thereof. There is a continuous decay of the political, administrative, and security institutions of the country. Efforts to stem the rot have failed so far. Declining political and public values have led to consistent and persistent political interference.
- Nexus between crime, insurgency and politics.

At the annual internal security conference of Governors and Chief Ministers in 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh acknowledged that the internal security threat to India is a major cause of concern. Currently, about 45 percent of India's geographical area, covering 220 districts, is facing internal security problems at various levels. On

23 December 2009, Home Minister P. Chidambaram, while delivering the 22nd Intelligence Bureau Centenary Endowment Lecture, stated, "India in the twenty-first century has turned out to be the confluence of every kind of violence: insurrection or insurgency in order to carve out sovereign states; armed liberation struggle motivated by a rejected ideology; and terrorism driven by religious fanaticism. Never before has the Indian state faced such a formidable challenge. Never before have the Indian people been asked to prepare themselves for such fundamental changes in the manner in which the country will be secured and protected."

Internal security problems in J&K and Northeastern states are well known. However, two additional problems which serve to highlight the seriousness of the internal security situation in the country are as follows:

Naxal/Maoist Insurgency

In October 2003, 55 districts in nine states were affected by Naxalite violence. It has now spread to about 180 districts in 17 states. Most of the severely affected districts are situated in Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashtra; eight of them are critical. More than 13,000 civilians and 5,500 security personnel have been killed as a result of Naxalite violence since 1990. In that, 2009 was the bloodiest year till date.

The origins of the Naxal movement can be traced back to the 1960s, when Naxalites started operating from various parts of the country. However, Naxalism emerged as a real security threat when armed groups like the Peoples' War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre joined hands in 2004 and formed the CPI (Maoists) to fight against the Indian state. One of the basic objectives of the Naxal movement is the overthrow of the existing state machinery in India. Naxals do not believe in parliamentary democracy. In fact, they consider it an aberration. While projecting the state as well as its armed forces as the "enemy", the Naxal movement calls upon its members to take up arms and defeat the enemy decisively. The movement believes that the state is merely an agent

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of the elitist class and does not cater to the interests of the lower strata of society.

A statement issued by CPI (Maoist) on 14 October 2004, stated, “We hereby declare that the two guerilla armies of the CPI (ML)[PW] and MCCI have been merged into the unified Peoples’ Liberation Guerrilla Army. Hereafter, the most urgent task, i.e. the principal task of the party is to develop the unified PLGA into a full-fledged liberation Army and transforming the existing Guerrilla Zones into Base Areas, thereby advancing wave upon wave towards completing the New Democratic Revolution.” The statement further said: “The new party will also continue to support the struggle of the nationalities (Kashmiris and tribals of India’s Northeast) for self-determination, including their right to secession and condemn the brutal state repression on these movements.”

The recent large-scale Naxalite/Maoist attacks on railway stations, police posts and patrols in West Bengal (Silda), Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhatisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere, and the recovery of sophisticated weapons like semi-automatic rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers, and training material, should give an idea of their strength, motivation, and potential. By spreading their movement to 17 states, and the latest declaration to take the war to urban areas, the Maoists have shown that they mean business. Till recently, it has been considered more as a law and order problem of the states and less an issue to be dealt with by the central government. The states have used inadequately armed, equipped, trained and motivated police forces and other resources in a ‘switch on’ and ‘switch off’ mode. The bane of our counter-Naxalite strategy, even after the lessons from Nepal in recent years, has been the lack of lucid analysis and consistency in formulating and implementing a viable strategy. It is evident that the central government has woken up to the problem now, but the desirable synergy with state governments is yet to be achieved. Besides, there are many powerful NGOs in civil society and the media, who still consider the Maoists as nothing more than modern avatars of Robin Hood.

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Communal Terrorism

Communal terrorism, induced, by and large, from outside our country, poses yet another grave threat to India’s sovereignty and integrity. It subverts the fundamental rule of law, denies basic rights to citizens, endangers the social fabric, and threatens political and economic stability. The primary objective of terrorists has been to trigger communal riots in communally-sensitive areas. Since the mid-1980s, India’s share of terrorist-related incidents and civilian casualties has risen to become the second highest in the world. The terrorist organisations seem to have perfected their *modus operandi*. Serial, high-intensity blasts in crowded places in metropolitan cities gets them the best results – maximum damage and the loudest message. Such incidents require strategising, meticulous planning, extensive logistic support and trusted execution. Only large, well-organised outfits with considerable means, expertise and support at their disposal can carry out such deeds.

Analysis of Internal Security Policies

It is apparent that existing internal security policies and the primary instruments for tackling law and order and internal security have not been able to cope with these growing challenges. In many troubled states, the Army has been employed in large numbers (of units) to create a semblance of law and order and conditions wherein elections can be held for the elected representatives to govern the state. But once committed, these forces have usually had to remain deployed for several decades.

Three points merit elaboration here:

- Military pressure alone cannot resolve matters unless there is good governance, with a strong thrust on socio-political and socio-economic issues. The political leadership and civil administration have to govern the states and the country with greater commitment and efficiency.
- Protracted and excessive employment of the Army leads to the 'Law of Diminishing Returns' for several reasons. First, an over-dependence on the Army reflects lack of trust and faith in the capability of the state and central armed police and paramilitary forces. Second, with the passage of time, the locals start treating the Army as just another police force. Third, such deployments and prolonged duties have an adverse impact on the Army's discipline, morale and operational effectiveness. And fourth, during a war/war-like situation, the Army requires public support. It cannot afford to alienate the local population as is currently happening in Manipur, and to some extent, in J&K and Assam.
- Reduction in Army deployment will be possible only if the paramilitary, central and state police forces can be revamped. There is a need to modernise these forces, improve their leadership, training and man management capabilities.

Centre-State Synergy

Law and order is a state subject. Policing authority, therefore, is vested with state governments. Thus, the

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central government cannot directly influence the quality of policing, a source of much of the problems in the management of internal security. Unfortunately, the state governments devote little attention to this important issue, and very often, refuse to recognise the basic linkages between normal policing and the maintenance of internal security. They have neither the resources nor the inclination to upgrade the quality of the state police or to raise extra forces, without substantial financial help from the centre. There is, thus, a tendency to let the situation deteriorate till it blows out of their control. At the operational level too, as observed in many states recently, synergy is lacking, particularly when the central and state governments are run by different political alliances.

Recently, the Finance Commission allocated a substantial amount of money to the states for the purpose of police training. But these police forces are still in deplorable shape. In many areas, the actual number of police personnel is much lower than the posts sanctioned. Thus, a large number of police posts lie vacant. There is far too much of political interference in the professional functioning of police organisations in these states. As a result, law enforcement agencies across the country, without exception, are in a state of utter disrepair. Unless these are re-invigorated and energised, the desired results from internal security operations cannot be achieved. The 'responsibility without resources' attitude at the state level, and the lack of accountability at state and central levels, needs to be resolved. Although the centre has built up large central police organisations, which stands at about six lakh personnel in 354 battalions (of which 220 battalions are meant for border guarding duties), it has been insufficient and ineffective. The government must implement the recommendations of the National Police Reforms Commission of 1979 and the Supreme Court's directives in 2006 in letter and spirit.

We need synergised centre-state strategies and doctrines to deal with different aspects of internal security, including insurgencies and terrorism. These would cover the afore-mentioned law and order-related reforms,

better coordination as well as the broad-based domains of national and state policies like accelerated economic development and social justice, security and media policies in affected areas. For example, the root causes of the Naxal problem in the tribal areas are the loopholes in the Forest (Conservation) Act, the Mines Act, and land acquisition laws, among others. Until and unless the necessary measures are adopted by the government to reform these acts, it will not be possible to uproot the Naxal movement or any other extremist movement in India.

Operational Synergy among Civil and Military Forces

Greater liaison, coordination and inter-operability for operations amongst agencies responsible for internal security is essential. It is time to think in terms of integrated capabilities and synergy among forces, for the optimum utilisation of police and military power. Synergy can be ensured only when the aims, goals, resources and techniques are harmonised by a single internal security doctrine.

Many years ago, the Army had proposed revamping the state armed police, central police forces and paramilitary forces, by the lateral induction of trained Army personnel with 8-10 years of service. This would result not just in the inculcation of Army ethos and culture, but also reduce training expenses. The laterally inducted personnel would benefit by serving longer terms (more savings due to late receipt of pension) and being able to serve within their own states. The Army would also benefit by maintaining a younger age profile. It would be a win-win situation for all. After keeping this proposal under consideration for over a decade, the government has now declared its intention to implement this proposal in a modified form.

Considering the length of India's borders, the border-holding forces will always remain inadequate. They have to be supplemented with 'Home and Hearth' units or village guards of the kind employed in Arunachal Pradesh. These 'Home and Hearth' units, staffed with as many local ex-servicemen as possible, can be raised wherever border-holding forces are thin on the ground.

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In the Northeast, the Assam Rifles had been raised primarily for deployment in that area and comprised personnel from that region. Its composition was eventually changed to that of an all-India force. The force, thus, lost its excellent rapport with the local people, which is essential for intelligence gathering and maintaining law and order. Ideally, about 65-70 percent of this force should be recruited from the Northeast.

Intelligence

India's track record on internal security and counter-terrorism makes it obvious that the intelligence establishment in the states and the centre require revamping. Our inability to pursue intelligence leads vigorously and to book the culprits to a logical conclusion is evident in most terror-related cases. The intelligence agencies have yet to develop new tradecraft and techniques for the penetration of non-state actors through human and technical moles, for the collection of intelligence, greater expertise in collation, analysis, and better coordination between intelligence and law enforcement agencies. This effort is underway now and should produce better results in the future.

Counter-intelligence continues to be a weak point in the Indian intelligence infrastructure. The regularity with which penetrations take place in sensitive departments and intelligence agencies is a disturbing development. A review and revamping of counter-intelligence capabilities is an urgent need.

In 2001, the Intelligence Task Force had recommended the establishment of a Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) for counter-terrorism and counter-intelligence. On

31 December 2008 – rather belatedly – MAC and subsidiary-MAC (in each state capital) were established through an Executive Order. In these new establishments, relevant information or intelligence gathered by every participating agency is analysed and the analysis is shared with each participating agency. The MAC-SMAC-State Special Branch network has been a welcome step. Since its establishment, it has been able to provide more information and better intelligence to the Intelligence Bureau and the state security systems.

Synergy in Law Enforcement, Legal and Judicial Systems

Another positive measure taken recently to ensure synergy in the investigation of terrorists' activities is the promulgation of National Investigation Agency (NIA) and notification of Special Courts under Section 11(1) of the NIA Act.

Synergy between law enforcement and legal and judicial systems is essential. Insurgency, proxy war and terrorism are acts of war. To tackle these problems, tougher anti-terrorism laws are required. Legal punishments to terrorists, their active or logistic supporters, and corrupt officials who enable smuggling of arms and explosives into India, need to be made prompt and severe. The prosecution of the perpetrators of terrorist acts needs to be expedited. The United States and the United Kingdom have provisions in their anti-terrorism laws that are much tougher than India's.

Proposed Measures by Home Minister Chidambaram

While delivering the 22nd Intelligence Bureau Centenary Endowment Lecture on 23 December 2009, Home Minister Chidambaram outlined a series of measures – organisational and systemic – for revamping India's internal security architecture and greater synergy in internal security operations:

Transparent Police Recruitment: The central government has devised and commended to the states a transparent recruitment procedure that will be technology-based and

free of any human interference. According to the Home Minister, the central government has implemented the new procedure in the recruitment to the CPOs and PMFs.

Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS): With no system of data storage, sharing and access, the police stations in the country today are virtually unconnected islands. To overcome this gross deficiency, the central government is implementing an ambitious scheme called the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS). This system will facilitate the collection, storage, retrieval, analysis, transfer and sharing of data and information at the police stations and between the police stations and the state headquarters and the CPO.

Community Policing: To encourage community policing, a toll-free service will be established, under which any citizen can provide information/lodge a complaint. The myriad bits of information flowing from such different sources can then be sifted, analysed, matched, correlated and pieced together to make actionable intelligence.

National Database Grid: Currently, each database stands alone, with its owners having no access to other databases. As a result, crucial information that rests in one database is not available to another agency. In order to remedy this deficiency, the central government has decided to set up NATGRID, under which 21 sets of databases will be networked to achieve quick, seamless and secure access to desired information for intelligence/enforcement agencies.

Unified National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC): At present, there is no single authority to which myriad counter-terrorism organisations are supposed to report.

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There is no single or unified command which can issue directions to these agencies and bodies. The NCTC will perform functions relating to intelligence, investigation and operations to counter any type of terrorism. All intelligence agencies would be represented in the NCTC. MAC would be subsumed into the NCTC. An Operations Wing of the NCTC – absent at present – will give it an edge in counter-terrorism, including preventing a terrorist attack and responding to a terrorist attack, should one take place. CCTNS and NATGRID will then come under the jurisdiction of the NCTC.

Division of Work in the Ministry of Home Affairs: Given the imperatives and the challenges of the times, subjects not directly related to internal security should be dealt with by a separate Ministry or brought under a separate Department in the MHA under an independent minister.

These are only proposals at this stage, which will be discussed, analysed and further reformed. What must be appreciated, however, is that the Home Minister has shown the vision, will and determination to create a need-based organisation to synergise efforts in internal security operations.

Conclusion

Synergy is essential to deal with India's complex internal security operations. Post 26/11, there appears to be a conscious effort to ensure better networking of agencies involved in these operations. Strategically, India cannot

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afford to be perceived to be buckling down under internal security or externally induced terrorist pressures. That would be disastrous. Neither can it afford to depend on other nations to take care of its internal security problems. Hard decisions, based on hard analysis of options in the current trend of internal security activities, have to be taken.

We need a comprehensive centre-state strategy to deal with different insurgencies and communal terrorism. It should include broad-based domains of national and state policies including accelerated economic development and social justice, security and media policies. Most importantly, it should address dedicated and effective governance through good administration, prompt and fair judiciary and a law and order machinery that inspires public confidence.



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Views expressed in this Issue Brief are those of the author and do not represent the views of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies.



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