

Internal Security: Need for Comprehensive Matrix

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Internal security has been defined as the act of keeping peace within the borders of a sovereign state or other self-governing territories, generally by upholding the national law and defending against internal security threats. Today's definition of security acknowledges the political, economic, environmental, social and human thread, amongs, other strands that impact the concept of security. It is the concern for security of the lowest common denominator of every society, namely the 'human being' or 'civil security', which has resulted in the development of the concept of 'human security', with a focus on the individual and the people. Therefore, the definition of security is related to the ability of the state to perform the function of protecting the well-being of its people.

India has a land border of 15,072 km, much of which is along difficult and hostile terrain, plus a coastline of 7,863 km and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.02 million sq km. Countries bordering India have their own share of terrorism and insurgencies. In India, 39 organisations have been banned by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) but there are many more organisations, like the Popular Front of India (PFI) that have trained cadres and weapons but not yet gone in for high profile terrorist acts. With our burgeoning population, the continuing evils of corruption, public sector inefficiency, castes, religious tension, underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and shortages and the deficit in managing social change remain the biggest challenges, with some 4.5 crore population unemployed, mostly the youth. The Maoist insurgency has created the biggest faultline spanning 20 states, seven of them seriously

affected. Some 40 million illegal weapons are circulating within India with an annual illegal trade of \$4 million. The case of India is unique in comparison to many other countries because of the large number of home-grown insurgencies, along with a substantial presence of trans-national terrorist entities on our soil and in neighbouring countries, posing a constant threat to our security. To top this, we have the inimical China-Pakistan nexus at both the conventional and asymmetric levels, targeting us continuously.

External Terror Links

The China-Pakistan sub-conventional nexus dates back to 1964 when Chou En-lai suggested to Ayub Khan that Pakistan should prepare for prolonged conflict with India instead of short-term wars, and advised Pakistan to raise a militia force to act behind Indian lines. By 1992-93, the process of transplanting Pakistani armed modules in the heartland of India had started taking cognisable shape; some of these cells were identified in Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Kota/Ajmer region of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala. The Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) had already started deputing volunteers to Pakistan for training along with the Mujahideen, Taliban and Al Qaeda cadres, and had established firm linkages with the Islamic Chhatra Shibir, Al Qaeda affiliated Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), Al Badr, Al Jihad and other organisations in Bangladesh. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had organised a nucleus of Maoists training in mines/Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)/explosives with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that is extracting a heavy price with security forces personnel being killed and maimed. During 2009-10, Stratfor had warned that Pakistan's ISI was trying to forge an alliance with the Maoists to destabilise India from within. Even as early as 2005, empties of bullets fired by the Maoists were found with Pakistan Ordnance Factory markings. The Intelligence Bureau (IB) had reported in 2008 that 500 Maoists had undergone training under SIMI in Kerala. In November, 2010, it was reported that the Maoists had acquired a vast and diverse assortment of foreign weapons, including rifles of .315 bore to .30-06 calibre and that more than three-quarters of their US\$ 70,000 plus budget was spent on procuring weapons and armaments.

The Indian Mujahideen (IM) is the creation of Pakistan, and Pakistan's involvement in numerous terrorist acts, including the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist strike is well established. The Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) has been hobnobbing with the Maoists and both the LeT and Al Qaeda have established roots in

ISI has made inroads in establishing modules in India's heartland.

Kerala and are deeply linked with the PFI. Pakistani militant Asim Umar is Al Qaeda's South Asia head. Shaped in radicalised seminaries and *madrassas* of Pakistan, his mother organisation HUI used to run branches in Kashmir and Myanmar. That Pakistan will continue with its state policy of terror is unambiguously clear. Pakistan has also been using Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka territories to wage terrorism in India and is in the process of radicalising Maldives with the same aim.

China had developed links with the Taliban more than a decade ago, backs Pakistan's anti-India *jihad* and supports the Maoist insurgency in India and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Manipur. Not only is China providing sophisticated weapons and communication equipment to the Maoists but over the past several months, has provided arms manufacturing facilities to Maoists within India and to Kachen rebels in Myanmar. In May 2015, Chinese intelligence brought nine militant groups of northeast India under one umbrella organisation: ULFWSEA (United National Liberation Front of West, South, East Asia). In addition, China has supplied assault rifles, machine guns, anti-tank rockets, QW-1 SAMs (Surface-to-Air-Missiles), armoured vehicles and missile fitted helicopters to the United State Wa Army (USWA) in Myanmar. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as 'South Tibet' and is leaving no stone unturned to stoke instability in our northeast.

When the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was in power in Bangladesh, its pro-China-Pakistan and anti-India stance was well known because it was supported by terrorist organisations, including the Jamaat-e-Islami and Ahle Hadith Andolan that were viciously anti-India and known to be funded by Saudi Arabia in a major way. Major terrorist camps were being run in Bangladesh then. The present Bangladesh government has come down heavily on terrorism but the latent capacity continues. Post the Burdwan blasts, revelations of the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) having consolidated in West Bengal is one of the fallouts. In northern Sri Lanka, the Pakistani High Commission had successfully established what is termed as the "Osama Brigade". Maldives, with around 70,000 foreign employees and some 33,000 illegal immigrants, has been invested by Al Qaeda, the LeT and possibly even the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS). China's newfound interest in Maldives is spurring anti-India sentiments. On balance, we have numerous terrorist organisations that are being capitalised upon by our enemies. Additionally, the Al Qaeda is refocussing to South Asia and we have our share of ISIS radicals to add to the problem.

Faces of Terror

Terrorists are faceless but the term non-state actor is a misnomer as they need lodgment and support. Their lethality has increased with sophisticated weaponry, equipment, technologies and use of the internet. Use of drones, lone wolf terrorism and possible use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and even Nuclear (CBRN) weapons are realities that the security forces must be prepared to face. These new dimensions of the threats that India faces require very flexible and versatile security management. Our state responses must be geared up to match the speed with which things are changing. We must also acknowledge that promises of foreign support in countering terrorism are likely to remain theoretical or at best amount to sharing of intelligence when it suits the national interests of the country providing the intelligence. It is not without reason that Ashley Tellis of the Carnegie Foundation says, “India being continuously subjected to terror actually suits many ... India is a sponge that absorbs global terror”. Whether his reference to “many” includes the US and rest of the West can be conjectured, but it certainly suits China and Pakistan.

Internal Security Set-Up

The MHA is charged with the internal security of the country. It has under its command the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), National Security Guards (NSG), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Assam Rifles (AR), the latter under the operational control of the Army. The BSF has a strength of 186 battalions with an overall strength of 2,05,990 personnel, including an expanding air wing, marine wing, artillery regiments and commando units. The CRPF has 228 battalions with an overall strength of 2,53,266. The ITBP consists of 58 battalions with an overall strength of 85 battalions and is expanding further. The SSB has 57 battalions with an overall strength of 74,686. The NSG has expanded post 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks; hubs have been operationalised at Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata, and a Regional Centre at Hyderabad is under raising. The CISF has a current strength of 165,000 and is to be expanded to 2,00,000 over the next two-three years. The AR comprises 46 battalions with an overall strength of some 65,662. The grand total of number of battalions, not counting AR units under the operational control of the Army doubles the strength of the infantry battalions of the Army. Then there is the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) which operates some 147 naval vessels and hovercraft, and 60 Dornier and helicopters, with more being added. Coastal patrolling is done by the State Marine Police up

to 12 nautical miles (nm) and by the ICG between 12 and 200 nm. In addition there is the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), presently organised in 12 battalions, the strength of each battalion being 1,149. Four NDRF battalions are capable of responding to CBRN attacks. Looking at internal security holistically, the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) together with the internal security element of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) (Rashtriya Rifles), the state police forces of all the states and union territories combined, with 145 India Reserve Battalions, total up to more than 5,000,000 men in uniform.

Intelligence

The national intelligence agencies report to the National Security Adviser (NSA). A Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) has been created within the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to share intelligence with all other intelligence agencies, including the agencies of the state governments and union territories through the State Multi-Agency Centres (SMAC) and vice-versa, albeit pan-India connectivity has yet to be achieved. A Joint Task Force on Intelligence (JTFI) has also been established. The National Information Grid (NATGRID) is still some years away, whereas the process to establish the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) has not even begun. The NCTC was blocked earlier because of objections by some states because it is to have the power to investigate and arrest. Besides, placing the NCTC within the Intelligence Bureau (IB) was perceived as making the IB an operational body without it being under parliamentary oversight.

Lacunae

Ministerial Control: The MHA charter covers a host of issues like border management, including coastal borders, providing manpower, financial support, guidance and expertise for maintenance of security, internal security of the country dealing with police, law and order and rehabilitation, dealing with constitutional provisions relating to J&K and all matters excluding those under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), implementation of the provisions of the Constitution relating to official languages and the provisions of the Official Languages Act 1963, dealing with Centre-state relations, inter-state relations, union territories and freedom fighters' pensions, disaster management, visa, immigration, citizenship, overseeing the citizenship of India, acceptance of foreign contributions and hospitality, matters relating to protection under the Human Rights Act and also matters relating to national integration and communal harmony, anti-national and subversive activities of various groups/

extremist organisations, policy and operational issues on terrorism, security clearances, monitoring of ISI activities and Home Secretary-level talks with Pakistan on terrorism and drug trafficking, to name the major ones. Though in terms of Entries 1 and 2 of List II, 'State List' in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, 'public order' and 'police' are the responsibilities of the states, Article 355 of the Constitution enjoins the union to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the governance of every state is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. This vast charter and managing of millions of men in uniform for ensuring the requisite security in the face of mounting threats is a mammoth task that appears being handled in a somewhat ad hoc manner, in view of the state of internal security. While proposing the NCTC, the then Home Minister (HM) had also proposed the establishment of a Ministry of Internal Security. If the HM himself made such proposal, obviously, he did not find the existing arrangements conducive to providing the required level of internal security.

Threat Appreciation: The first ever India Risk Survey that was undertaken jointly by ICCI and Pinkerton, says that at the government level, reforms are reactive and piecemeal, not on any integrated and comprehensive level that should have happened as part of a national strategic planning process. But this requires a holistic threat appreciation that should be continuously reviewed. As far as reforms are concerned, it is a question of which organ makes the most noise and can get its way through. Obviously, much is amiss.

Intelligence: India has nine major intelligence agencies with the charter of some not even ratified by the Constitution. The question also remains that in the absence of a national security strategy, that axiomatically should include internal security as well, and absence of defining national security objectives, how do you task the intelligence agencies? The need to infiltrate terrorist organisations (including across the border) is all pervasive and not relevant to the Maoists alone. It is ironic that even the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), though mandated to operate sources cross-border, is denied this and instructed to rely on Technical Intelligence (TECHINT) which is grossly inadequate, Human Intelligence (HUMINT) being the most important amongst all source intelligence.

Maoist Insurgency: The Maoist insurgency affects 2,000 police stations spread over 223 districts across 20 states. The internal security challenges are serious enough to destabilise India if allowed to grow unchecked. Leaving the handling of the Maoists to the individual states is not effective because, one, the insurgents cross over to the neighbouring state when pressure mounts; two,

the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) are placed under the Director General Police (DGP) of the state who is subservient to the Chief Minister while the ground level Member of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) rely on Maoist support, implying a softer approach and leakage of intelligence; three, senior level CAPF appointments are invariably from the Indian Police Service (IPS) officers who have experience in law and order, not counter insurgency; four, not all CAPF troops going in for counter-insurgency are put through a mandatory pre-induction training, especially those not moving in initially with their units. This is also relevant to the one-third annual turnover of CAPF units placed in Maoist areas for prolonged deployment like the Rashtriya Rifle (RR) units in J&K; five, large tracts in Maoist infested areas, particularly the 72,000 sq km Dandkaranya forest, remain largely untouched other than sporadic forays, and little is being done to establish the rule of law in such areas, and; six, many states are holding prisoners for months, even years, without fielding any charge against them, which breeds more discontent.

Optimising Technology: The NATGRID which should be connected to the Global Intelligence Grid (GIG), has been delayed. The NCTC needs to be established and connected via the NATGRID to state level Counter-Terrorism Centres (SCTCs) in 'all' states, not just a chosen few. While the Army is going in for the Battlefield Management System (BMS) and Battlefield Surveillance Systems (BSS), these are required pan the security sector (with adequate checks on a need to know basis) replete with a Common Operational Picture (COP). A decision support system is required that can enable short, medium and long term assessments. The Navy's national command, control and communications intelligence network is to track ships at sea, for which the Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) has been established. Though being integrated with some 20 countries, will it be capable of picking up the type of small vessels used by terrorists during 26/11? The CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System) is still far from linking all police stations in the country. Then there is the issue of tackling the use of cyber space by terrorist organisations for propaganda, recruitment, funding, targeting, etc which requires private-public partnership in a major way.

Special Operations: Special operations are important internally as well as cross-border. Internally, we need to infiltrate terrorist organisations and go for precision elimination of the terrorist leadership and vital infrastructure, the other tasks being psychological operations and de-radicalisation. These can hardly be left to individual states—they need coordination at the national level,

in consultation with the states. As for cross-border special operations, we have largely been ineffective despite a large number of special forces because Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) perceives this to be its exclusive domain. That is why we have not been able to strike at the roots of terrorism across the border and have failed to create any measure of deterrence.

Establishment of Ministry of Internal Security is a priority.

Requirement

The following suggestions merits consideration:

- The government should seriously examine establishing a Ministry of Internal Security (MoIS). Successive strategic gaming exercises conducted at premier institutions and panel discussions indicate this is very much required.
- In addition to a rolling threat appreciation, special operations and psychological operations need to be planned and executed centrally by the MHA/MoIS.
- Since the CRPF is designated as the primary Counter-Insurgency (CI) force, a 24 x7 operations room within the MHA/MoIS should be established, manned by professional CRPF officers to oversee the CI operations, particularly in Maoist infected states.
- Political authority should take a call on posting IPS officers to command the CAPFs, which has also resulted in inadequate organisation, equipping and training of these forces, as lamented by veteran CAPF officers. The CAPFs must be given their DGs and ADGs who have risen from the same force.
- The NATGRID must be expedited and the NCTCs and SCTCs established on priority.
- The NCTC must come up directly under the MHA/MoIS rather than as part of the IB.
- National Intelligence Agencies must also be accountable to the MHA/MoIS in parallel with the National Security Adviser (NSA). This is also relevant in the case of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) monitoring terrorists using the cyber space and overseeing the public-private partnership in this context, which should be of major concern to the MHA/MoIS.
- In addition to a rolling threat appreciation, special operations and psychological operations need to be similarly planned and executed centrally by the MHA/MoIS.
- The police forces must expand to the 220 police per 1,00,000 population norm advocated by the UN and their equipping must be looked into.

The enhancing China-Pakistan anti-India nexus and Pakistan's free hand in Afghanistan are likely to increase their proxy war in India. We need to focus more on internal security, to enable economic advancement, checkmate instability and avoid being forced to fight a two-and-a-half-front war, or worse still permit the internal half-front. The need to reorganise and focus as above was never greater.

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