



# POLICY BRIEF

## Internal Security

June 2009

### INTRODUCTION: NEED FOR A COMPACT NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The concept of national security has progressively been widened in recent years. India faces a number of conventional and non-conventional national security challenges. There are several internal security threats which have external linkages. Traditionally, internal security threats have been categorised under the headings of Left-wing extremism, North East, Jammu & Kashmir, communalism and organized crime.

Dealing with these threats requires a comprehensive national security strategy. The Kargil Review Committee had made several important recommendations towards reforming the government's national security structures. The government of the day had set up several task forces to look into different aspects of national security. The recommendations of the task forces were integrated by a Group of Ministers into a comprehensive document titled "Reforming the National Security Structures". The document contains over 300 recommendations many of which have been implemented. This is to date the most comprehensive document on national security made public by the government. Eight years have passed since the GOM report was published. In these eight years, the security scenario has changed considerably with new, more complex and virulent threats emerging. The government may consider setting up another GOM to examine the national security structures to consider steps that need to be taken to meet the emerging and future threats more effectively.

It would be helpful if the government can articulate an integrated and coherent national security strategy, synthesising all elements of national power. Such a comprehensive

national security strategy should outline the various dimensions of national security, the assessment of the government with regard to the prevailing national security environment and the steps needed to deal with these threats.



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### INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is a key component of security. The Kargil Review Committee had pointed out the various lacunae in the intelligence apparatus of the country. The Mumbai terror attacks of November 26, 2008 (popularly being referred to as 26/11 attacks) brought out the fact that intelligence was available, but its analysis, dissemination and action on intelligence were missing. Coordination amongst intelligence and law enforcement agencies remains the weakest point in the Indian system.

The government has set up a Multi Agency Centre (MAC) which seeks to unify and analyse the intelligence coming from different sources and channels. This is an important step which needs to be replicated at State level. A network of MAC and State Multi Agency Centres (SMAC) need to be created. Equally important is the timing,





collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence.

### Humint

The need to strengthen HUMINT remains paramount. Numerous anti-India groups have proliferated since the Kargil War of 1999. Penetration of these groups is important.

### Techint and Osint

TECHINT is becoming indispensable for intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination. Space-based surveillance, open source intelligence (OSINT), cyber space, media, etc are important sources of intelligence. For separating the relevant signal from the background noise the use of frontier technologies needs to be popularized. The government has created National Technology Research Organization (NTRO) for the above purposes. The interface between NTRO and other intelligence agencies needs to be improved. Databases of information should be created. Some of this information can even be shared with private sector also. The model set up by the United States (DNI, Homeland Security, etc) need to be studied and their best practices considered for adoption in India.

### Coordination

The coordination between the Central and State level institutions needs to be improved and made seamless.

### Data Sharing

India could learn from the experience of the US and other Western countries where effective data-fusion centres have been created. Actionable intelligence should be accessible to all law-enforcement agencies in real time on need to know basis. The use of information technology in intelligence work has to be enhanced several folds. Fusion centres to



integrate all available intelligence should be created. The need of the hour is sharing of intelligence at the earliest, rather than guarding turf. This mindset change should be brought about at the earliest possible.

### Public Perception Management

Public perception management is another important component of the strategy for internal security. Special efforts are required in this direction, particularly in the context of dealing with the problems in the North East, Naxal-affected areas, J&K, and terrorism. This needs to be given due priority.

## TERRORISM

India has been a victim of terrorism for a long time and it has been unable to prevent acts of terror. The 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai is one such example. Like in the case of Kargil War, the reasons for the inability to prevent the terror attacks should be analysed and made public. This would help in better preparedness to prevent similar attacks in future.

### Political Will and National Consensus

Political will remains one of the most important aspects of dealing with terrorism. There is a public perception that India is soft towards acts of terrorism. The public debates in the case of Afzal Guru, the Parliament attack, Kandahar hijacking and numerous other occasions create an impression that the government does not have a clear strategy to deal with terrorism. In principle, India should consider terrorism as an act of war and there should be no negotiations with terrorists. There is a need for consensus between the Centre and the States and among the political parties on the strategy to deal with terrorism.

### Anti-terror Laws, Terror Financing

Counter-terrorism strategy requires strong deterrent laws, effective and quick investigation and prosecution. The

government should also employ adequate resources to choke terrorist financing and illegal money transfers (*Hawala*). Economic offences are detrimental to the country's security. A strong mechanism needs to be developed to deal with such offences. Economic intelligence wing therefore needs to be strengthened.

### NIA and NCTC

The debate over the setting up of National Investigation Agency went on for several years till the 26/11 attacks happened. Even today the NIA is ill-equipped and far from being effective. A National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) should be set up and all anti-terrorism operations should be planned and executed through this Centre. The NIA and NCTC may work in unison.

### Counter-terrorism Infrastructure

There is a need to significantly enhance domestic counter-terrorism infrastructure. Police reforms and the enhancement of capabilities of security forces are important elements of the policy to deal with terrorism. The government has taken a number of steps to modernize the police forces. As incident after incident has shown, particularly in the Naxal affected areas, the State police forces are ill-equipped, ill-trained and poorly motivated to deal with terrorism. They lack proper police stations, communication systems and mobility. Inter-state coordination amongst police forces is lacking. Training has to be improved and a good leadership amongst the police officers has to be created. The security agencies need to be given the necessary freedom to deal with terrorism without political interference.

### International Cooperation

International cooperation is critical for dealing with terrorists as they have cross-border linkages. The government has set up a number of counter-terrorism joint working groups with other countries. There has been useful cooperation between India and the United States after the 26/11 attacks.

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However, there is an urgent need to enhance the effectiveness of these joint working groups through extradition treaties, intelligence sharing and joint operations, and effective measures against terrorist financing.



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### NAXALISM

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described Naxalism as the most important internal security threat facing the country. In 2008, the number of incidents of Naxalite violence was 1591 and the number of casualties was 920. These figures are higher than those in 2007. Chattisgarh remains the most seriously affected State by Naxalite violence followed by Jharkhand, Orissa and Bihar. 76 districts across various States are highly affected by Naxalite violence. Naxal cadres have also been arrested in Haryana and Delhi.

### Weaknesses

The inability to control the Naxal violence is because of several reasons. Naxalism is essentially an outcome of socio-economic problems, perceived injustice and inequity. The issues raised by them are people-centric and have certain legitimacy in the eyes of the common people. Naxal



movement has a long history. A purely security-oriented approach to dealing with Naxalism is unlikely to succeed. States like Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have still not

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implemented land reforms. Globalization has deepened relative inequities. Several political groups maintain understanding with the Naxalites. Sections of urban intelligentsia are sympathetic to the Naxalite cause.

#### Increasing Militarisation

'Naxalites have also improved in training and are increasingly taking recourse to high-end technology. They have become more aggressive in so much as they have become more militarized and resorted to attacking

e c o n o m i c infrastructure. Their method of operation revolves around stealth, speed and surprise. They often target unprepared and lethargic police establishments by overwhelming them in large numbers.



#### Counter Measures

##### a. Security Measures

The government has initiated a number of steps, including modernization of police forces, surrender and rehabilitation policies, filling up of vacancies in State police forces, raising specialized task forces, strengthening of the State intelligence set-ups, etc. Most recently the government has initiated steps to raise 10 COBRA battalions and to establish 20 schools of counter-insurgency and jungle warfare; this process should be speedily completed.

##### b. Development Schemes

The government has also taken steps towards development, employment, fair and firm revenue administration, mechanisms for grievance redressal. It is essential to constantly improve these schemes, and to win the hearts and minds of the people. Unfortunately, the steps taken by the government, though laudable, are uneven and insufficient to deal with the problem. For instance, the fruits of development in Naxal-affected areas are largely invisible despite numerous plans and schemes. A lot of work needs to be done by the States in this regard.

##### c. Focus on implementation

Many well-intentioned schemes of the Government are not effectively implemented. Both the Centre and States need to seriously pursue measures to improve governance.

### NORTH-EAST

While the overall security situation in the North Eastern States has shown improvement as reflected in reduced incidents of violence and casualties, the fact remains that there are several insurgent groups which remain active in the region. Many of them have taken recourse to extortion, drug running, arms trafficking, etc. to keep themselves relevant. The progressive criminalization of the insurgent groups is a major development in recent years.

#### External Links

The insurgency in the North East is sustained by several factors. These are: identity and ethnic politics, support to insurgent groups from Bangladesh and Myanmar, easy availability of arms smuggled into the North East from Thailand, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, the change of demographic profile in the region due to illegal migration from Bangladesh, and the nexus between the politicians, contractors

and insurgents. The ill-timed talks between the government and some insurgent groups have also made matters worse.

### Suspension of Operations

The insurgents have used cease fire and Suspension of Operations (SOO) to regroup and consolidate whenever they come under pressure. The ongoing talks between the government and NSCN(IM) have reduced the incidence of violence but not led to a political settlement. Thus, talks have proved to be a double-edged sword in the North East.

### Way Ahead

The problems in the North-East are amenable to simple solutions. The feeling of alienation in the North-East is strong and needs to be tackled with sensitivity. The security forces have been unable to provide relief to ordinary citizens from rampant extortion and corruption. Connectivity in the region remains poor. The economic activity is at a low ebb. The porous borders with neighbouring countries continue to make dealing with the insurgency situation difficult. The surrender-cum-rehabilitation schemes have been only partially successful. These have created an underground economy of terror as the experience of SULFA shows. The issue of Greater Nagaland, which can destabilize Manipur and Assam, has not yet been resolved. The Centre has given large amounts of funds for economic development but these have not been utilised properly and often ended up strengthening the hands of the insurgents. As in the case of Naxalism, the state governments have been found wanting in providing good governance to the region.

The government has started subsidized helicopter services in the North-Eastern States. While this is a positive development, this will not solve the serious problem of lack of connectivity. A massive road and rail connectivity programme needs to be initiated and completed in a time-bound fashion.

The government has to take a number of steps to deal with the situation. SOO and cease fire

should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the insurgent groups do not take advantage of these to consolidate and regroup themselves. Talks with the insurgent groups, while an important policy option, should be pursued from a position of strength and not for political reasons alone. For instance, ULFA could have been dealt a severe blow in 2003 when it was on the run from Bhutan because of 'Operation All Clear'. The talks with ULFA which started in 2004 helped in consolidating its position. Assistance to ULFA from Bangladesh is critical for its survival, which if choked



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would go a long way to weaken it significantly. ULFA leaders and cadres based in Bangladesh should be pursued and neutralized to the extent possible, even as intense operations are carried out against those who are based on Indian soil. The government must initiate extensive steps to end the menace of extortion. Unless extortion is stopped, the credibility of the government and security forces will be in question.

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) should continue till normalization is achieved in the North East. To overcome chronic under-development, the government should optimally exploit the natural resources found in the region.





Tripura has substantial quantities of natural gas. India should try to build a pipeline from Myanmar to Tripura to use the combined gas to generate electricity which should be distributed to all the North Eastern states. Tripura's gas should be used as a catalyst for development in the region.

The North East region requires a concerted effort to develop tourism, small scale industry, and agro and forestry industries. The Department of North Eastern Region has outlined a number of schemes for the development of the region. It should, however, be ensured that the suggestions of the local population are incorporated in these schemes. Efforts should also be made to make available the benefits of India's 'Look East' policy for the North Eastern region.

The government should design programmes focusing on the young population of the North East. Improving the quality of higher education in the North East is vital. The cultural connectivity of the North East with the rest

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of India should also be promoted through well designed programmes in the area of sports and culture. Sports training institutes of high quality should be set up in the North East given the ample talent in the region.

The government needs to engage the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar to elicit their support in eradicating the training camps and



bringing the IIG leaders to justice. So far, the support from Myanmar and Bangladesh has been half-hearted and lukewarm.

It is essential to devise a holistic approach which combines security, development, culture and foreign policy initiatives into a forward looking time-bound programme of action for the North East region.

## JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Although there has been a perceptible decline in militancy in Jammu & Kashmir, the situation remains precarious due to growing Islamic radicalization in Pakistan. There have been reports of Taliban infiltration into Jammu & Kashmir in the recent months. The holding of the Assembly elections and Lok Sabha elections in J&K has also led to an improvement in the situation.

### Challenges Ahead

Despite this positive development a number of challenges remain. The regional and communal polarization in the State in 2008 after the Amarnath controversy is a matter of great concern. The separatist elements in the Valley have not disappeared. Many people in the Valley have interpreted the high turn-out in the Assembly elections not as a sign of normalcy but as a desire by the population to have better governance. The demand in the Valley for reduction of the security forces remains strong. The politicians also continue to raise the demand of remove of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the State.

### Precarious security situation

The security situation in the state continues to be influenced by developments in Pakistan. The likelihood of higher levels of infiltration cannot be ruled out. Although the military situation along the LoC/IB is generally normal, occasional violations of cease fire have been reported.

## Government's Measures

**CBMs** The government has taken a number of steps to improve the security situation in the State. These include several confidence building measures (CBMs), including bus services between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, Poonch and Rawlakot, Amritsar and Lahore, Amritsar and Nankana Sahib, the Samjhauta Express, the Thar Express, Munabao-Khokhrapar rail link, operationalisation of cross-LoC trade, etc. These measures have enhanced contacts between the people on both sides of the LoC.

**Hurriyat** The Prime Minister also held discussions with Hurriyat leaders in 2006. Three round table conferences chaired by the Prime Minister were held in 2006-07. The PM's Reconstruction Plan of Rs. 24,000 crores for J&K was announced in 2004.

## Cross-border Support

Despite these measures, the situation in the state cannot be said to have fully normalized. Pakistan continues to regard Kashmir as the core issue. The Pakistani support to Kashmiri militant continues unabated.

## Way Ahead

The government needs to continue with its present security and development policies. It should continue to project Kashmir as an integral part of India. The time has not come as yet to discontinue with AFSPA. Nor can the number of security forces be reduced considering that Pakistan is becoming increasingly unstable. The soft border policy should be pursued with care and reviewed periodically. The democratic process in the State which has been strengthened with the recent elections should be continued.

## BORDER MANAGEMENT

India has a land border of over 15,000 kms with Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. In addition, it has over 7000 kms of maritime borders which may be porous and difficult to guard. The border

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terrain is varied and difficult. The borders with Nepal and Bhutan are open. Four Central Para-Military Forces viz. ITBP, AR, BSF and SSB are engaged in guarding the International Border. In recent years, the government has improved border management through fencing, flood lighting and deployment of high-tech electronic surveillance systems and construction of check posts. Nevertheless, the country faces serious problems such as illegal migration, smuggling, drug-running, narco-trafficking.

The 26/11 terror attacks exposed the vulnerability of India's maritime security. Though government has taken steps to revamp coastal security, a lot more effort is required.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General

- ◆ Formulate a comprehensive national security strategy.
- ◆ Improve coordination amongst various law enforcement agencies.
- ◆ Improve coordination between Central and State level agencies and make them seamless.

### Intelligence

- ◆ Strengthen HUMINT and penetrate various terrorist groups.
- ◆ Enhance coordination amongst various intelligence gathering agencies at all levels. Ensure a strong network of MACs, SMACs and SIB.
- ◆ Enhance TECHINT capability and popularize the use of frontier technologies in gathering TECHINT and OSINT.
- ◆ The interface between NTRO and other intelligence agencies needs to be improved.
- ◆ Prepare strong databases and build information network.
- ◆ The model set-up by the US in respect of DNI and Homeland Security needs to be carefully studied and adapted to suit India's needs.
- ◆ India could learn from the experience of the US and other Western countries where effective data-fusion centres have been created.
- ◆ Actionable intelligence should be accessible to all law-enforcement agencies in real time on need to know basis.
- ◆ Priority should be accorded to Public Perception Management.

### Terrorism

- ◆ In principle, India should consider terrorism as an act of war and there should be no negotiations with terrorists.
- ◆ There should be a consensus between the Centre and the States and among the political parties on the strategy to deal with terrorism.
- ◆ Strong and deterrent laws are needed to deal with terrorism.
- ◆ Choke terrorist financing.
- ◆ National Investigation Agency should be well-equipped and made effective.
- ◆ There is a need to significantly enhance domestic counter-terrorism infrastructure.
- ◆ Police reforms should be speedily implemented
- ◆ International cooperation to deal with terrorism needs to be strengthened.

### Naxalism

- ◆ A purely security-oriented approach in dealing with Naxalism is unlikely to succeed.
- ◆ The creation of COBRA force at the Central level and special anti-Naxal forces in the affected States, as well as raising 20 CTJW schools, as planned, should be speedily completed.
- ◆ MPF scheme should be earnestly implemented.
- ◆ Surrenders of Naxalites should be encouraged and effective rehabilitation should be ensured.
- ◆ The need of the hour is to improve people-centric development schemes.



## North East

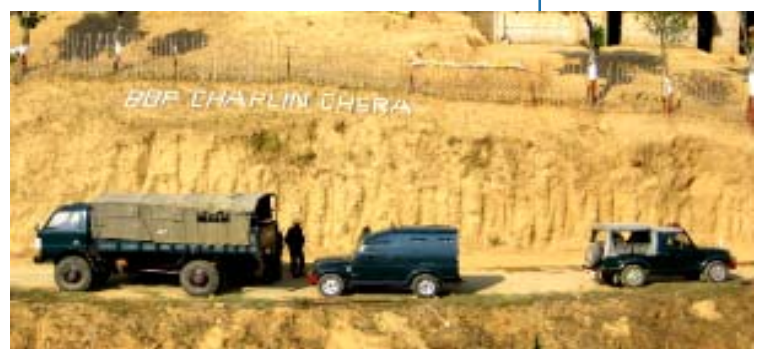
- ◆ Ensure adequate security.
- ◆ Stop extortion.
- ◆ Develop infrastructure, connectivity and communication.
- ◆ Education and health care needs to be given due attention. Specialised higher education institutes and health care institutes should be set-up.
- ◆ Develop integrated tourism infrastructure.
- ◆ Agro-based industry should be given a fillip.
- ◆ Government should engage Bangladesh and Myanmar to ensure that IIGs do not operate from their territory.
- ◆ ULFA leaders and cadres based in Bangladesh should be pursued and neutralized to the extent possible.
- ◆ A holistic approach should be devised which combines security, development, culture and foreign policy initiatives into a forward looking time-bound programme of action.

## Jammu and Kashmir

- ◆ The government needs to continue with its present security and development policies.
- ◆ The government should continue to project Kashmir as an integral part of India. It is not yet time to discontinue with AFSPA.
- ◆ Security presence should not be lowered.
- ◆ The soft border policy should be pursued with care and reviewed periodically. The democratic process in the state which has been strengthened due to recent elections should be continued.
- ◆ CBMs with Pakistan should be implemented.

## Border Management

- ◆ Enhance the capabilities of border guarding forces.
- ◆ The scope of Border Area Development Programme (BADP) should be enhanced
- ◆ The connectivity of the borders with the hinterland should be improved.
- ◆ The construction, management and maintenance of ICPs should be set up at the earliest. The integrated check point (ICP) programme should be made robust.
- ◆ The issue of adverse positions and enclaves should be resolved with Bangladesh at the earliest.
- ◆ Illegal smuggling of cattle from India into Bangladesh should be curbed through legalization of cattle trade and other measures.
- ◆ The relationship between the authorities and the border area population should be improved.
- ◆ There is a need for better coordination among all agencies involving border management. Border guarding forces along with local population should be consulted while devising border area development schemes.
- ◆ Issuance of multi-purpose identity cards needs to be given high priority.



- ◆ Cross border linkages amongst population on both sides should be permitted but better regulated.
- ◆ Border trade between the populations on both sides should be encouraged and regulated. Border hats/markets should be established.
- ◆ A scheme of issuing work permits should be considered to manage illegal migration from Bangladesh.
- ◆ The fragmentation among agencies dealing with maritime security should be ended and real-time functional coordination mechanism should be set up. The modernization of coastal police stations should be accelerated.
- ◆ India should be prepared for the enhanced refugee flow from neighbouring countries during political turmoils. Necessary infrastructure to deal with the problems should be built up in advance.



\* This brief has been prepared by the Terrorism and Internal Security Cluster of the IDSA



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