



Internal Security – Need for Course Correction

3 Feb, 2011 [Ajit Doval, KC - Former Director, VIF](#) [View15591](#) [Comments 0](#)

India is on a surge; a great destiny awaits it. If there is one single factor that could negate or retard it, it will be its failure to govern itself. Ensuring safe people, upholding the rule of law, managing change with order and ensuring legitimacy of power by those who wield it shall be critical components of that fail to happen, history will once again lament India couldn't do what it could.

In post war period, internal security has become primary source of degradation, destabilization and retardation of the states as against external aggression. states during this period faced state failure, disintegration, break down of their political or constitutional systems consequented by internal conflicts and various factors leading to internal security dysfunction ranged from political turmoils, sectarian violence, economic deprivation or social breakdowns. Significantly, various lines provided the basic munition, the external factor often catalyzed the process to make it decisively unmanageable. Failure to address the external factor management made the states to lose their capacity to control the avalanche that initially appeared as a trickle. In the evolving security setting, the conventional approach is increasingly proving to be grossly inadequate to meet the new generation Internal Security threats.

Management of Internal Security – New Realities:

India, in architecting its internal security doctrines, systems and policy needs to factor in the following:

- Wars are increasingly proving to be cost ineffective instruments of achieving strategic and political objectives. With the emergence of Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW), a fight against an invisible enemy, hidden within the civil society, the consequences of wars can be highly unpredictable with no assured gain to the stronger. Defeat of Soviet Union by religious irregulars in Afghanistan, American experiencing in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, Pakistani air Shanti Bahini in Bangladesh etc. are illustrative of the limits of military power against Fourth Generation Warfare.
- Civil society has become the battle grounds whose control is sought both by the violent anti state groups and the state. It has given rise to the proxy war. Hostile states, to bleed their adversaries, are increasingly patronising armed groups operating in their enemy countries. It has opened a new opportunity to weaker powers to take on their more powerful adversaries in what we call as asymmetric warfare. In these, weaker states can bleed powerful adversaries through Covert Action (CA) at a low cost, in a sustained manner and claim deniability. In the Indian context, Pakistan that harbours compulsive hostility against India but lacks the capability to achieve its political and strategic objectives, militarily made CA as an instrument of its state policy. Pakistan has leveraged its geographical proximity, radical Islam, India's soft governance, nuclear blackmail, military tools to capitalize over India's internal security vulnerabilities.
- (a) Phenomenal up-gradation in capabilities, resources, international linkages and support base of violent groups is another disturbing phenomenon. They require security infrastructure much beyond and complex than required for maintaining peace and order in civil society and enforcing the rule of law. The emergence of large well armed and organized armed groups the states are facing erosion in their monopoly over coercive power. With the sophisticated systems, modern communication equipments, huge financial resources, access to modern technology and support of rogue states, activities of the placed internal security in a different orbit altogether. In the Indian context, the Islamic terrorist groups not only are patronized and supported by Pakistan but maintain close nexus with gun runners, drug crimes, hawala racketeers, currency counterfeiters etc.
- Diminishing efficacy of conventional response policies and systems and inability of states to keep pace with them is another infirmity. The conventional response particularly in liberal democracies, treats acts of violence (no matter how gruesome) as normal crimes, punishable through due process of law, and not as terrorism. This jurisprudence is heavily weighed in favour of the wrong doer and is practically inoperable against those who operate from foreign lands. Instruments like laws, police, judicial systems and even militaries, find themselves grossly inadequate to prevent, protect and penalize the wrong doers. Besides above, in India, soft governance, political factor and corruption have further eaten into the vitals of state power. Political factor has started casting doubt both over enactment of right laws and their enforcement with full political will. The withdrawal of Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act (POTA), Centre's Special Acts against organized crimes in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh etc. are illustrative of politicization of internal security management.
- (a) Role of non state actors like the Media, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), think tanks, etc., have also added to complexity of the situation. The oxygen of terrorism and media inadvertently plays in their hands by giving them undue coverage. As perception management is an important part of security management, ability of these groups to influence the public opinion, without any corresponding responsibility, only confounds the problem.

India: Slow to Transform

India is not unique in experiencing this paradigm shift. What singles it out is the fact that having paid the highest price in battling against terrorism, insurgencies over 90,000 human lives lost and nearly 14,000 security personnel killed and huge drain on its scarce financial resources; it has been the slowest, if at all, to respond. The response has been swift and decisive while in India it has been delayed, half hearted and often lacking political will. The systems, doctrines, methodology and enablement of security apparatus have by and large remained unchanged. Within 48 hours of September 11 (9/11) strike, the US took the policy decision to overhaul the whole system and bring in the huge new infrastructure, concepts and laws to create Department of Homeland Security and institution of Director National Security Council. President Bush announced that "It values individual freedom but should it get in conflict with supreme national interest, the latter will prevail". Instead of system merely resorted to quantitative response hoping that enhanced force level without change in training, systems, equipment etc would be sufficient to count insurgencies.

The expenditure on state police forces and central para military forces cumulatively have increased in last few years from Rs. 15,092 crores nearly to Rs. 26 an increase over 70%. In terrorist and insurgency affected areas 22% troops are tied on duties to protect themselves and other 45% on protecting the VIPs With 11% force personnel on leave and training reserves and 5% engaged on administrative duties; what is really left to mount field operations is less t powerful laws, enhanced operational level intelligence, bold political decisions, lack of new strategic and tactical ideas, we have got entrapped in conv numerical response to internal security. The dogma of 'time-tested methods' has become a doctrine to resist change.

India's internal security landscape in recent decades has undergone a paradigm shift. The conventional pattern of civil disorders, communal disturbances turmoil, political conflicts etc. have seized to be the nation's primary internal security concerns. They have been substituted by externally sponsored cover powers targeting country's internal fault lines to achieve their strategic objectives. While country's democratic polity, economic growth, and social transf bringing down conventional threats, except probably the Left Wing Extremism, the external factor has been an important catalytic factor in promoting te espionage, subversion, cyber space violations, currency counterfeiting, Hawala transactions, demographic invasion etc. India considering its Comprehensive has failed is politically and diplomatically leverage it to its best security advantage.

Jehadi Terrorism:- Kashmir and Beyond

Pakistan which, during the Afghan war through Western assistance, had acquired formidable covert capabilities, re-positioned the elaborate infrastructure to India through terrorism. It wanted to replicate Afghan model in Kashmir, hoping to make it a theatre of Jihad for all the Muslims and force India to a sel Pakistan. Though it failed to achieve this objective, over the years Jihadis have become integral part of Pakistan's war-machine and a low cost instrumen India. Pakistani researcher Sabina Ahmad in her report to International Crisis Group (ICG) calculated 11,500 Pakistani nationals having been killed in India from 1990 to 2005. This is indicative of the scale and intensity of Pakistan sponsored Jehadi terrorism.

Growth of Jehadi forces, perceiving India as its target, both in India's western and eastern neighbourhoods, is a serious security and ideological thre indigenous Muslim population. While sizeable population of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh has come under its spate, desperate attempts are beir tentacles within India. Superimposition of this exported variant of Islam constitutes a high potential long term threat for India and will have to be cou politically and physically.

Besides J&K, hundreds of Muslim youth drawn from other parts of the country have been trained and motivated for subversive activities in Pakistan. A larg youth trained by the ISI and disguised as Indians have been positioned as part of an intricately networked covert apparatus. Mushrooming of Madrassas and large numbers propagating an ideology of hate and exclusiveness, particularly in the border areas, is another disturbing trend. An imaginative policy measures would have to be taken to meet this threat.

The 26/11 terrorist action at Mumbai depicted a new order of lethality in Pakistan's unabated covert offensive against India. For almost three decade: accepted such provocations. It has failed to retaliate in a proactive manner that could raise costs for Pakistan and compel it to roll back its anti-India terrori: ceded the strategic and tactical initiative to Pakistan some three decades ago and needs a course correction before it poses an existentialist threat. India should not be unrealistically raised in the backdrop of nuclear blackmail as Pakistan has its own vulnerabilities many times higher than India and in its strat ignore the threat that India can pose should the conflict grow beyond a point. India also needs to revisit its no first use nuclear doctrine.

Left Wing Extremism:

Left Wing Extremism has emerged as country's most serious internal security challenge. After its cyclic rise and fall, it assumed serious proportions after MCC, along with other splinter groups, merged together to form the CPI (Maoists). The spatial growth of the LWE thereafter has been meteoric and furtherance of their political objective of seizing power through gun have exploited alienations caused by issues like denial of social and economic justice t society, large scale displacement of tribal populations by major hydro-electric projects and extensive mining in tribal areas. This has led to their influence r in 9 states in 2001, to nearly 203 Districts in 18 states by 2010. Among these the core of insurgency is focused in Chattisgarh (Abujmar Region) and Jhar activity levels in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. The movement has been substantially militarised with 16,000 armed cadres, some 15,((including 900 AK-47 Rifles, 200 Light Machine Guns and locally fabricated Rocket Launchers), over 85 camps where they are able to impart training in tac strong financial back up to pay regular salaries to members of its so called 'People's Liberation Army'.

The Left Wing Extremism embodies many features that make the problem intractable. A large inaccessible and scantily governed terrain that is difficult to d matter what force levels are pumped is one major problem. Further, to their advantage, the Maoists have a large alienated population that has suffered economic neglect and are easily susceptible to motivated propaganda of the Maoists who promise to establish an order that will deliver justice, freedom from protection of their way of life. A corrupt and callous governance further makes the people an easy prey to Maoist propaganda. They are able exploit al conflicts to gather support by promising different things to different people. It may range from exploiting caste conflicts in Bihar, resentment against sentiment against forest laws and practices in tribal areas, unemployment among youth or Islamic sentiment among sections of Muslims telling them all solutions to all their woes. Availability of large sums money to pay regular salaries; to their cadres in areas where there are large bodies of uneducated and only unemployed but for most jobs unemployable.

However, they have some high vulnerabilities as well. Illustratively, like the most ideology driven movements, Left Wing Extremism is controlled by less than and nearly 30 commanders of its armed cadre. They determine the political line, control the resources and design the strategy. The bulk of 16,000 odd ar times more supporters are only gullible tribals and poor people misled by vicious propaganda, frightened by the gun or lured by the money. For the leaders, of safety and comfort, they are easily replaceable commodities. Neutralization of top leaders and activists in four decade long history of Left Extremism ideological dilution, dissensions, and demoralization giving a blow to their image of invincibility and surfacing of doubts about viability of the movermer through violence. At tactical level, it has led to struggle for leadership, disruption in sources of funding and abandonment of plans in the offing. Further, leaders has often provided strategic and tactical inputs which, when pursued imaginatively, substantially weakened the movement.

Devoid of its ideological plank the movement stands reduced to a problem of organized crime. A credible, focused and sustained psy-war offensive to exp anti-people will be hard for them to bear.

Money factor is another important element that is empowering the Left Wing Extremism to raise new cadres, procure weapons and expand their arc (recruited youth is being paid rupees 2,000 to 2,500 per month, which in a poverty stricken area attracts many youth. It is estimated that the left wing extre nearly rupees 1200 crore a year, which is a huge money resource in tribal and backward areas. Maoists raise these funds through extortions, collections fro officials, protection money, levies on rich landlords, businessmen, contractors, transporters etc. Paradoxically, increase in government outlays for dev affected areas has strengthened them financially as enhanced outlays are not backed up by effective and accountable administrative machinery. Their dep vulnerability and it is possible to take series of steps to minimize if not totally eliminate it though strong administrative and legal actions against the fund pro

North-East:

North East security discourse, of late, has been marked by good news of peace engagement with the rebels, improved security cooperation from Banglade insurgent groups etc. However, external factor in a region that has 5,215 kms contiguous international border with other countries and only about over 1% land though pivotal is being glossed over. External factor has and will continue to remain a vital factor in our management of North Eastern security.

China, with which India has uneasy security relationship, shares a border of nearly 1,561 kms with NE states. It also has a dubious track record of meddling groups till mid eighties. After a long lull, there is increasing evidence of China reviving its Covert offensive in the North East. Chinese support to the rebel groups has waned depending on content and direction of bilateral relationship, their evaluation of the strength and grit of people in power in Delhi, viability and reliability etc. It is also noteworthy that whenever assistance from erstwhile East Pakistan, and later Bangladesh, to NE insurgents became difficult, the Chinese stepped in.

There are definite indications that, after a long lull, there is major policy shift in China. In October, 2007, on the invitation of Chinese authorities, Anthea, former foreign affairs of NSCN(IM), visited China and held meetings with Lee Wuen, head of intelligence of Yunnan province and Chang local intelligence head in Kunming in China. Shimray, handed over a letter to the Chinese authorities signed by Muivah, self styled Prime Minister of NSCN(IM), holding peace talks in India. The letter informed Chinese of appointment of Kholose, a Sema Naga, as their permanent representative in China. Chinese welcomed this institutional arrangement and wanted Nagas to keep them informed about (i) Activities and movements of Indian Army, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, (ii) Intelligence regarding activities of Tibetans in India and (iii) Progress of peace talks with India. Chinese also tasked them to keep track of other NE insurgent groups and progress of their peace talks. One of the major responsibilities of Kholose was procurement of weapons from China.

In April 2009, the self styled President of NSCN(IM), Isak Chissi Swu, leader of group talking to India, accompanied by Shimray visited China for which the Chinese intelligence in Philippines. They held a high level meeting with one General Lee and three senior Chinese intelligence officers. The Chinese reiterated their demand for Military cooperation, again reiterated their earlier requirement regarding information about army movements in Arunachal, activities of Dalai Lama etc. subsequently initiated follow up actions in Delhi, Dharmshala, Arunachal Pradesh and NSCN(IM) headquarters to meet Chinese intelligence requirements. Chinese also commenced to ship 1000 weapons from South Chinese port of Beihei to Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh for the NSCN (IM).

Paresh Baruah of ULFA after being pressurized by Bangladesh security agencies, also visited China in 2010. Reports indicate that he led a group of about 1000 in training in Ruli in Yunnan was provided substantial quantities of weapons. It is significant that ULFA has been a source of procurement of weapons by Left groups. Possibility of some of the Chinese weapons reaching them through ULFA channels can not be ruled out.

Reality of Chinese renewed interest in NE insurgency can not be wished away in our security calculus. It assumes special import in the backdrop of increasing aggressiveness, military activities in border areas, claims on Arunachal Pradesh and linkages of Left Extremists with NE insurgent groups. The government in India engaging the rebels in peace talks needs to display greater clarity of vision, well defined objectives and strategic precision. Mistaking the talks as an end rather than a means can push India into a self made strategic trap. While the rebel groups are enhancing their capabilities, establishing trans-border linkages, procuring weapons, recruiting new cadres, the government appears to be calculating publicity mileage and possible electoral advantages as their sole gains. This can be a self defeating strategy.

Illegal Immigration:

The size geographical location and porosity of our borders makes large illegal migration to India from neighboring countries possible. People of all neighboring countries, at least one important ethnic, religious or linguistic commonality with a section of the Indian population, which makes it possible for them to find easy shelter in India. Economic opportunities afforded by relatively higher economic growth, freedoms of a liberal democratic polity, corruption, shortcomings of Indian political and judicial systems etc. have all contributed to make illegal immigration a major internal security problem.

Demographic invasion from Bangladesh, has already assumed alarming proportions. In many of the bordering districts of Assam and West Bengal it has led to demographic transformation, forcing the original inhabitants to sell their lands and flee. Instead of abating, the last two years have witnessed an unprecedented inflow – the new migrants becoming more abrasive and emboldened, considering their illegal migration almost a matter of right. Subdued though, voices of protest in Bangladesh have started surfacing both in Assam and Bangladesh.

The illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, who well exceed 2.5 million now, are no more confined to bordering states of Assam, West Bengal, Meghalaya etc. They have established habitations in depth areas of the country. Most of them have been able to acquire identity documents with local political patronage and connivance of corrupt officials. Muslims in some areas are facilitating their settlements and helping them in procurement of ration cards, identity documents, jobs and political patronage.

This large scale migration is no more only a cause of demographic change, social conflicts, denial of economic opportunities and civic amenities to our own people, but has become a security concern. The Islamic terrorists from Bangladesh readily find local shelters in length and breadth of the country. These immigrants also bring ingrained anti-Indian ideas and seeds of fundamentalism. The border is porous and the infiltrators get full support from Bangladesh Border Forces. This large scale migration of migrants is likely to become much more pronounced in the times to come, given the push factor in Bangladesh and the pull factor on the Indian side.

Illegal migration from Pakistan and Afghanistan is relatively small but its security implications are much greater. Pakistan as part of a long-term covert strategy is trying to establish modules in different parts of the country with well trained and highly motivated Pak residents masquerading as Indians. A large number of these infiltrators enter India with regular visas frequently go under ground and become untraceable.

Unemployment in Youth:

Though, essentially an economic and not a security issue if left unattended large scale youth unemployment can have serious security implications. India's population of nearly 1.2 bn, 62.9% of which is in working age group. By 2026, India's population profile is likely to grow even younger (68.4% in working age group). India's population at 1.4 bn will overtake that of China. This translates into one billion people in the working age group that will need to be gainfully employed. Any sections of unemployed youth vulnerable to forces of destabilization, disruption and destruction – both indigenous and foreign inspired. Channelised youth unemployment can catapult India into a new power orbit making its human resource capital in the ageing world as a non-competable CNP component for many decades ahead.

The total sum of jobs presently in India's Public and private sector (including those in the unorganized private sector) work out to barely 300-350 million. Liberalization, so far is only producing the miracle of jobless growth. Most Indian industries have been imitating the Western corporate model – downsizing to maximize the profits. The Jamshedpur Steel plant of the Tatas that employed 80,000 workers some three decades ago with a production of 1 million tons per year, now employs just 40,000 in the 1990's and the output rose to 5 million tons per annum by automation. The plan is to further reduce the work force to just 20,000 but raise output to 10 million tons per years. While to achieve global competitiveness India cannot afford to produce at high costs, it at the same cannot afford to keep its manufacturing paradigm shift in over growth strategy is required and heavy investments need to be done in areas that can create large employment opportunities; near 2026. Man power intensive industries like ship building, infrastructure projects, rural employment schemes etc. will have to be accorded high priority. Continuous upgradation of existing skills through massive vocational training programmes need to be launched substituting the conventional educational pattern that educates but unemployable. **One of the ironies of Indian employment market is that while there are large numbers of youth with 10 to 12 years of education, most of the industries and employers find it difficult to get appropriate manpower that hardly requires training of two years or less beyond basic 10 to 12 years of schooling. Non inclusive growth, large scale unemployment, huge income disparities etc. can be potential causes of economic degradation.** In national economic planning the strategico- security factors need to be given its deserved importance.

Published Date : 3 February, 2011

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