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CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STRATEGIC STUDIES



SEMINAR ON

NAXALISM AND MAOISM AND INDIAN ARMY

26th August, 2010

**CENTRE FOR ADVANCED
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

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WELCOME BY DIRECTOR

AIR MARSHAL S. KULKARNI

Air Marshal (Retd) S. Kulkarni welcomed everyone present for the Seminar on “Naxalism and Maoism and Indian Army”. He said that we are fortunate to have persons who have had personal experience in handling the subject and have done intensive research in this area, to talk on the subject as main speakers and also to chair the event. Brigadier (Retd) Hemant Mahajan, YSM was commissioned in 7th Maratha Light Infantry in June, 1975. He served extensively in Counter Insurgency operations in Insurgency and Terrorist prone areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and the North East. He has been writing profusely on this subject in the vernacular newspapers and also in the DNA, in English. Lt Gen (Retd) Dr. DB Shekatkar, member of the Governing Council of the Centre, a former Commandant of the Infantry School has intensive field experience in successfully countering and tackling Naxalism and Maoism, both in India's North-East and North-West. He has co-authored a number of books on Changing Perspectives of National Security, India's Security in the 21st Century, Impediments to National Security, India's Internal Security, India and Counter Insurgency, Peace Initiatives, Conflict Resolution in India's North East, Combating Terrorism in Kashmir. He was Chhatrapati Shivaji Chair Professor in Policy Studies, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Pune University. He has been a member of many prestigious organizations and institutions in India and is a eagerly sought speaker by them in India as well as abroad. The event is being chaired by Lt Gen (Retd) BT Pandit, PVSM, VrC, member of the Centre, a very distinguished and experienced officer of the Corps of Engineers. He commanded an Independent Infantry Brigade, and an Infantry Division in J&K. he commanded a Corps in Punjab in the disturbed environment arising out of internal and external threats. He retired as the Adjutant General at Army Headquarters.

We now look forward to an illuminating session of presentations by the main speakers, their interaction with the audience and the distilled views of the chairman and his closing address.

SEMINAR ON

NAXALISM AND MAOISM AND INDIAN ARMY

Chairman : BT Pandit
Main Speaker : Hemant Mahajan
DB Shekatkar

PAPER PRESENTED BY
BRIG (RETD) HEMANT MAHAJAN

“...It would not be an exaggeration to say that the problem of Naxalism is the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country..... A wide range of views has been expressed but there seems to be unanimity on the fact that we need to give the problem a very high priority.....”

- Dr Manmohan Singh

Background

Naxal movement now encompasses 20 states out of 33, 232 districts out of 604, 1611 police stations out of 12476 & 14,000 villages out of 650,000. 35% of Indian land mass is affected. Area is larger than J&K & NE combined.

Naxals attacks on policemen, government official and politicians became more and more daring. In 2009 total of 210 civilians, 149 security force personnel, 122 Naxals (Hardly any dead bodies recovered) died totaling 381 fatal casualties. 2010. may even be more bloodier with 1560 fatal casualties till 20 Sep. The Naxals also claim to have established complete domination over Abujmahadh & Dandakaryna area, which comprises of tribal areas of Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Both these areas total up for more than the combined area of Punjab, Haryana and Tripura.

Intelligence reports and captured literature from the Naxal bases have revealed that the Naxalite in India have established linkages with many gaps within and outside India.

They might soon gain a continuous presence along the length and breadth of the country and thus carve out a north-south and east-west corridor. It is in the intersection of these two corridors and Bastar in Chhattisgarh, that the Maoist central leadership is said to be in hiding.

If the Maoists were to ever launch coordinated, simultaneous attacks along the east-west corridor, they would be able to nearly cut off peninsular India from the rest of the country. On the other hand, the north-south corridor can "virtually drive a wedge through the vital areas of the country, cutting off the north-eastern part of India from the rest of the country.

The Naxalite movement is the main threat which is affecting the nation today. It is more dangerous than the situation in Jammu and Kashmir or the situation in the North-East. You won't be able to go from Delhi to Kolkata or from Mumbai to Chennai if this movement catches on.

Left Wing Extremism or what is popularly known as Naxalism in India has drawn its inspiration from the teachings of Karl Max and the social revolutions engineered by Lenin in Russia and Mao in China.

The birth of Naxalism in India can be attributed to, two landmark incidents which occurred in 1967. The movement derives its name from a small village Naxalbari in Siliguri District of West Bengal, where the oppressed landless farmers rose against the exploitation by the wealthy landlords. The movement was supported by the break away revolutionary group Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal who are recognized as the founders of the movement in India. Simultaneously, though totally unconnected, a peasants revolution was launched in Telangana Region of Andhra Pradesh led

by Chandrapulla Reddy. Both the incidents were violent in nature and were inspired by the success of the communist movement in China and Russia. While the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal collapsed after elimination of its leadership by the security forces coupled with pragmatic land reforms, the movement in Chhattisgarh has continued to simmer ever since. These movements, however, succeeded in drawing the attention of the Nation to the total absence of development in these areas and the exploitation of the dalits, adivasis and landless farmers by the feudal system based on class and caste inequalities. The Government, however, classified these as socio-economic and law and order problem and not as possible internal security threats. Thus a myopic view of the issue was taken and long term effects or intentions of the movement were ignored.

The emergence of the movement in India can be attributed to a number of historical, social, political, economic and other causes.

The ideological inspiration for the movement was derived from the Chinese communist who also provided the moral supports. Radio Beijing in one of its broadcast in 1967 stated that revolutionary struggle had been launched by Indian people in the Siliguri Darjeeling areas of India.

Another important cause was Social Inequalities. Oppression, atrocities and discriminatory treatment of dalits by the upper caste landlords was very common in most parts of the country. These inequalities in society force them to take recourse to violence and join Naxalites.

The lack of development and Land Reforms in these areas, which are very rich in forest and mineral resources, has alienated the people from the government machinery. The Naxalites have exploited these sentiments and hence have found favour among the Tribals.

Tribal and Forest Policies established to preserve the culture of tribals have led to creation of a separate class of people vis-à-vis other ordinary citizens of India. Further under these policies the Tribals have been denied their traditional means of livelihood and hence their

only means of survival has been taken away from them. This in effect has led to neglect, under development and exploitation of the Tribals.

Lastly inadequate Governance in these areas has resulted in loss of faith by the local population which has allowed the Naxals to run a parallel government in these areas. Let us now take a view of the poor governance in the affected areas.

Ideology & Spread Of Red Corridor

Naxal Ideology is inspired by the “Mass Line” concept as enunciated by Mao & the “Armed Struggle” concept as pronounced during the Russian Revolution. Broadly speaking Naxals are:-

- a) Against Democracy.
- b) Against Capitalist and Rich Industrialist.
- c) And advocate rule of the proletariats.

The 1967 Naxalbari uprising in West Bengal was crushed by the State Government. However, the movement assumed larger dimension, when, the state units of CPI (M) in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh joined the struggle. In Nov 1967, comrades from all these states set up All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries or (AICCCR). Later in 1969, due to the ideological differences, Charu Mazumdar split from the CPI (M) to form CPI (Marxist Leninist) or CPI(ML).

Operation Steeplechase

Operation Steeplechase was launched in West Bengal in 1971 to suppress the Maoist insurgency, which, by now had assumed dangerous proportions. By 1972, the movement declined in West Bengal due to death of Mr Charu Mazumdar, ideological differences between the groups and reluctance of China to support the movement. Shri Chandrapulla Reddy succeeded Shri Charu Mazumdar and advocated departure from policy of violence. However he was far from successful in his endeavours. Never the less, Maoist menace was far from over and by 1973 fresh guerrilla struggles emerged in parts of

central Bihar and Telangana. 1975 saw birth of CPI (ML) Peoples War Gp under leadership of Shri Kondapalli Seetharamaiya and many other splinter gps.

Efforts to unite these factions failed and by mid 1980s some groups regained their ascendancy in backward areas such as:-

- a) Peoples War Gp (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh.
- b) And CPI(ML) & Maoist Communist Committee (MCC) in Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

1983 showed signs of revival of peasant revolution with formation of People's Democratic Front (PDF) in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. PDF subsequently fought elections with the main stream political parties and won a seat in the legislative assembly in 1985. Maoist also tried to consolidate their sphere of influence by wooing the Sikh extremists after the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. In 1989 CPI (ML) (Liberation) recorded its first electoral victory from Ara sending the first 'Naxalite' member to the Parliament. In 1991 general elections however CPI(ML) lost its seat but maintained its presence in Parliament through PDF which by now had been rechristened as Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC).

Consequent to Mr VP Singh's implementation of Mandal Commission, Chief Minister Chenna Reddy lifted ban on Naxal groups in Andhra Pradesh. The ban was reimposed in 1992 to be relaxed again in 1995 by the then Chief Minister NT Rama Rao. This enabled the Maoist to strengthen their hold and induct new members. The 1990s also saw Naxalism spread to not only underdeveloped and Tribal areas but also to the urban centers. The Naxals also increased their presence in both the state legislature and the Parliament with members of CPI(ML) and PDF getting elected to state assemblies, Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha, from Bihar & Assam in the 1995 general elections. Interactions among various Communists and Left parties also intensified in wake of the Soviet collapse. In 1996 CPI (ML) joined hands with CPI and the MCC and formed Indian Institute of Marxist Studies. With the growing clout of the CPI (ML), armed clashes between ultra-leftists and upper caste private armies (like Ranvir Sena) had started assuming enormous proportions in Bihar. By 1999

Naxalism had spread to Madhya Pradesh and North Bihar adjoining Nepal.

With the turn of the century Naxals attacks on policemen, government official and politicians became more and more daring. The Naxals also claim to have established complete domination over Abujhmadh & Dandakaryna area, which comprises of tribal areas of Jharkhand ,Chattisgarh, Bihar, Orrisa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Both these areas total up for more than the combined area of Punjab, Haryana and Tripura. The resentment of tribals of these area is aptly portrayed in a video. In Dec 2000 PWG launched People's Guerrilla Army (PGA) to counter security forces offensive. Naxalite groups from all over South Asia got together to form first international coalition of Maoists called Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA). MCC and PWG also established links with LTTE, Nepali Maoists and Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence to receive arms and training. The Naxals now aim at creating a liberated zone which they term as the Compact Revolutionary Zone , colloquially called 'the CRZ'. Symbolically the zone would extend from Pashupati Temple in Nepal to Tirupati Temple in Andhra Pradesh and further extending to Sri Lanka . Effectively this would split the country in two parts .

As you would have realized, the movement has grown from an indigenous peasant movement to an elaborate network of well organised arms struggle spanning across international borders. Having its roots right through the length of the country overflowing into Nepal and Sri Lanka, Naxals are the next biggest challenge to the Indian Union.

Naxalism & External Support

Despite the efforts to resolve the 35 years long Naxal movement in the Indian Subcontinent the violence has been continuing and we are witnessing a gradual but perceptible increase.

Intelligence reports and captured literature from the Naxal bases have revealed that the Naxalite groups in India have established

linkages with many groups within and outside India. The linkages can be classified as those With Indian Terrorist Groups, With Regional Terrorist Groups and With International Terrorist Groups and Organisations.

Links with Indian Terrorist Groups.

- a) J&K Terrorist Gps. Naxalite spokespersons on many occasions have openly supported the actions and cause of the J & K terrorist groups. The Lakshar-e-Toiba terrorists who carried out the attack on the American Centre at Kolkata in 2001 had escaped to Jharkhand and had taken refuge in a Naxalite sympathiser's house, in Ranchi. In return, the J&K terrorist organisations who are well trained in Explosive Devices and sophisticated arms, impart training to the Naxalite groups.
- b) NE Insurgent Gps. Intelligence agencies have been reporting linkages between Naxalite elements and the insurgent gps of NE i.e. ULFA, NSCN and PLA. The NE insurgent gps like PLA & NSCN had followed the Maoist ideology and were even trained and supported by China in the 60s and 70s. The common ideological linkages and aspirations to fight against the Indian state have helped them to share information, develop linkages and provide logistic support.

Links with Regional Groups.

- a) Links with Nepal Maoists. The link with the Nepal maoist is probably the most dangerous. The joint operation by the Maoists of India and Nepal involving nearly 400 maoists on 22 Jun 2005 at Madhubani and East Champaran Distt on a police post and two banks was a landmark event. There are enough instances and evidence that there is a great deal of coordination, cooperation, sharing of intelligence and exchange of resources between the maoist of India and Nepal.
- b) Links with LTTE. In the late nineties Naxals approached LTTE for sophisticated arms and ammunition. LTTE agreed, but

asked for a heavy price which was beyond the financial resources of Naxals. With the ever increasing capacity to purchase and hire the expertise of LTTE, it is not long before we find trained 'human bombs' and even highly sophisticated weapons with Naxals.

International Linkages.

- a) Member of RIM (Revolutionary International Movement). Revolutionary International Movement or RIM is an organisation which encourages and supports the Maoist groups across the world. This is a US based group which carries out ideological campaign. A Turkish Left Wing Extremist group maintains the website and publishes journals and literature for international consumption. The CPI (Maoist) is a member of the RIM and is listed on its website thus offering it an opportunity to access the world and be known in international forum.
- b) Linkages with Left Wg Philippine Groups. A few media and intelligence reports from South East Asia stated that the Naxalites in India had developed links with the Left Wing Extremist of Philippines and through them with other groups of South East Asia.

These linkages have lead to the formation of a fearsome organisation and a large number of groups which are operating in the country with impunity.

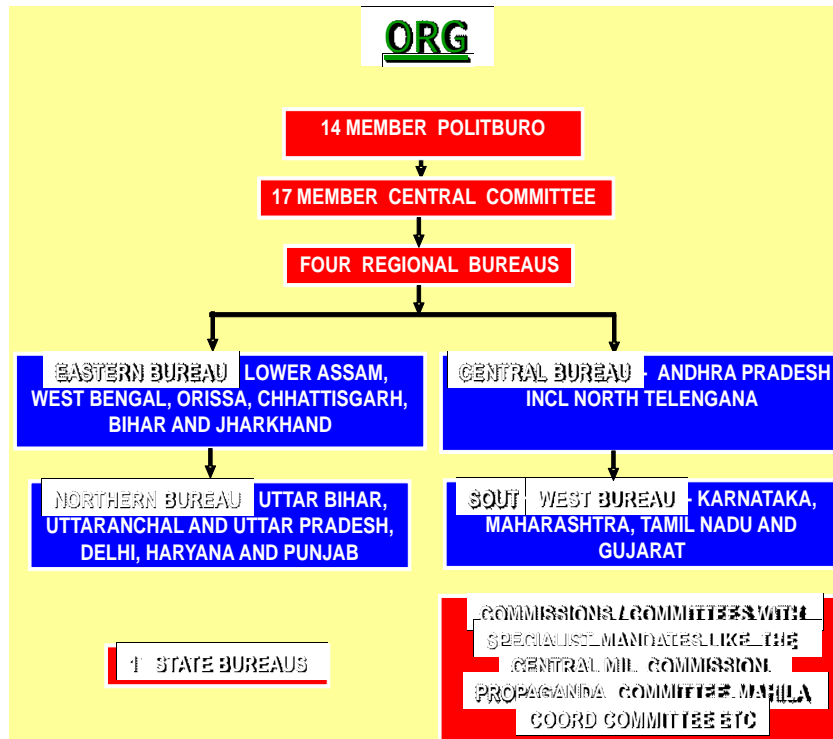
The first category comprises of those parties which are already engaged in armed struggle, or support the idea of participating in armed struggle either immediately, or else after short-term preparations are complete. This category includes the following five groups :-

- CPI (ML) Peoples' War Gp.
- CPI Maoist Communist Center (I).
- CPI Janashakti (Rajanna Group).
- CPI (M-L) Naxalbari and the



ORG

There are a large no of Naxalite groups in India which are either Maoist, or strongly influenced by Maoism. We have grouped them into three categories based on their profile of violent activities. The first category being the most violent, while the second adopting the electoral path and the third category remaining ambivalent. Now let us see the categories one by one



CPI (Maoist).

At the other end of the spectrum are the parties that seem to have effectively abandoned the whole idea of people's war or armed revolution, and now focus on reformist struggle. The most prominent party in this category is CPI (M-L) Liberation. It has more than 5000 full time members and claims a total membership of over 2.5 lakhs. The Party is strongest in Assam, Bihar and Jharkhand, though it has units in many other states like West Bengal.

In between these two extremes there are a large number of ambivalent parties which favour what they call the "mass revolutionary line" or "Mao's mass line". Most of these parties favour people's war at some point, but they think that the ground is not yet prepared for it. Some of the "mass revolutionary line" parties are:-

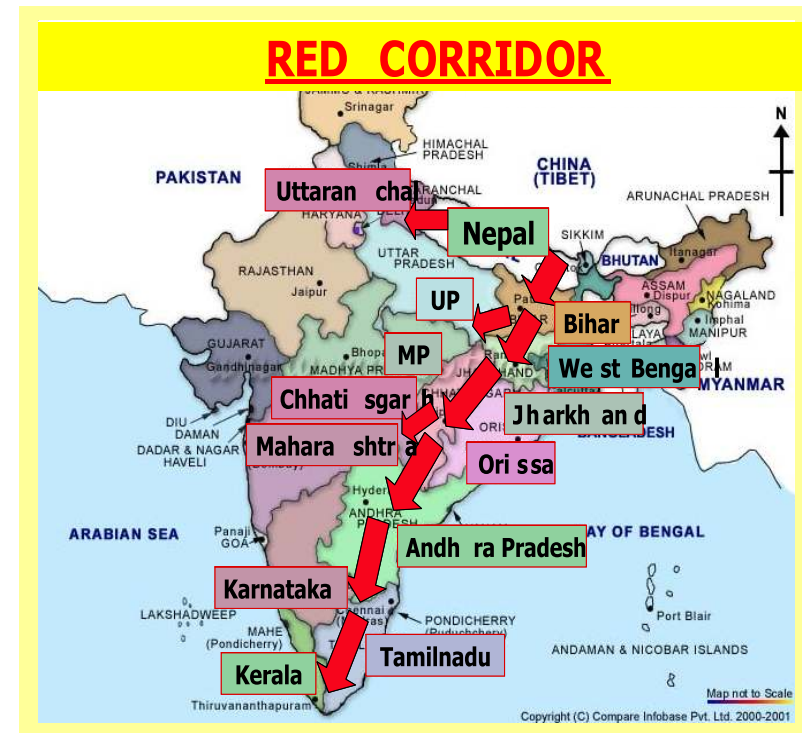
a) Communist Party Of India (Marxist Leninist).

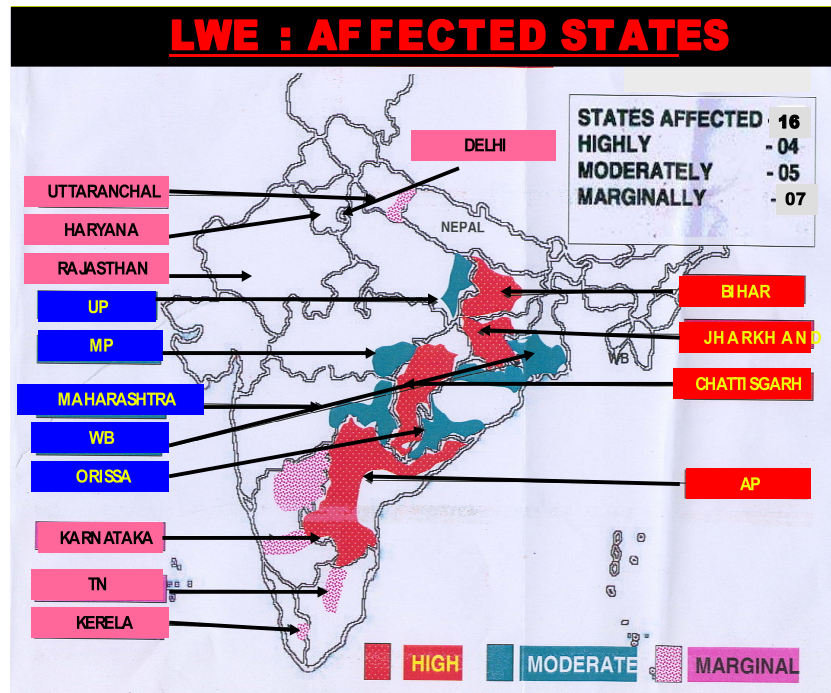
- b) Unity Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India.
- c) CPI (M-L) New Democracy [this party seems to be leaning more toward guerrilla warfare now.] and
- d) Communist Party Reorganization Centre of India (M-L)

While most of the parties have been ambivalent about their role and operating philosophy, those in the first category yield the maximum clout, are the best organised and are the real threat to our internal security which has prompted this study group to focus more on this storm gathering on the nations security horizon.

Present Situation

Naxalite movement now engulfs 165 districts in 14 states. During 2005-2006 the violence level has shown an upward trend in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh and Jharkhand. Let us now see





the affected states in detail.

They have a 21 member Central Committee, and a seven member Politburo with five Regional Bureaus i.e., North, South Western, Eastern, Central and Orissa. The Bureaus provide them the ideological support and guidance. As far as their armed wings are concerned they have zonal committees, each having divisions and dalams. At village level they have Sangams.

The modus operandi of the various categories of naxalites varies and largely depends on the shades of ideology they believe in. It varies from:-

- Philanthropic activities to win hearts & minds,
- Shaping public opinion by contact with the media.
- Indoctrination.
- Extortion and kidnapping.

- Rampant strikes on govt structures by embracing the Maoist method of strikes using human waves against far inferior targets.

A total of 39 Naxalite groups are known to exist. The People's Liberation Guerrilla Army and the People's Guerrilla Army have been merged into a unified military organisation called the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army.

The current Naxalite strength is estimated to be 15,000 fighters, with an access to about 6,500 firearms. The Naxalite groups also recruit child soldiers. Their bid to carve out a corridor has shown a series of splits and mergers taking place between more than 100 groups and parties with communist ideologies. The synergy achieved by these mergers is slowly but surely posing a grave challenge to the state law & order machinery.

Today, the CPI (Maoist) spearheads the Naxal violence in the country, accounting for about 91 per cent of the countrywide violence and 23 per cent of resultant deaths. The fatalities have increased from 717 in 2005 to 742 in 2006 with Chattisgarh being most severely hit accounting for more than 50 % of all the deaths. Furthermore, the formation of CPI (Maoist) has resulted in :-

- An expanded area of influence.
- Improved finances and flow of arms.
- Easy inter state movement of the naxals.
- Spread of the movement to over 165 districts in 14 states.
- A cadre strength of 9000, to include 2000 hard core naxals and
- Holdings of upto 6500 weapons from AK-47, SLR, pistols to country made weapons.

With the grim present situation that we have seen, the ramifications that naxalism possesses is indeed scary.

Current Ramifications

The spatial spread of naxalism is of growing concern. A disturbing, if not frightening, pattern emerges if, on the larger canvas,

one were to look at the districts currently under the influence of the Naxalites, or being targeted. They might soon gain a continuous presence along the length and breadth of the country and thus carve out a north-south and east-west corridor. It is in the intersection of these two corridors and Bastar in Chhattisgarh, that the Maoist central leadership is said to be in hiding.

Naxalites, today, exercise dominance over a huge spread of the country's territory, carry out attacks on security forces and symbols of governance at will. Chhattisgarh has now emerged as one of the principal centers of a co-ordinated movement of left-wing extremism. The movement has demonstrated the intent and potential to spread across the length and breadth of the country, constituting what Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh rightly remarked is the "single biggest internal security challenge."

The Maoist threat appears to have overtaken all other insurgencies in the country – at least from the geographical spread point of view.

Militarization And Consolidation

The merger of MCC (I) and PWG to form the CPI (Maoist) has resulted in the consolidation of their military and political wings and consequently in the emergence of a potent threat to internal security. Like LTTE in Sri Lanka, it is following the policy of coercion and elimination. It is forcing the other 37 LWE groups to either join CPI (Maoist) or be prepared to be eliminated, in this process; it has killed large number of the cadres of other groups.

- a) The first is that they now have a larger footprint. CPI (Maoists) has now emerged as the dominant LWE group with its influence extending over a large part of the country. It has made the other LWE groups irrelevant and is recognised as the sole representative of the poor and landless classes.
- b) As a dominant group, it will have a far greater bargaining power with the Governments in States and Centre and thus legitimize its existence, policies and representation.

- c) It is estimated that the merger would increase the credible military wing cadre strength from 7,000 to approx 14000. Even if 25% of these are capable of armed struggle, then also the strength goes upto 3500 which is much larger than the total No of terrorist operating at any one time in J & K.
- d) The merger would have great impact on financial strength of the organisation taking it from Rs.200 crores to nearly Rs.700 crores annually , enabling it to acquire more sophisticated weapons and ammunition from arms market in SEA and African countries.
- e) The LWE are trying desperately to find a voice in international forums so as to get world wide recognition and acceptance. It has found a platform in "World Social Forum" the organization which opposes WTO, globalisation, MNC and capitalism.

The increased trend of specifically targeting security forces has had a serious impact on the functioning of the state police and the CPO's. Moreover, the Maoists' lethal capabilities and daring attacks on the security forces have grown enormously. They now field sophisticated weapons like the AK 47 rifles, SLRs and rocket launchers. They have also "demonstrated" their skills at manufacturing and successfully exploding improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Mercifully, they have yet not gained access to the deadly RDX.

Arms and Ammunition

Maoist cadres and people's militia are armed with various types of weapons. When the rebels launched their campaign of violence in 1967 they used farm implements. Over the years , their arsenal has seen a phenomenal rise in its numbers and sophistication. Presently , the Maoist arsenal consists of country made guns, SBBLs, DBBLs, 7.62mm SLRs, LMGs and AK series rifles. They are also reported to have snatched an unspecified number of 5.56 mm INSAS rifles from the security forces in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Also from hurling crude bombs the Maoist have graduated to successfully setting off

improvised explosive devices (IEDs)- landmines and claymore mines with high precision and great lethality. Lately, the Maoists have also been using improvised crude rocket launchers. The designs of a rocket launcher were recovered for the first time in the country from an arms dump. Since 2003 on at least a dozen occasions the Maoists have fielded rocket launchers with partial success in Andhra Pradesh. For sometime now the Maoist have also been using sophisticated communication sets of foreign origin, some of which are said to be capable of communicating upto a distance of 150 kilometers.

Modus Operandi and Tactics

The Naxalite leadership in Andhra Pradesh has ushered in strategic and tactical changes in the functioning of its cadre. It has shifted its local guerrilla squads (LGSs) deep into the forest and brought in three-member teams of armed cadres to function in the plains and the semi-forest areas. Two or more LGSs have been clubbed together with members of special guerrilla squads (SGS). These teams are to move together in platoon formations, mostly in the forests. Two- or three-member squads have been introduced to take up organisational activity in their place. The one-plus-two (OPT) formations, as the Maoists call them, are practically invisible. Their members wear plain clothes and carry easily concealed small weapons. Cadres hailing from one district are `posted' to some other district to avoid detection. The new strategy contrasts sharply with the movement of cadres in other naxal-affected States where LGSs continue to function. These squads consist of four to five armed cadres each. They are the most functional units as they are responsible for the organisational and military activities in the plains and in semi-forest areas. The obvious reason for bringing about the change was that the LGS members were increasingly becoming easy police targets, since they were easily identifiable by their olive fatigues and weapons. While the forest terrain offered them protection, they were literally sitting ducks in the plains and the semi-forest areas. With the police mounting pressure, LGSs were forced to accord top priority to self-defence while relegating "organisational responsibilities of uniting people on local issues" to the background. Maoists believe this lack of political activity led to a situation in which people became

passive spectators.
Dandakaryna and Abhujmadh

The heart of this so called Dandakaryna area is the thickly forested area of 'Abhujmadh' which is approximately 10,000 square kilometers, falls in Chhattisgarh and the remainder is contiguous area in Maharashtra. This entire area of Abhujmadh till date has not been surveyed either by Survey of India or through revenue survey. Nearly 20,000 tribal families live in this area, in 237 villages in a most primitive manner with virtually no basic amenities. There are no roads and tracks in this area. It is reliably learnt that more than a dozen training and logistic camps belonging to both the major Naxalite groups i.e. PWG and MCC are located inside. Abhujmadh area is extensively used by Naxalites for their Central Committee and Politburo meetings and is really the 'nerve centre' of all Naxalite activities. This area of Abhujmadh needs to be sanitized at the earliest, then surveyed and opened by launching aggressive developmental activities and brought under control through effective governance. This effort is beyond the reach of the State Government and would require specialized forces, equipment and air effort to have any chance of success where even the British Empire did not dare to extend their administration, who only went to the extent of declaring this in one of their Gawttees, an area suitable for settling 'Refugees'.

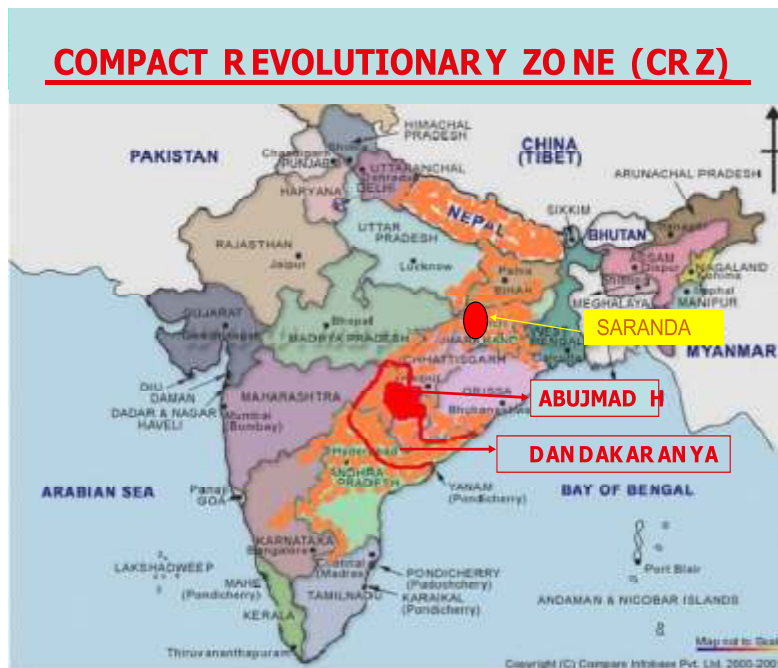
DANDAKARANYA



Impact on Economy

It is sheer coincidence that the areas affected by Naxalism are very rich in natural resources. They hold unexploited banks of huge deposits of minerals, oils and industrialised territory. In most cases, economic development in these areas cannot be undertaken due to the very basic existence of the menace. Indirectly, this has a negative effect on the economy of the country.

New Social Order. Early Naxalite leaders, who have spent nearly 30 years in the movement, were students and middle-class intellectuals. But the tribals amongst whom they find most of their new recruits are among India's poorest: "the most exploited, the bottom rung", according to Ajit Jogi, a tribal leader and former chief minister of Chhattisgarh. Typically, they live in forests and have no rights to their land. Most of the inhabitants are subsistence farmers



earning a meagre cash income from selling forest products. Most of the young recruits—illiterate tribal people—have never read Mao.

Addl Burden on Centre and States

Today the centre has an additional expenditure in hand, that of funding the states to fight the menace of Naxalism. Roughly, the amount averages to 12% of the state expenditure considering all the affected areas put together. Needless to say, this amount would have been effectively used elsewhere for useful development of the areas had it not been extravagantly used for obtaining the wherewithal infrastructure to be put in place for curbing the ill effects of Naxalism.

Full Blaze Insurgency. The naxalite threat has practically overtaken all other insurgencies in the country. Statistically speaking, the fact that at least 165 districts in 14 states out of the total of 602 districts in the country are affected by the menace shows the ramification of this menace in the sphere of insurgency. In a sharp contrast, terrorism in Jamu and Kashmir affects 12 districts, while the combined influence of the multiple influenced insurgencies in the North East afflicts, in various measures 54 districts. Over the past years, the fatalities in various other insurgencies have tended to decline consistently, while the fatalities resulted by Naxal violence incidents have increased continuously.

Assessment

Considering all these ramifications the naxal violence is likely to increase with an enhanced area of influence in the near future and will pose a more serious threat than insurgency in J&K and NE.

The growth of the naxals in the first decade will be significant. Maoists would be stronger in their traditional areas and would strive for a hold in other States. Regular battles between Maoists and police forces would continue to take place. Mostly the Maoists would have greater influence in four states, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and pockets of influence in other states. The nature of unstable coalition governments and political setups along with the

ever-changing policies would undermine faith in the political system and strengthen the cause of Naxals. This would prompt the youth of the nation to join hands with the Naxalites and the menace of Naxalism will continue to grow. The Government would be grappling to devise a coherent and uniform policy to deal with this menace. There would be serious contemplations whether to deploy army in the affected states or to carry on with reorganized and rearmed state police forces. The word 'Naxalisation' would certainly find its place in the latest edition of the Oxford dictionary on similar lines as that of 'Talibanisation'. Law and order in the affected states would be in a total state of disarray and Left Wing Extremism would surely be on course to engulf more than two thirds of the nation under its influence, thereby confronting us with a Kashmir and North East like situation, albeit, of a much bigger magnitude.

Challenges Faced In Combating Naxalism

As a country, it would be a sincere endeavour to ensure that we are not engulfed in the fire of Naxalism. In fact adequate steps taken would ensure that the scenario just painted remains a faded dream that could not be executed by the dark forces to ruin the country. However, there are a few glaring challenges that our country faces in combating naxalism. The biggest challenge is that the country has not been able to fully address the root causes which gave rise to the movement in the first place. These causes can be broadly clubbed as social, political, economic, security, psychological and diplomatic challenges. Our study group analysed these challenges and a few important ones are being discussed in this presentation.

Social Challenges

Socio-Economic Factors. Naxalite problem is a manifestation of the socio-economic fault lines in the society. It is not a coincidence that Naxalism is present in those areas of the country where 90% of the rural poor live below the poverty line. Socio-economic factors are mainly responsible for the sustenance and growth of naxalism.

a) **Land Reform.** The basic problem is that the tribals do not

own any land and hence the produce also does not come to them. The slow implementation of land reforms has led to the growth of Naxalism. As such, the percentage requirement of land for the landless is minimal. For example It is estimated that out of 2, 75, 069 sq km, only 32, 375 sq km of agricultural land and 109 sq km of urban land can meet the requirement of all the landless and poor in Andhra Pradesh.

- b) **Poverty.** Poverty is another factor which has contributed to the sustenance of the movement. The younger generation of these poverty ridden areas want to have the facilities that are available in urban areas. Given the infrastructural problems and the failure of governments to perform, the rural youths fight a losing battle against the urban youth and are easily indoctrinated to join the naxal cadres.
- c) **Social Divide.** Naxalism has been fueled by the social discrimination and violation of rights of the dalits and adivasis by the upper classes. The remedy lies in restoring the rights, confidence, dignity and self esteem of the oppressed dalits and lower classes. This can be only achieved by a change of mind set of the upper classes and by implementing imaginative social reforms. This is a major challenge which is opposed by the privileged groups.
- d) **Poor Governance.** Poor governance is another aspect which has sustained the violence. The failure of the government to reach out to naxal affected areas is a major factor that aids the growth of Naxalism. Popular schemes take long to devise but even longer to implement. In short, governance, or the lack of it, in these areas is a primary reason for growth of the Naxalite problem.

Political Challenges

Lack of Coherent Political Policy. One of the biggest

challenges to counter-naxal operations is the total lack of coherent political policy to deal with this kind of terrorism. Some of the ad hoc measures adopted have only become hurdles for future operations. Intermittent ceasefires without corresponding cessation of hostilities and political reconciliatory packages only nullify the gains achieved until then and interfere with intelligence gathering and combing operations. Adventurist policies, including release of naxalites have an adverse effect on the morale of the security forces, thereby affecting the entire gamut of counter-terror operations. This is generally done much against the wishes of the security forces engaged in counter-naxal operations and on the political presumption that these released naxalites would appeal to their underground cadres to give up armed conflict and surrender. As feared by the security forces, the released naxalites in most cases prove to be turncoats. This eventually indicates to the insurgents that the government would buckle under pressure.

Inconsistency in Policy

Another aspect that our country sadly lacks is consistency in its policy. As the political mantle changes hands, so do policies formulated by the previous Governments. The Central Government's economic and developmental packages for the Naxal affected areas is a saga of each administration doing its best to outbid the other by announcing bigger packages. It is a different matter that approximately only five percent of this actually reaches the population. The surrender policies offered by different Governments in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are also a case in point. The same story is repeated in the case of all accords reached at the end of political negotiations. The political management of conflicts in the Naxal affected areas is a testimony to the failure of all accords. The primary reason is that while all aspects of the problems get monitored to some degree, this is done in isolation. The management is left essentially to the political party in power in the state, whose perceptions are coloured by the compulsions of remaining in power. Political decisions are also influenced by many human rights organizations and monitoring agencies that operate either in India or abroad. Most often, in an attempt to appease these

agencies, Governments coerce the security forces to slow down their operation, which eventually results in undoing the gains obtained until then. In addition, international pressure also determines political course of action. Adding to the complexity of the situation is India's heterogeneity; what worked in Orissa will not work in Andhra Pradesh, and what works in Andhra Pradesh will definitely not work for Bihar. Each theatre of conflict is distinctly different and except for few general pointers, it is difficult to emulate a single national counter-naxal strategy.

Economic Challenges

Economic Inequalities. The naxal affected areas are severely affected by the disparities in economic and social terms. The rich Thakurs and Zamindars consider poor people and tribals as people with No Dignity and hence socially exploit them. In spite of the minimum wages stipulated by the government, the landlords hardly pay anything worthwhile for a day's labour which results in inadequacy to support large families thus forcing the youths to revolt.

Lack of Economic Development Measures. As such, the infrastructure development and economic growth in Naxal areas is adversely affected due to the unstable security situation prevalent in these areas. The problem gets compounded by the fact that no new investments in such areas are possible because of the high risk involved. Also, diversion of large portion of state or central earnings to fighting naxalism will result in neglect of other important aspects like education, food and basic amenities which, in turn, will fuel more discontent.

Availability of Financial Support. No organization can survive without the availability of sound financial support and source of regular income. By rough estimates, the CPI Maoist, by itself generates approx 500 -700 crores annually. This money is spent on payment to its cadres, purchase of arms and ammunition and running of frontal organisations and institutions. The main source of funds is through wealthy industrialists who carry out mining in these areas, govt contractors, forest produce like timber and biomass, government

agencies and officials, extortion, looting of banks and collection of taxes. As long as the finances are available, such organizations will always find means and motivation to grow and spread their influence.

Security Challenges

During the 1980s, the Naxalites linked themselves with the nationality struggles in the Indian Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir. This strategic decision had a significant impact on both, the agrarian as well as the autonomy movements. Each was a complex struggle involving class and nationality, as well as caste and gender. In addition, the formation of the smaller states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal allowed people more say in their affairs, but the new states were created keeping the overall power structure intact. As a result, the nationality struggles in these areas continue as an integral part of the agrarian and the broader democratic struggle. It is widely felt that naxalism is no more a law and order problem, but poses a threat to internal security as is evident from the declaration of a "Compact Revolutionary Zone" of "Red Corridor" extending from Nepal to Tamil Nadu and accounting for almost a third of the country's total area.

Weak Legal System. The legal system in conflict prone zones leaves much to be desired; either it does not work at all or works very gradually. Frequently, the state's prosecution in the cases of arrested naxalites is weak, thus enabling hardcore naxalites to walk free. One of the reasons for weak prosecution is that the aggressiveness of police in apprehending the naxalites is absent during the prosecution stage and there is no follow-up or monitoring of the case once the arrest has been made. The recent debate on the issue of POTO and POTA showed the extent to which the Indian society and Government was fighting shy in enacting stringent laws.

Another objection raised is that naxalism is the manifestation of political violence and the causes behind the act need to be analyzed with care. When terror activities includes killing of unarmed civilians and non-combatants, it has regressed from being a political movement to heinous crime.

Democracy, also does not bind a government's capabilities to fight Naxalism in democratic ways. There is also a need for a consistent policy / legal framework for outlawing naxalite groups. Anti-naxal legislations are also required in the area of funding and sources of funding for naxalist activities. Most often, only the obvious financial structures are targeted while attempting to dismantle the political infrastructure of the naxalites. Finance of naxal networks in an emerging concern that needs adequate attention.

Psychological Challenges

Popular Support. Popular support is the most important feature of any armed conflict, be it terrorism, insurgency or Naxalism. It not only stalls counter-naxal operations effectively, but also proves to be a rich source of logistic support for the naxalites. Therefore, the Naxalite challenge in the overall context rests upon the issues of agrarian transformation, tribal people's rights, nationality movement and resistance against imperialism and globalisation. All this adds up to what they characterise as the people's democratic revolution to change the very character of the Indian state. Because of the issues they pursue, the Naxalites have a social base which sustains them despite a variety of repressive measures adopted by the state. The National policy therefore needs to be loaded with strategies to wean away public support for the naxalites, thereby dismantling their political and financial infrastructure, and translate this disenchantment into stoic support for the government. Public support for Naxals is expressed in two ways viz sympathy and fear – and can be tagged under three phases. The phases are subjective and have been postulated only for conceptual clarity.

- a) The first phase is during origin of the conflict when the public sympathizes with the naxalites as the latter rallies for issues concerning the public and a "Robinhood-like" image is propagated. At this stage, the counter-naxal operation needs to encompass strategies that would address the causes behind the conflict, or in other words, hijack the terrorist's cause. Use of military force needs to be minimal as human rights violations and excesses can have a negative bearing on ongoing counter-naxal operations as well as long-term governance.

- b) As the conflict progresses, the public withdraws their sympathies from the naxalites because of public disenchantment with ceaseless violence and elusive peace. In the second phase, the public's disappointment in the naxalites has no corresponding reposing of faith in the administration, for lack of public involvement. At this stage, counter-naxal operations need to focus more on the causes that generated public support in favour of the naxalites and address grievances, if any.
- c) The third phase of popular support would be when withdrawal of support to the naxalites has a corresponding backing to Government's counter -naxal initiatives. However, the battle would be conclusively won only if the Government is able to retain this support on a long -term basis.

Media

Lastly a look at the media would indicate that an apt truism would be that "Naxalism is aimed at the community in general and not the eventual victims. Unintentionally, the media in naxal-affected areas work in favour of the naxalites. The focus of reporting has been on the incidents of terror rather than possible disillusionments that have fuelled naxalism. To that extent, it has been variously argued that naxalism and the media have a symbiotic relationship feeding and thriving off each other. It must also be acknowledged that reporting from a conflict zone is not easy and is fraught with challenges and grave risks. "Naxalites regard any dissenting media as an enemy to be punished and destroyed." And there are innumerable instances where media houses have been threatened with dire consequences, and in some instances even attacked, for not toeing the naxalites' line. The situation prevails in areas where the vernacular media with its reach, is more biased to sensational reporting. While it is attributable to the fact that they operate out of fear, to some extent, it is also because they are not as professional as the national media.

Measures Adopted By The Government To Resolve The Problem

Numerous measures have been taken in the past both by Centre and the State Governments to combat naxalism. Following a lot of criticism regarding the knee jerk response to Naxalism the Government tabled a bill in Mar 06, thereby defining a coherent policy to combat the challenges posed by the naxalite menace. This policy comprises the following components:-

Before we look at the recommended strategy to combat this threat, let us see what the govt has initiated in the recent past. Numerous measures have been taken both by centre and the state govts to comb naxalism. Following a lot of criticism regarding the knee jerk response to Naxalism the Govt tabled a 14 point policy paper in Mar 06, clearly defining the policy to combat the challenge posed by the naxalite menace. This policy comprises the following components:-

- a) The Government to deal sternly with the naxalites indulging in violence.
- b) Address this menace simultaneously on political, security, development and public perception management fronts in a holistic manner.
- c) All states to adopt a collective approach and pursue a coordinated response to counter it.
- d) Improve police response in the states and pursue effective and sustained police action against naxalites and their infrastructure individually and jointly.
- e) No peace dialogue by the affected states with the naxal groups unless the latter agree to give up violence and arms.
- f) Strengthen the cadre base of Political parties in naxal affected areas so that the potential youth there can be weaned away from the path of naxal ideology.
- g) The states from where naxal activity/influence, and not naxal violence, is reported must have a different approach with special focus on accelerated socio-economic development of

the backward areas and regular inter action with Non Governmental Oeganisations, intelligientia, civil liberties groups etc. to minimize over ground support for the naxalite ideology and activity.

- h) Promote local resistance groups against naxalites but in a manner that the villagers are provided adequate security cover and the area is effectively dominated by the security forces.

Other points covered in the policy are:-

- a) Mass media to be extensively used to highlight the futility of naxal violence, loss of life and property caused by it and developmental schemes of the Government in the affected areas so as to restore people's faith and confidence in the Government machinery.
- b) The states to announce a suitable transfer policy for the naxal affected districts. Officers to be posted with a stable tenure in these areas.
- c) Other states to adopt the surrender and rehabilitation policy for naxalite initiated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh.
- d) The State Governments to accord a higher priority in their annual plans to ensure faster socio- economic development of the naxal affected areas.
- e) Adequate security and other measures to be taken to facilitate uninterrupted developmental activities in the naxal affected areas.
- f) The Central Government to fund the efforts of the affected states on financial, security and development fronts and bring greater coordination between the states to successfully tackle the problem.

This policy paper is yet to be implemented. Let us see what measures have already found a beginning.

On various occasions, the PM Dr ManMohan Singh has

emphasized, on the need to strengthen the local police on all fronts, improve intelligence setup, and enhance joint ness amongst Naxal affected states. On his recommendation, to check Naxal activities in different parts of the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has set up a special Naxalite Desk, and constituted an Empowered Group of Ministers in Oct 2006.

The group met for the first time on, 19 Feb 07, and made the following recommendations:-

- a) Provide better training to the police.
- b) Provide the latest equipment to the states, including helicopters, UAVs, armed and anti-mine vehicles.
- c) Increase funds to Naxal affected states.

Some states have taken various measures to combat Naxalism. Andhra Pradesh, has to some extent been successful in its attempts to combat Naxalism, by domination with a resurgent police force, backed by the armed reserve force, the Greyhounds, and a well developed intelligence network.

However, certain pitfalls of the govt strategy in combating naxalism can be seen as:-

- a) Lack of political consensus on the policy.
- b) States were not consulted when the policy was framed.
- c) Lack of coordination between states still very evident.
- d) Although, the policy states, that there will be no dialogue without laying down of arms, still some states are getting into a dialogue with naxals still brazing their arms, showing a lack of consistency in the policy.
- e) Ineffective surrender policy, where the surrenderees have created a band of criminals running protection rackets and real estate businesses.
- f) Developmental policies have still been given, mere lip service, and no concrete progress is evident.

Recommended Measures To Be Adopted

At the outset we would like to stress that there is no quick fix solution to this problem. The approach will have to be an integrated one involving various social, eco, pol, psychological & security measures working in tandem.

First and foremost there is a requirement of increased jointness, coordination and cooperation amongst the affected states in all aspects including intelligence, sharing, planning and execution of anti naxal operations especially along the interstate borders.

Naxalism is largely a socio-economic problem and addressing this is of utmost importance. Social measures that may help in curtailing this menace are:-

- a) Land Rights and Reforms to eliminate Feudalism in the affected parts. Surplus land must be distributed among the poor and the landless and state protection provided to them. Kerala has set an excellent example in completely eradicating the naxal movement due to land reforms. Others need to emulate this.
- b) Improved Irrigation Facilities is another area that calls for immediate attention. The suicide by farmers in Andhra could have been averted with better irrigation facilities. Expediting the water linking scheme will help solve the problem to some extent.
- c) Improved Education and Health Care must be ensured with the help of NGOs working in the area. The present education system has neither been able to provide universal education nor develop skills for gainful employment. As a result, the benefits have not reached the people in these areas. The institutions of Baba Amte and R K Mission have made inroads into these areas. Such organizations need to be encouraged.

- d) Present Forest Policy of declaring reserved forests displaces locals, creates unemployment and offers no rehabilitation to the tribals. To the contrary, studies have shown that tribals help and preserve nature rather than destroy it. Since ages, the tribals have co-existed with the forests. They have traditions and practices of living in perfect harmony with nature. Therefore, these policies must be corrected to protect the rights of the tribals.
- e) Our social organizations must be encouraged to go into interior areas to usher in, social and cultural changes. there is an urgent need to eradicate the caste system which has been eroding the society especially in these tribal areas. Social organization are best suited to handle this effort.
- f) There is a need to improve the standing of the police and the administration. Dynamic and honest administrators and police officials need to be posted in these areas. There is a need for speedy and fair justice to be not only done but seen to be done.

Economic Measures

- a) Presently the states of Chattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand, which have abundance of Bauxite, coal and iron ore, have very few core industries. Industrialization must be encouraged in these areas, especially backward areas to generate more employment opportunities and wean away people from naxalism.
- b) The construction of roads, bridges, power and irrigation projects will help in development of these neglected areas and provide employment opportunities. Planning a segment of the Golden Quadrilateral through these areas will bring connectivity.

- c) A large number of schemes are being planned through budgetary allocations, however they have not been implemented either due to rampant corruption or security problems. Monitoring of Development Projects, by a Central Task Force, in naxalite affected states, will ensure that measures planned for these areas are being implemented effectively and within the stipulated time period.
- d) Economic Development would increase the options of generation of employment within the area. Small scale industries especially the ones dealing with traditional handicrafts or locally made goods need to be given special impetus.

Socio-Eco Measures

Along with the socio-eco measures certain Political Measures need to be enforced with the aim of bringing the naxalites into the main stream of the government.

- a) The Naxalite gps should be encouraged to join the mainstream politics. This will enable the states to engage them and the people to judge their true commitment to social equality. The model which was followed by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Mr. Chenna Reddy to allow extremists to function openly in 1990, with some modifications can be tried again. Open political engagement in all affected states simultaneously is a must. Possibility exists that the taste of power at various levels may corrupt naxalite leaders and cadres, and expose them to the people for whom they are seeking social justice.
- b) There is an urgent need to improve governance at both centre and state. The governance at grass roots i.e. village, block, district and regional level has to be responsive to the needs of the locals. The central institutions like judiciary, banks, forest, revenue etc. and state adm, like police stations,

- agricultural institutions, and district administration have to function at optimum efficiency.
- c) The tribal tradition of self governance has been a long and well tested mechanism. This must get state recognition. The tribes must be allowed to function in an autonomous manner in accordance with their established cultural and traditional laws. Creation of autonomous district councils in such areas may also be considered.
- d) There is a need to engage Naxalites in peace talks simultaneously in affected states as a prelude to their eventual assimilation in mainstream politics.
- e) At the diplomatic level more interaction needs to be carried out with neighbouring countries to reduce transborder support to the movment.

Psychological Measures

In addition to the socio-eco and the political measures efficient and imaginative psychological measures should be undertaken by the state to wean away people from naxalism. Some possible themes that could be adopted are:-

- a) Irrelevance of outdated Maoist ideology, which even China has dumped.
- b) Importance of globalisation and liberalization for overall development.
- c) Outdated philosophy of state controls which led to fall of iron curtain.
- d) Naxal violence which is an obstacle to developmental activities.
- e) Penetration of criminals in the naxal organization.
- f) Socialism which is an important facet of Indian Democracy.
- g) Lastly, Naxal commanders live in relative comfort while the cadres dwell in misery.

However, it must be understood that to efficiently implement these initiatives the right kind of theme should be chosen for each area. The locals should be able to relate and understand the implication of the theme which is being used and not be lost as an “also tried” measure.

Legal aspects need a major relook. The legal system needs to be geared up to impose stringent punitive actions against perpetrators and simultaneously put in place a comprehensive surrender policy to rehabilitate and provide security against reprisal from the Naxalite groups.

Exploiting of media needs a revamp. Media could be used as a force multiplier in the fight against the Naxal menace. At the moment the naxals are using vernacular and national media to suit their requirement, which in fact needs to be managed better by the state and the centre to highlight the efforts of the state and break the façade of the naxal ideology.

Security Measures

Another area which needs our immediate attention is the Security Measures. Though these may not be the ultimate answer to this problem, but these sure are necessary to make grounds conducive for implementation of the other more important measures. A unified approach under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) needs to be adopted to tackle naxalism. There is a need to set up an apex level unified command structure to issue common directions and guidelines to be followed by the affected states. Such a command should consist of DGPs of affected states, Intelligence heads of state and representatives of central Intelligence agencies.

Modernisation of Police Force also needs to be undertaken on a war footing as an important step in improving security conditions. The existing ratio of police to population in these areas is 1:1000. This needs to be enhanced to min of 3:1000 in Naxalite affected areas. Sensitive police stations should be headed by selected police officers who are above the corruption menace. Vehicles with armour protection should be provided to police forces to counter the threat of

landmines. Police communication should be upgraded to interconnect the police stations to the district police HQs and the district police HQs to the sub-div / div police HQs of the affected states.

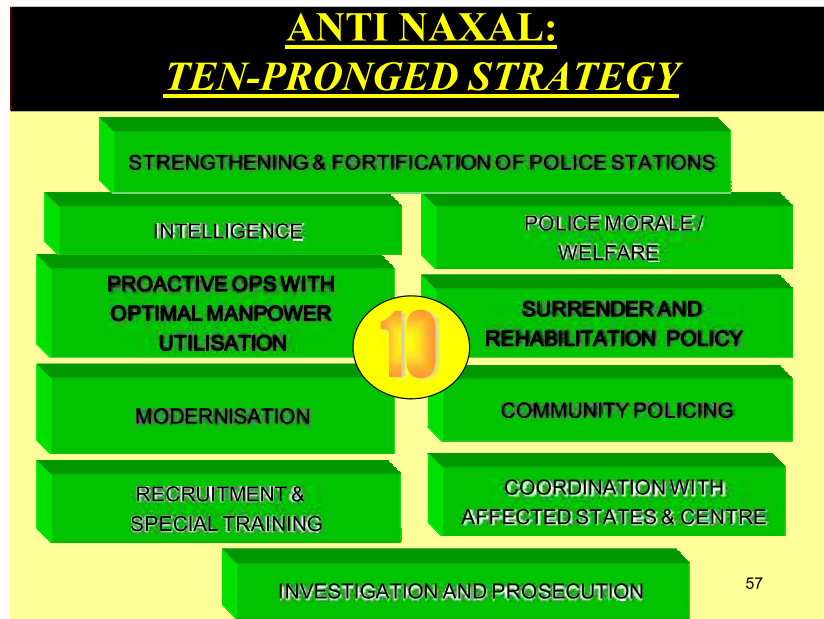
After having seen the recommended measures let us now see what the perceived role of armed forces can be in the near future.

Perceived Role Of Armed Forces

The internal security threat from Naxalites has acquired dangerous proportions and can no longer be wished away. The problem has all the ingredients of developing into a major internal security crisis in future i.e. by 2010 and beyond. Considering the heavy troop commitment in J&K and NE, it is visualized that any further commitment in these affected areas would be counter productive because it would seriously impinge upon the training and operational preparedness of the armed forces for conventional operations. But taking a serious view of this emerging security situation, the COAS Gen JJ Singh – in Jan 07 – has committed to provide all assistance to CPOs and state police in tackling this problem, stopping short of troop deployment.

In view of this commitment the army can take certain concrete actions to combat naxalism passively now and be prepared for it actively, when the time comes. Certain proactive steps that can be taken by the army could be:-

- a) Intelligence Management at Army Level. A centralised data base needs to be developed at Army level by the DGMI. Such a package should be able to carry out instant trend analysis of violent incidents as well as dynamic assessment of the situation.
- b) High level of cooperation needs to be ensured, with Police Forces in spheres of intelligence acquisition and sharing, offering them better training facilities and provisioning of logistic support for their operations.



- c) Additional recruitment quotas in targeted areas will allow us to hold recruitment rallies in affected areas and wean the youth away from Maoists.
- d) The heart of so called Dandakaranya area is the thickly forested area of Abhujmadh which is yet to be surveyed. Thus, as a first step, we should carry out the survey and mapping of these areas. Let's not be caught in a situation akin to what we encountered in Sri Lanka.
- e) The growing menace of extremist groups in recent times suggests that we set up a nodal agency to evolve practical concepts, doctrines and training methodology for undertaking sub conventional operations in these areas. There is a thought process that this role could be assigned to RR HQs which after necessary restructuring should be re-located at Ranchi, Nagpur, Raipur and re-designated as Army

Counter Terrorist College. In addition to Armed forces persons, the faculty of this College could comprise of representatives from Police, PMF, social scientists, civilian experts on internal security and NGOs.

- f) Establishment of a Jungle Warfare School on the lines of Chattisgarh in identified areas of CRZ can also be considered. It would serve the dual purpose of intelligence acquisition alongwith imparting of essential operational training to own troops. It will also assist in establishment of army amongst the local populace and make people realize the power of the state.
- g) We should acquire land in the areas of Abhujmadh for Fd Firing and training and to carry out unit and formation level exercises. This would allow us to be prepared to undertake counter Naxalite operations in such isolated areas with ltd preparations.
- h) A plethora of adventure activities like cycling, trekking, river rafting etc are conducted by the army all over the country. Diversion of some of these towards CRZ can help us in knowing the terrain and the tribals well as also the current situation prevailing in the area.
- j) Conduct of Sadbhavana Projects to win the hearts and minds of the local populace, in the name of helping our own soldiers and their families would prove beneficial.

Force structuring of the Army deployment in the northeast and J&K is based on company operating base (COB) dependent grids with approximately a brigade or sectoral Area of Responsibility (AOR) spreading over a district. An element of ground holding is inherent in these deployments as insurgencies in these areas are secessionist in nature. If the deployment pattern of one brigade per district is applied to Naxal affected areas then approx 120 brigades will be required.

This is neither practicable nor possible.

The Armed Forces will have to be employed as the ultimate offensive punch in anti-Naxal operations, akin to Special Forces employment in conventional operations and cannot be deployed on a typical COB based grid.

It takes approximately an hour for an insurgent cell to execute an act of violence and get away from the scene. It is to beat the insurgents in time and space that the CI grid consists of COBs that can reach any location in their AOR within an hour.

Traditionally the Army operates on a COB based grid in the hinterland whereas the CPMFs have been operating in urban and semi urban areas. In the context of anti-Naxal operations it could be prudent for the police /CPMFs to man the CI Grid and carry out area domination in the hinterland. Special Forces teams of the Army could be stationed at the district HQ to carry out precise intelligence based offensive operations at short notice.

The British forces in Basra successfully executed the 'hunter-killer' concept for conduct of Counter-Terrorist operations in Iraq. The Rhodesian Special Air Services (SAS) followed a similar technique namely 'Fire-Force'. The concept ensured reduced response times by launch of platoon sized forces by helicopters to hunt down insurgent cells at extremely reduced reaction times. The employment of these hunter killer teams which could react in reduced time frames over large distances negated the requirement of a spread out and manpower intensive COB based deployment. Heli-lift capability of a platoon if provided to Special Forces teams located in district HQ would not only ensure speed of action but help in beating the insurgents for time and space. Provision of heli-lift capability to the army would ensure swift and surer response with a leaner deployment and give it omnipresence.

So, what needs to be done? Coy sized Special Forces teams of the Army with a platoon heli-lift capability need to be stationed at district HQ to carry out high impact, precise and intelligence based

operations. A Special Forces Battalion Headquarter would be responsible for conduct of operations in a state. States such as Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa which are more severely affected can have up to two headquarters deployed.

There would be requirement to clearly define the Command and Control arrangements. The Apex bodies at each State should be headed by the Political Executive and not bureaucracy. The armed forces representative should be the Military Commander responsible for operations in the specific state. Seniority consideration should not be the governing consideration. Army should not resort to traditional COB based deployment as this will result in defensive operations such as road opening, convoy protection and base security. It must be employed as the cutting edge.

The operations of the Army should feed on the intelligence obtained from state police forces deployed in the hinterland. There will be a requirement of a fully functional Joint Operations and Intelligence Centre at each district HQ to share intelligence. Legislations to provide legal protection to Army Personnel operating in Naxal affected areas such as Armed Forces Special Powers Act will have to be enacted prior to employment of the Armed Forces in these operations.

To conclude, military solutions to insurgencies are seldom possible. Deployment of the Army in anti Naxal ops, if inescapable, must be made towards achievement of a clearly defined end state within a given timeline. It must not degenerate into an indefinite ground holding operation.

In his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of Red Fort on 15 August 2006, the PM identified two security threats to the country – terrorism and Naxalism. Unfortunately, till very recently the problem has not found favour for serious discussion, primarily because it has never been treated as an issue which deserved national attention and was treated as a socio-economic problem or at best a law and order problem. The spread of the movement in recent years has been rather alarming: from 55 district in nine states in 2003 to 156

districts in 13 states in 2004 to 20 states out of 33, 232 districts out of 604 in 2010. In their strongholds which includes 55 districts in 12 states, they are known to run a parallel government. They resort to killings, kidnappings, abduction, extortion, improvised explosive device (IED) blasts and destruction of property. They are also reported to have linkages with the other insurgent and terrorist organizations of the North East and neighbouring countries. The developing threat from the Naxalites, therefore has very serious security implications for the country.

Conclusion

India has been a major victim of externally sponsored insurgencies and terrorism for the last four decades. We have suffered and bled patiently and have taken huge human casualties which could exceed 13,000 uniformed personnel and 53,000 civilians during the last 25 years. In spite of raising our voice at all international forums, seeking extradition of terrorists involved in some of the major 'terrorist strikes' in our country, we have failed to get any favourable response or worthwhile support from the international community or from the countries directly or indirectly supporting such activities. In spite of committing bulk of our para military forces and a sizeable segment of the Army, we are nowhere near resolving these problems.

All of us have been involved in maintaining 'National Security' i.e. the integrity and sovereignty of the country, which, in the current environment is threatened by internal as well as external threats. The dividing line between the internal and external threats is getting blurred with every passing day, since the possibilities of armies of any country invading other's frontiers are rather remote. Instead, the external threat has acquired a new form in which it is being replaced by cross border terrorism, global terrorism, illegal infiltration and migration, narco terrorism or even the looming threat of biological and nuclear terrorism. These together with prevailing internal environment in the country, pose a serious threat to our security.

It is therefore desirable that a detailed analysis of the ongoing Naxalite movement be carried out and workable solutions be identified before the situation goes out of control. Following a lot of

criticism regarding the knee jerk response to Naxalism the Govt tabled a 14 point policy paper in March 06, clearly defining the policy to combat the challenge posed by the Naxalite menace.

This policy paper is sensible & comprehensive but yet to be implemented. On various occasions, the PM Dr Man Mohan Singh has emphasized, on the need to strengthen the local police on all fronts, improve intelligence setup, and enhance joint ness amongst Naxal affected states. Nothing much was done in the previous tenure except announcements of noble intents while country's glacial paced security apparatus of Home Ministry was crawling slowly; the Naxals have taken Naxal terrorism to a new level.

The merger of MCC (I) and PWG to form the CPI (Maoist) has resulted in the consolidation of their military and political wings and consequently in the emergence of a potent threat to internal security. It is forcing the other 37 LWE groups to either join CPI (Maoist) or be prepared to be eliminated, in this process; it has killed large number of the cadres of other groups. It is estimated that the merger would increase the credible military wing cadre strength from 10,000 to approx 20,000. Even if 25% of these are capable of armed struggle, then also the strength goes up to 3500 which is much larger than the total Number of terrorists operating at any one time in J&K. The merger would have great impact on financial strength of the organization taking it from 200 cores to nearly 700 cores annually, enabling it to acquire more sophisticated weapons and ammunition from arms market.

It has been reported that coordinated offensive will be launched by the security forces against the Naxals. Let us hope that the present live & let live policy is replaced by taking Naxals head on. The path to peace is long but with stern political will and resolute action by security forces we can avoid creation of Naxalistan.

PAPER PRESENTED BY LT GEN (RETD)
DB SHEKATKAR
(A bridged to focus on the advisability of use of
Indian Army for Countering Naxalism and Maoism)

Difficulties in Combating Terrorism

Combating terrorism whether by infringement of individuals liberty, diplomatic negotiations or reprisal raids is complicated by several problems :-

- a) It is difficult to agree on a definition of terrorism with its many manifestation from criminal to political to insane. Till date even UN has not agreed to the acceptable definition of terrorism. Same is in India too.
- b) Often anti terrorist acts may be more objectionable and oppressive than those acts they wish to prevent, creating martyrs and often improving the credibility of the threat. (9/11, 26/09 are examples).
- c) The adoption of anti terrorist safeguards and punishment must be universal. For example, it is no use to have an expensive efficient system in the USA or France to prevent nuclear theft if potential terrorists can smuggle in the materials from other countries. (AQ Khan's Syndicate in Pakistan and North Korea). Global dependence requires that each nation depends on others to deter terrorism through punishment and strict security measures. The problem is that many governments do not oppose all terrorist acts.
- d) It is difficult to institutionalize programme to combat terrorism because most nations, do not want to abandon the

principle of asylum. In the past some Western countries have accepted many refugees who have clearly committed illegal acts under law of some other country. They have allowed terrorists to seek asylum.

- e) Any response to terrorists activity must consider domestic political implications.

Problems of Military Response

Terrorism, Militancy, Insurgency, or Naxalites cannot be fitted neatly into a geographic region. It cuts across district, state even national boundaries and all norms of traditional decision making. The simple fact of bureaucratic organizations, and delineation of areas of responsibility creates significant difficulties in dealing with the problems. Our experience is replete with examples of how much terrorists, militants and insurgent can benefit if the territory/area where they operate has border with a foreign country, provided such a country is either a hostile power (Pakistan vis- a-vis terrorists in Kashmir, or a friendly but weak country (Myanmar and Bangladesh vis-à-vis, Naga, Manipuri insurgents and ULFA terrorists). To a smaller extent and in a different way, provincial, state, district borders can also prove useful to terrorists, insurgents and Naxalites. Only enhanced and close coordination of operations etc. are not enough when there is a requirement to place the area under one unified command looking after all counter terrorist operations including military operations, psychological warfare, civic actions, development programmes have to be executed.

Terrorism, insurgency, Naxalism is largely a political and social phenomenon and therefore difficult for Defence services alone and security forces to handle ; even though the immediate official

response to it is likely to be based on police or military force. Substantial inter-departmental cooperation is necessary.

Terrorism is not a generally accepted form of military warfare. It is not a traditional war of soldiers and no defined national threat, defined battle field, fronts, rules, civilians or diplomatic immunity exist. It requires a new concept and appropriate legal sanctions. The projection of military power and technological sophistication often creates a level of fragility which merely invites terrorists attacks rather than ensure security. Look at the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Some times there is apprehension in minds of the elected representatives of the state government that adoption of hard-line against a militant section would erode their political base. This assessment may be resolutely contested by the security forces, charged with the task of law and order, who feel and rightly too, that a weak-kneed policy is an open encouragement to militancy and terrorism. It is therefore, for the Central Government to lay down quantum and nature of force which should be used. Persecution and repressive policies are not advocated as these may fan local extremism and alienate general public, however united it may be. Punitive measures, too, do not act as deterrent. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that a balanced legal force, used at an opportune time may well avert illogical bloodshed at a later date. We have seen it in Punjab, Kashmir, North East and now in Naxalite infested states.

It is not obligatory that every terrorist has to be apprehended and tried before court of law, just as, it is not necessary for every enemy soldier to be taken as prisoner of war and brought before a war crime tribunal. Force must be met by force and there should be no inhibition in dealing with person/organization who has taken up arms against the state or murdered a fellow citizen in cold blood.

There cannot be two opinions that a triumvirate of administrator, policeman or soldier should control counter terrorist operations. However, often there are differences on type of top – level executive authority which exercises powers. There are contrary views ; one advocating that military action is an aid to civil power, and therefore primacy of political control should be maintained; other view is that the moment a state government is unable to enforce law and order, its façade of legality is demolished in public eye and therefore it is prudent to place the state under an integrated administration responsible both for civil affairs and counter terrorist operations. Whichever view one may subscribe to, underlying principles are that there should be a single direction at the top and that administration should be sympathetic, incorruptible and dedicated.

There is a need to strengthen and empower organization like National Security Council or an equivalent body to take decision on issues pertaining to national security. The organization must include participation of various ministries and agencies dealing with national security, involving strategic, political, economic and military issues. This is not being done in its present form and functioning. Based on the directions of the Central Government the counter terrorist operations will have to be conducted in close coordination with the state government, central police organization units, para military forces and different types of intelligence agencies operating in the area. In case the operations are to be conducted in border states, the external affairs ministry, our diplomatic missions abroad, RAW, Ministry of Railway, Merchant Shipping, Indian Air Lines, Air India, Air Force, Navy, Border Road Organization, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting P&T Department will have to be co-opted for integrated analysis, policy formulation and coordination. There is thus an urgent need to evolve a formalized structure at national level to achieve coordination and integration. The present Security

Advisory Board is inadequate and only ornamental. National Security Council is also an ornamental body in its present form and duties.

There is also an urgent need of an immediate measure that the Government should expand the scope of Cabinet committee and its working group and must establish a fulltime highly specialized Counter Terrorist Assessment and Research Group. This group should carry out research work, formulate guidelines and programmes, education of police and other agencies connected with counter terrorist operations, publicity, public security analysis, assessment of a domestic and international aspects of terrorism, development of a consolidated terrorist information system, and study of significant terrorist incidents around the world. The Group must make its information available to local police authorities and other law enforcement agencies.

Counter terrorist operations require the coordination and harmonization of political, social, economic and security forces activities from highest policy making level to lowest levels of executions. This requires the following :-

- a) Identification of long term national interest, perspective and objectives. Recognition of threats within India and outside which effect our national interest.
- b) Identification of areas of interest, areas of influence and areas of domination and control.
- c) Evolution and formulation of coordinated policy based on our interests and threat to these, preparation and issue of political objectives and directives to deal with the unrest/terrorism.
- d) Unification of command and control structure, and allocation

of resources of various agencies to deal with the unrest/terrorism.

Confronted with proliferating and increasingly sophisticated terrorist groups at home and abroad, on the one hand and the necessity to maintain the basic constitutional freedom and safeguards are the hall mark of a democracy, on the other India must develop new programmes and policies to combat terrorism. In India, today by virtue of process of governance and parliamentary debate and freedom of press, it is fortunately impossible to undertake a programme of pure repression. If we examine the political culture within which Indians function, it is evident that there exist well defined conviction about what the government may or may not legitimately do and a broad consensus on the fundamental rights of citizens. Our democratic system is thus both a necessary and sufficient limitation on the use of repressive force. Moreover any illegal action by the government is undertaken with peril since it can be manipulated by terrorists to serve their own purposes. But our politician's desire to maximize individual freedom also blinds them to dangers presented by terrorism and at times prevents them from seeing the necessity for deterrent action. I have experienced this in Punjab, Kashmir, and North East in different ranks and appointments while commanding combat troops, formations combating insurgency and terrorism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

LT GEN (RETD) BT PANDIT

As you all know, the Naxalites or Maoists as they are known now, have been around for over 40 years. I am not going into the Genesis of this movement which was born in a small thatched hut in an unknown village Naxalbari in West Bengal in early 1967. Its main objective then was redistribution of land to the landless and overthrow of the Government and the tyranny of the upper classes, by use of force. They achieved their first operational success on 26 May, 67 when santhal tribals ambushed a police patrol killing an inspector. The weapons used, believe it or not, were tribal bows and arrows!

Since then this hydra headed animal (I won't call it a monster-not yet anyway) has come a long way. Over the years it has gone through many ups and downs; seen considerable proliferation and splintering. As its regional spread expanded, there are as many as 30 groups spread over the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar, covering some 220 districts in the so-called "RED Corridor". By some estimates, their combined Armed Cadre is 20,000. In all these groups, while the issues are localized there is one common thread: total disregard for our democratic systems and institutions and resort to ruthless violence to attain their objectives. Their slogan is very attractive: Jal, Jamin and Jungle. They operate through a number of front organizations such as the latest PCAPA. They also enjoy covert political support or even patronage. Their leadership structure is very complex, flexible and often elusive.

The Naxalites of late, have intensified and expanded their activities and have achieved some notable success eg the Dantewala

ambush of the CRPF inflicting as many as 76 casualties and the ghastly sabotage of the Dnyaneshwari Express. Incidents of kidnapping too have become more frequent.

So far, except for the direct central intervention in 1969-70, the problem has been left to respective State Government and the Police with little or no co-operation and co-ordination between them. In turn, they have, by and large treated this as a serious law and order problem without any coherent policy to take up the political challenge.

Even now, there is no consensus at the national level. The PM terms this as the biggest threat to internal security; the Home Minister virtually declares war; the Ministry of Defence and the Service Chiefs are reluctant to get embroiled in this mess; the ruling party spokesmen call it a socio-economic - developmental challenge; one cabinet Minister openly hobnobs with the perpetrators; human rights meddlers and self styled intellectuals lend moral support, the TRP driven media paints highly exaggerated and worrisome picture of the RED Corridor where the writ of the Indian State allegedly does not run; and the opposition parties expectedly use this to embarrass the ruling dispensation whenever possible.

There is no denying that this challenge has military dimensions as well and the option of using the Army (arguably the most experienced force in the world in CI Ops and guerilla warfare) appears very attractive indeed. The clamour is "we have this wonderful and tested weapon, why not use it before it is too late. After all this was very effectively and successfully used back in 1969 in West Bengal so why not now?" There are many who support this line of argument. Redoubtable Lt Gen Jacob asks what is this fuss about? To his way of thinking, this simply requires the PM to call up a General, give him a division or two and mandate him to eradicate this

scourge which can be done in five simple steps. Find (SVI & int), fix (est and main contact), surround, close in and apprehend/destroy. He goes on to say "Let future generations not say that we emulated Hamlet by procrastinating on this issue". While his basic position can be questioned, his take on procrastination is very valid. Although we have lived with this problem for over 40 years, it can no longer be swept under carpet'. Nor can it be left to individual states. Time has come to clearly spell out the national Strategy and initiate effective steps to :-

- a) Ensure effective co-ordination and Co-operation among the affected states – their civilian administration, police forces and the PMF.
- b) Revamp, reequip, the CRPF by appropriate training, good leadership and motivation fully imbibing lessons from recent set backs.
- c) Reorganise, reactivate intelligence agencies who must work in concert with each other to provide actionable intelligence to our forces.

In the meanwhile the carrot and stick policy needs to be pursued on all fronts. While all criminal activities must be put down with heavy hand, relentless efforts are necessary to wean away the popular base of the Naxalites, education, development, land reforms, tribal forest rights, health need to be urgently addressed. This entails good governance which in turn entails revamping the administration and police reforms. It may be worth consideration if we need special administration cadre as was tried out in the North East in the form of IFAS.

As regards bringing in the Army, there can be no two opinions that this is the weapon of last resort and the universal law of diminishing returns, applies in this case too. The Army and the Air

Force, on their part, must be ready to take this call in the National Interest, if the situation so warrants, however much they abhor operations against own people. However, if this recourse is to succeed, the following aspects must be kept in mind.

- a) AFSPA : The Army when deployed on CI ops, needs legal authy/protection. This is provided by AFSPA. There is a clamour from vested interests for its repeal. This must not be countenanced. By all means, introduce more checks and insist on accountability and strict action in the event of misuse, but dilution of its substantive provisions would be disastrous for the internal security and integrity of the Nation. Without such an act, the Indian State would be even more toothless than what it is perceived to be now. If there is marked improvement and semblance of normalcy, the Government may withdraw the notification of disturbed area when the AFSPA automatically ceases to apply.
- b) Minimum Force : Since in CI ops, the troops are dealing with own people, only minimum force should be used so as to keep to the minimum the casualties and collateral damage. However in heat of ops, it is not always possible for Junior commanders to correctly judge what that level is in a given situation. Furthermore, this constraint runs counter to the Army's basic ethos of the spirit of aggression and ruthlessness. This, being a battle winning factor, must not be allowed to be blunted or else we may end up with the Army that uses minimum force against the enemy too. Already, perhaps, the unit commanders and Junior commanders feel tempted to play safe and be content with filling forms and writing citations. A careful balance must be maintained between these two contradictory factors.

- c) Encounters : I have personally seen how the civilian administration and the judicial system get totally paralysed. There are no magistrates to be seen, no Government officials, no prosecutors, no witnesses. Even Judges avoid hearing such cases except perhaps to promptly grant bail to captured terrorists so what are the Security Forces to do ? The Government must ensure that they do not find 'encounters' as the only way forward .
- d) Human Rights : No one can dispute that human rights must be respected and violations must not be tolerated. On the other hand, the terrorist does not respect this principle and only remembers his own rights when cornered or apprehended. This, like Geneva convention, ought to be two-way protocol. In any case, most of the complaints are false and motivated for gaining propaganda points and show Security Forces in poor light. The record of the Indian Army in this matter is something for all of us to feel proud about.
- e) Intelligence : Success in CI ops depends entirely on actionable intelligence or else the Security Forces can end up like prize fighters doing shadow boxing. Electronic surveillance and human intelligent are two primary sources. All intelligent agencies need to be, reactivated and they must work complementary to each other and not in the rat race of one-upmanship.

The naxalites, over the years, have expanded their areas of influence and won sizeable popular support with complex yet well knit organization and leadership structure, resources and well trained and highly motivated armed cadre strength, they now are capable of mounting hit and run ops, kidnapping as well as effective propoganda. Notwithstanding this, I personally feel that the ground situation is

nowhere near a state of insurgency, let alone guerrilla warfare. Hence, it should be possible for the affected States to tackle this menace albeit with full support, guidance and coordination by the Centre. The earlier successful 1989-90 Punjab Model, the recent experiments in Andhra Pradesh, Selva Judam, Greyhounds, COBRA forces and the lessons learnt from recent setbacks, should help in evolving a viable multipronged strategy to blunt and defeat this insidious threat to our National Security.

In the ultimate analysis, the answer lies in providing good governance, zero tolerance to corruption, enforcing accountability at all levels and effective Judicial System. This should be backed by well trained/equipped/ motivated and well led and politically empowered police forces.

The Army should only be brought in as a last resort. There some straws in the wind which makes us hopeful that the situation would not come to such a pass.

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| 51. | "Naxalism and Maoism and Indian Army" | 26 Aug.10 |
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