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India's Internal Security Situation

Present Realities and Future Pathways

Namrata Goswami



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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
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New Delhi

I

INTRODUCTION

The concept of democracy in India is indeed unique, with its vast pluralism based on a population of myriad communities and tribes. That uniqueness can be captured through those years following independence in 1947 when Indian public life was lit up by the promise of democracy and the opportunities available to its citizens following British colonial rule. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Vir Sarvarkar and intellectuals like Nirad Chaudhuri ignited Indian public imagination with the promise of liberty and freedom by being a part of the new nation. Since Independence, India has, however, not produced one single dominant narrative of its state's history. Instead, many interpretations of the "idea of India and its democracy" have been woven in several quarters, far away from a mainstream narrative.¹ These narratives possess immense value to the building of our nationhood, which is still a project in progress, and will be for some years to come.

It could be presupposed that the history of independent India is a history of the Indian state acting as a single sovereign agency. This brings in many insightful aspects: the ability of the state to maintain the territorial integrity of India, to act as an agent of economic development, and to provide its citizens opportunities for social progress. What must also be kept in mind in this critical context is that unlike the states of modern Europe, which took on the responsibilities of their citizens in a gradually sequential manner, India had to adopt these responsibilities with immediate effect in 1947 and had to also deliver on them fast.²

Consequently, the Indian state's dominant role as provider for its people has led to a kind of paradox: the expectations from the state are high while the capacities of the state, realistically speaking, are far below the

¹ Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004), pp.1-3.

² Khilnani, n. 1, p.3-4.

expectations thrust upon it by its citizens. This does not mean that the Indian state has not lived up to any of these expectations in the last sixty years or so. It has had its share of successes. One of the greatest achievements is perhaps the ability of the Indian state to accommodate so many diverse communities and political cultures within an evolving, adaptable and flexible federal structure.

Let us now dwell on this unique aspect of the Indian political structure; namely, federalism which has been quite successful in addressing issues of political representation and economic development.

Indian Federalism

By definition, a federal state is underlined by two rules: first, it must have at least two levels of government. Second, each level must have at least one area of action in which it is autonomous. The latter requirement must be guaranteed by a written constitution, and disputes between the two tiers are resolved by a single independent judiciary.³ Federations are centralized or decentralized. The US and Brazil are examples of decentralized federalism where the regional states are strong and the centre weak. Whereas, centralized federal constitutions grant very limited autonomy to the states and allocate most of the power to the Centre. Austria, Belgium and India are examples of this kind. If one compiles the data on how many states have federal constitutions, then amongst 191 states, only 25 are federal. However, these include the most populous states like the US, Russia, India, Brazil, Canada, Germany, and Nigeria which constitute 41 per cent of the population of the globe.⁴

India has a population of 1.21 billion with 80 per cent of the population being Hindu, Muslims constituting 13 per cent and Christians and Sikhs 2 per cent respectively. The pattern of population across states in India is very multifarious. In order to handle such diversities, India has a two tier federal structure with decision making divided amongst the 28

³ William Riker, *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1964), p. 11.

⁴ Pippa Norris, *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), chapter 7, p. 2.

states. The federation is asymmetric with states like Kashmir and Nagaland having special provisions under Articles 370 and 371 respectively. Since the breakdown of Congress dominance in the 1990s, federalism has also perhaps facilitated the proliferation of a number of regional parties providing for representation in terms of class, caste, region, language, or ethnicity. In 1999, 20 parties provided a stable national coalition termed the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre, transforming the national political process earlier dominated by a single party. Earlier in 1993, there was a three tier structure of decentralization when the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution established Panchayati Raj with local bodies, aimed at removing rural poverty and the caste system. Interestingly, India is now divided into 28 states, seven union territories with 600,000 villages and towns.⁵ There has been further decentralization of power with the establishment of state election commissions, and state financial commissions and the institutionalization of the Gram Sabha (direct participatory village assemblies). Urban areas are governed by Municipal Corporations, Councils, Town Area committee, and Notified Area Committees. Rural areas have 474 district legislative bodies (Zilla Parishad) with 5, 906 blocks councils (Panchayat Samitis) and 227, 698 village councils (Gram Panchayats) at the base.⁶

Apart from these recent facts, one must not forget the context in which India's Constituent Assembly crafted its constitution in 1947. The experience of Partition and the communal violence that preceded it moved the Constituent Assembly to establish a strong centre which could uphold the unity and integrity of the young nation. Despite this, the linguistic diversities were duly recognized and states were largely organized in 1956 along linguistic lines. However, the federal structure was flexible enough to establish states in the Northeast based on the ethnic dimension, like Nagaland in 1963. The process of state formation within India continues: till as recently as 2000 the NDA formed three new states in Northern India: Uttaranchal now Uttarakhand carved out of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand carved out of South Bihar and

⁵ Noris, n. 4, p.20.

⁶ Ibid.

Chhattisgarh, separated from eastern Madhya Pradesh. Constitutional provisions also guarantee that the Indian Parliament can break up units without having to seek consent from the affected state or its people. The nation-building project is therefore juxtaposed between the Centre and the States with the Centre dominating the process. However, a strong central state is necessary to maintain social harmony when dissenting voices are largely violent in nature. Secession has been banned in the Indian constitution. Enough constitutional flexibility has been provided to deal with political aspirations for greater autonomy.⁷

Federalism and decentralization also lead to vertical sharing of power amongst multiple layers of government; decentralized governments are the linchpins of plural democracies. In Western Europe, countries have moved towards fiscal decentralization with growing regional autonomy, resulting in policy flexibility, innovation, and experimentation, for ensuring government responsiveness to local needs. Control is mostly through regulation and not direct involvement. Significantly, an ideal type of federalism will mostly look at i) the degree to which fiscal, administrative and political decentralization occurs in the public sector juxtaposed with the type of constitutional rules enshrined in the constitution for governing that relationship; ii) better public policy; and iii) representation and accommodation of territorially based ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences.⁸ Fiscal decentralization is thought to fight local corruption as it increases the accountability of politicians and officials to local societies. The advantages of political decentralization are particularly evident in deeply pluralistic societies. Plural societies are home to racial, tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or caste based identities. Hence, political decentralization helps to promote accommodation and management of tensions amongst local ethnic groups otherwise antithetical.

⁷ Balveer Arora, "India's Experience with Federalism: Lessons Learnt and Unlearnt", paper presented in International Seminar on "Constitutionalism and Diversity in Nepal", Organized by Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kathmandu, Nepal, August 22-24, 2007, pp. 1-13. Also Dawn Brancati, "Decentralization: Fuelling the Fire or Deepening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?", *International Organization*, 60/3, 2006, pp. 651-81

⁸ Noris, n. 4, pp. 8-9.

However, the creation of a federal state can unravel the unity of the nation if not handled carefully or if the centre is weak. Federation fails where democratic institutions are weak. Parochial and ethnic narratives can also create problems. Administrative decentralization transfers bureaucratic decision making authority from the Central government to sub-national tiers. Fiscal decentralization transfers some form of resource allocation, giving sub-national bodies local tax management and revenue generation powers.

In India, the federal structure is based on a distribution of power between the centre and the state, the cardinal features of which are:

- 1) A Single Judiciary;
- 2) Uniformity of Civil and Criminal Laws; and,
- 3) Common All India Civil Services.

The All India Civil Services (bureaucracy) provide that unifying thread for the federal experience as well. The Inter-State Council, which was established in 1990 under Article 263, also provides a mechanism for chief ministers of states to come together and discuss issues.

Limitations on the usage of Article 356: The landmark Bommai judgment

Article 356 which enables the Centre to dismiss state governments has been used quite extensively in India. In a detailed six judgments pronouncement in the historic case of *S.R. Bommai versus the Union of India* on March 11, 1994, Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy stated: “Since the commencement of the Constitution, the President has invoked Article 356 on as many as ninety or more occasions. Quite a performance for a provision which was supposed to remain a ‘dead letter’. Instead of remaining a ‘dead letter’, it has proved to be the ‘death-letter’ of scores of State Governments and Legislative Assemblies.”⁹ Subsequently, Justice Jeevan Reddy and Justice S C Aggrawal stated that “The

⁹ See Sukumar Muralidharan, “A Constitutional defence mechanism”, *Frontline*, 15/21, October 10-23, 1998 at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1521/15210140.htm> (Accessed on August 31, 2008).

Constitution of India has created a federation but with a bias in favour of the Centre. Centre has been made far more powerful *vis-a-vis* the States... But that does not mean that the States are mere appendages of the Centre. Within the sphere allotted to them, States are supreme. The Centre cannot tamper with their powers.” Six out of nine judges were of the opinion that unless it is clear that the dismissal of the duly elected state government is the only means through which affairs of the state as per the constitution can be conducted, the President cannot be entitled to dismiss a state government.¹⁰ The *Bommai* judgment also argued that if the Presidential proclamation fails to obtain parliamentary approval within the stipulated period of two months, the Government dismissed under Article 356 would stand reinstated and the Assembly revived.

Certain Caveats in Indian Federalism

Though the federal experience in India has been good, certain caveats are in order.

Sub-optimal adherence to the principles of Democracy: Political democracy is about choices people make in their lives. These choices are based on the social conditions around them, which have a direct bearing on the functioning of the state and what it embodies. However, the key factor is that this relationship between society and the state is not just about structural inequalities and injustices, but has a profound influence on the way citizens shape their sense of self and their social possibilities.¹¹ The strength of Indian democracy is its sheer capacity to generate a host of creative energies.¹² However, it must be admitted that the state, which has been designed to secure the liberty, well-being and dignity of citizens has been routinely throwing up forces to undermine these values and norms.¹³ This is the result of corruption, mediocrity, indiscipline, and lack of a deep moral engagement of the political class, with the common people. A state cannot create the much

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Pratab Bhanu Mehta, *The Burden of Democracy* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2003), p. 10.

¹² Ibid, p.14; Khilnani, n.1, pp. 15-60.

¹³ Mehta, n.11, pp. 18-19.

needed emotional bond with its citizens purely on the basis of constitutional methods and rules. There must be a simultaneous process of a deep emotional engagement of common people with the idea of India as their own. However, the continued concentration of power in a few hands contributes to this crisis of leadership and democracy thereby failing to ignite the imagination of common people.

This raises the question of whether Indian democracy is able to sustain itself, not by espousing the values democracy is meant to honour, but by the sheer rationale of power in Indian society. Do we as citizens stand up and speak about the injustices to be undone and the federal processes that require strengthening? The citizens of India also need to help India's democratic ethos and refrain from blaming state failures on men and women who take up public office. Economic upliftment and social well-being requires a concerted effort from all citizens and blaming democracy for political decay is simply unqualified activism at best. It is here that careful causal analysis is very important for correct diagnoses of the causes that led to sub-optimal outcomes.

A truly democratic world is possible only when its citizens are engaged in a relationship of mutual respect and not competition. The problem, however, in non-egalitarian societies is that since there is no public acknowledgement of self-worth, these societies will be "characterized by both a fierce competition to dominate, and paradoxically, an exaggerated sense of servility".¹⁴ Sadly enough, most institutions and practices in non-egalitarian societies deny individuals the most basic forms of recognition, that they are valuable in some way.¹⁵

Also, the political parties in India have been a cause of concern for some years now. Most parties lack intra-party democracy. There are neither any strong procedures nor institutional mechanisms based on which parties like the Congress can incorporate a new generation of leaders or a new set of ideas through a transparent process. It is rather unclear how certain leaders are chosen to positions of power or how

¹⁴ Mehta, n.11, p. 41.

¹⁵ Ibid.

certain policy ideas are prioritized over others. The other national party, the BJP, suffers from a similar lack of robust institutionalization and intra-party democracy. Leaders simply want to control their parties and are adverse to transparent debate and discussion on party mechanisms and processes. These are certain issues that require deep thought and debate if federalism's benefits are to be truly enjoyed in India.

Lack of Financial Autonomy: States suffer from lack of financial autonomy and as a result are heavily dependent on national schemes and projects, for which there is a lot of competition. The states in the Northeast are a case in point. Financially, Northeast India is in a dismal condition with regard to locally generated revenues in order to sustain a decent living. The Union Government contributes nearly Rs 35,000 crores every year for a population of say 32 million. The Centre provides 85 per cent of Arunachal Pradesh's funds; 51 per cent of Assam's funds; 80 per cent of Manipur's funds; 70 per cent of Meghalaya's funds; 80 per cent of Nagaland's funds; 40 per cent of Sikkim's funds; 72 per cent of Tripura's funds : and 70 per cent of Mizoram's funds. Moreover, most of the planning for development is done by central agencies like Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) and North Eastern Council (NEC).

Lack of Implementation of Reforms Recommended. The Sarkaria Commission was set up in June 1983 by the Government of India to study the relationship between the Centre and the states. The commission submitted its report to the government in 1988 with 247 specific recommendations.¹⁶ However, the recommendations put forward by the Sarkaria Commission have not been implemented, either in letter or spirit by the Government. For instance, one of the recommendations of the commission was to transfer the residuary powers except taxation to the concurrent list, which has been supposedly rejected by the Union government. Unless recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission are implemented, problem areas between the Centre and the states will persist.

¹⁶ Amal Ray, "The Sarkaria Commission's Perspective: An Appraisal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 23/22, May 28, 1988, pp. 1131-1133.

Lack of Institutional Mechanisms. The biggest challenge to the smooth functioning of Centre-State relations is the lack of institutional mechanisms, which are democratic, effective and accountable in a given area. Take the example of District Councils in Manipur and Assam. The idea behind establishing District Councils under the Sixth schedule of the Constitution was to encourage local political representation. But the lack of financial autonomy renders them heavily dependent on the state governments, who are likewise dependent on the Centre, and the experience therefore has not been good in this regard. The Districts Councils in *Dima Hasau* and Karbi Anglong districts in Assam have been unable to address the social and economic needs of the people of these districts. So is the case with Manipur where the hills areas have been largely neglected by Imphal and the District Council lacks any sound institutional base.

An assessment of India's internal security scenario should therefore keep the complexities of its federal structure in mind.

India's Internal Security Situation: Present Trends

While examining India's present internal security scenario, the year 2008 stands apart as a year of violent incidents in India, the most devastating of which were the terror attacks of November 26-28 in Mumbai and the attacks on October 30 in Guwahati, which together killed more than 200 civilians. In fact, the internal security situation as per the "Status Paper on Internal Security" issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on 31 March 2008 had prophetically projected a grim picture unless the Indian state and society took concentrated pro-active steps to root out violence from within India by an equitable programme of development for all. According to the report, the violence in 2007-early 2008 was highest in the Northeast with a 49.92 percentage count (Assam and Manipur with highest death counts) followed by the Naxalite areas at 33.06 per cent and Jammu and Kashmir with 17.01 per cent.¹⁷ The report identified four areas of concern for India in this context: armed

¹⁷ See "Status Paper on Internal Security Situation", Ministry of Home Affairs, March 31, 2008.

violence in the Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir; Naxalism; and growing communal violence. This was further reiterated by the “Status Paper on Internal Security” issued on September 1, 2008.¹⁸ The report, however, asserted that while the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Naxal affected states like Andhra Pradesh and Bihar had improved, affairs in states like Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Naxal affected states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odissa, etc. were a matter of growing concern.¹⁹

In comparison, the year 2009 was comparatively peaceful with a decrease in terror attacks as well as a scaling down of violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast. Naxalism, however, continued to be a cause of concern in 2009 and some of the most violent incidents were as a result of Naxal induced violence in states like Bihar and West Bengal. In order to tackle the Naxal problem, then Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram gave voice to a two-pronged approach on behalf of the government, which included a coordinated security approach and an offer for dialogue with the Naxalites once they give up violence. 2009 also witnessed the operationalization of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which was set up in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks. The NIA is “mandated to investigate and prosecute offences under the Acts (NIA Act) mentioned in the schedule, including offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act that have interstate and international linkages and assigned to it by the Government”.²⁰

Four National Security Guards (NSG) hubs were also set up in 2009 at Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, each having the strength of 250 personnel. Coastal security was also improved under the ongoing ‘Coastal Security Scheme’, with 64 out of 73 coastal police stations made fully operational.²¹ The Government also passed a proposal to

¹⁸ See “Status Paper on Internal Security” Ministry of Home Affairs, September 1, 2008.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.1.

²⁰ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, “Year End Review MH-09”, at C:\Documents and Settings\namrata\My Documents\North East\Year end review 2009 PIB Press Release.mht (Accessed on March 04, 2010).

²¹ Ibid.

raise 38 additional Battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and 29 new battalions for the Border Security Force (BSF) over a period of five years. The situation in the border states of the Northeast saw significant hopeful changes towards peace with a decrease in violence. Jammu and Kashmir also witnessed decrease in violence in 2009 as compared to 2008.

However, capturing these positive trends in 2009 should not make us lackadaisical in our approach to internal security, as the Pune terror bombings on its famous German bakery reminded us in early 2010. Adding to this caution was Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who in his address to the Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security on 7 February 2010, stated that "cross-border terrorism, the Maoist insurgency, and separatist movements in the North-East were the gravest threats to India's security".²² He further added that "each one of these threats requires determination, hard work and continuous vigilance to tackle."²³

In 2011, it was reported that there was a marked improvement in curtailing the number of killings as a result of Naxal violence. According to then Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram, the success story of 2011 was the improved situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeastern states. The success in the Northeast was credited to two factors: first, the success of the security forces; and secondly, the success of the Indian state in reaching out to armed groups with dialogue and negotiations.²⁴

However, while the violent incidents by themselves came down, the minister also cautioned that there were negative stories that targetted the Indian state. Therefore, states needed to recognize the fact that insurgent groups like the Naxals do not recognize any borders and

²² "PM calls for vigilance to tackle security threats", at <http://www.livemint.com/2010/02/08004235/PM-calls-for-vigilance-to-tack.html> (Accessed on February 09, 2010).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See "Union Home Minister's Speech at the Chief Minister's Conference on Internal Security", April 16, 2012 at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/2012/HM_internalsecurity.htm (Accessed on April 25, 2012)

would try to spread their movement even to the peripheral states of India like Assam, Manipur, etc. In fact, Assam has been recognized as the new theatre of the Naxal conflict with the Communist Party of India (Maoist) making efforts to link up with insurgent groups in Manipur as well.²⁵ The biggest operational hurdles in dealing with the Naxals are terrain, and their area or zonal committees that use local recruits to their tactical advantage. The Andhra-Odissa-North Chhattisgarh-Jharkhand-Bihar area has a large Naxal presence and influence. Its front organizations are active in spreading Naxal propaganda. Despite a drop in violence, 2011 still suffered from 91 lives lost to insurgent and terrorist violence, and 1908 persons were injured.²⁶

In July 2012, Assam erupted once again in ethnic clashes between the Bodo and the migrant Bengali Muslim communities in the Bodo Territorial Area Districts (BTAD). The violence that started on July 19 and July 20 killed nearly 82 people. The BTAD districts, namely; Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa, and Udalguri, and the neighbouring Dhubri district remain tensed with nearly 400, 000 people displaced, taking shelter in the 300 or more relief camps across the districts.

A diagnosis of the violence revealed that there were multiple interconnected underlying causes responsible for the flare-up. First, the political empowerment of minority communities in the BTAD areas in recent years resulted in growing unease amongst the Bodo community. In May 2012, Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) Chief, Hagrama Mohilary had accused minority representative in the BTC Kalilur Rehman of the Congress for instigating the minority community against the Bodos. What further led to tensions between the two communities was the demand by the All Bodoland Minority Students' Union (ABMSU) and All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) for dissolution of the Bodo dominated Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) for its alleged involvement in Bodo-Muslim tensions. This kind of

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

'elite instigation' from both sides of the social divide resulted in inter-community tensions thereby creating rigid boundaries in otherwise multi-ethnic areas. Second, these political tensions were further compounded by the common perception in Bodo areas that illegal migration from neighbouring Bangladesh was relegating the Bodos to a minority status in their own land. The Bodos, at present constitute 29 per cent of the population followed by the Rajbonshis (15 per cent), the Bengalis immigrants (12 to 13 per cent), and the Santhals (6 per cent). Third, the 'perception' of massive illegal migration from Bangladesh generated a fear psychosis amongst the Bodo community that their ancestral lands were illegally taken away by the migrants. The absence of any reliable official data on the number of people coming in from Bangladesh into Assam aggravates this situation. Fourth, the inclusion of illegal migrant names in the voters list is viewed as a deliberate ploy by some outside force to empower an outside group vis-à-vis the Bodos so that they lose their sense of distinct indigenous identity. This creates a siege mentality amongst them. Fifth, the existence of armed groups like the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (anti-talk faction), the Bisra Commando Force representing the Santhals, etc, further creates a situation of violence.

Sadly enough, what occurred in the BTAD areas was not new. Similar violence had occurred in the past. In 1993, the first large scale massacre occurred when 50 migrants were killed in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts. In 1994, 100 migrants were killed in similar violence in the Bodo areas. In 1996, another minority community in Bodo areas, the Santhals were targeted by the Bodos killing 200 people and displacing thousands. In 2008, in an exact replica of the present violence, Bodo-minority community violence killed 100 people and displaced nearly 200,000.

The state response to the Bodo-areas violence was lackluster at best. There were telling signs since April-May 2012 that the BTAD areas were tense and violence between the two communities could erupt. Hence, the first step that the Assam state government should have carried out is increase police presence in these districts. Also, these areas are designated "Disturbed Areas" where the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 amended in 1972 is imposed. As a result, the army is already stationed in nearby Rangiya and Goalpara districts.

Consequently, the army should have been alerted much earlier by the state government so that the necessary permissions required to send troops to conflict areas were procured from Delhi in time. What happened instead was that since no prior request was made by the state government, the army had to wait until the Ministry of Defence issued orders to respond to the crisis. This aspect of procedural delays also brings into stark focus the aspect of civil-military relations in conflict areas and the need for decentralization of command and control.

Another aspect which needs to be grappled with is the existence of the armed National Democratic Front of *Bodoland* (NDFB) in the Bodo areas. Existence of an armed group in such conflict affected areas prone to extreme forms of distrust and misperceptions between communities is a dangerous situation. It is pertinent that peace talks are started with the NDFB to disarm the outfit. This is not such a difficult task as the leader of the NDFB, Ranjan Daimary was handed over to India by Bangladesh in 2010 and is in Indian custody. An important fact that also needs to be resolved is the absence of land records in the Bodo areas. According to the Bodo Accord of 1993, no outsider can settle in Bodo lands. But this provision has not been implemented in letter and spirit. Moreover, community records on land holdings are weak and not written down. Hence, a Bodo whose land has been taken by an outsider has no papers to claim ownership of land.

The need of the hour is to activate a state owned and driven land record system, work out a viable mechanism on generating a dataset on migration from Bangladesh, and increase the presence of the police in areas that have already been identified as “disturbed areas”. These steps will help assuage local fears based on loss of land; fears that are easily manipulated by local politicians for their own vested interests.

Compounded into all of this is the fact that internal armed violence threatens the national security of the Indian state. National security policy by definition implies formulating and implementing a national strategy which involves the use of force in order to create a favourable environment for the furtherance of national values and interests. Given its criticality in India’s democratic ethos, where the use of force internally is viewed with a great deal of scepticism, India’s national security policy on its counter-insurgency response has to be carefully developed and implemented. Indian political values include its democratic tradition;

community rights and individual freedom; the proportionate use of force; an accommodative state; and the notion of legitimacy being derived from the people. National interests include defence of the homeland from subversive activities, which is linked to the very survival of the Indian state; economic development; social cohesion; and a deep commitment to the norm of territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Determining an internal security policy is however not an easy task, given the complexities involved with having to deal with multiple armed conflicts. There are usually two dimensions towards formulating such a policy based on a focus on the national security of a state. First, there is the physical dimension determined by the military capabilities of the state to counter internal dissent. This will also include intelligence agencies, the economic growth pattern of the state, as well as the development packages provided to affected areas in order to better governance mechanisms. The second dimension is more psychological, which indicates the willingness of the people of the state to support the efforts of a government to achieve certain national interests. National interest as mentioned above can be neatly divided into three broad clusters.

First, vital or survival interests of a state. This includes threats to the survival of a particular state, its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Second, critical interests that could become first order interests in the long term: economic capabilities, living standards, health of the political system, etc.

Third, serious interests which could include such interests that do not impact the first two interests but could cast problems over them. For example; non-violent political dissent, fluctuation in prices of oil, etc.²⁷

Viewed from this perspective, the armed insurgencies and terrorism within India directly threaten the survival of the state as well as its territorial integrity. Therefore, dealing with them is a first order interest

²⁷ A division of national security interests of a state can be found at Sam C. Sarkesian, *et.al*, *US National Security Policy Makers, Processes and Politics* (Boulder, US: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008).

of the Indian state. It is in the light of this backdrop that this monograph offers a critical assessment of the Naxal affected areas in India; armed violence in the Northeast of India; and the recent surge in terrorism in India. The monograph has five chapters. The first chapter provides the introductory observations; the second chapter offers an overview of Naxalism; the third chapter deals with certain significant armed groups in the Northeast; and the fourth chapter elaborates on the rise of terrorism in India. Informed by the assessment of the three chapters including the introductory chapter, the fifth chapter identifies certainties and uncertainties with regard to Naxalism, the armed groups in the Northeast and terrorism and their consequences in 2030. Based on this, three alternative scenarios have been crafted and certain policy recommendations have been offered for consideration.

II THE NAXAL CONFLICT AND THE STATE'S RESPONSE

The Naxal or Maoist conflict in India erupted in the 1967 violent peasant protests in the *Naxalbari* district of West Bengal. The movement simmered during that time, and had its ebb and flow, but a strong state response managed to curtail the movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. It revived in the mid-1980s and is at present identified by top Indian policymakers as the gravest internal security threat to India, surpassing the externally funded terrorist movements in Kashmir and the Northeastern insurgencies in overall impact.¹ Naxalism has spread to 17 states in India, including Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, to name the few main ones, affecting nearly 185 out of 602 districts.² With established base areas in Dantewada and Bastar districts of Chhattisgarh, the movement has shown no signs of abating there. Reports indicate that Naxal armed underground cadres number around 15,000 men and women, with 12,000 firearms, and an unarmed cadre strength of nearly 200,000.³ Nearly 60 per cent of the armed contingent of the Naxalites is in Northern Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. In fact, according to the 2008 Internal Security Report, Naxalite violence in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand was as high as 58.56 per cent and most of the casualties were due to the use of landmines and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in these states.⁴

¹ See “PM’s Speech at the Conference of CMs on Internal Security” April 16, 2012 at <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech-details.php?nodeid=1165> (Accessed on May 26, 2012)

² Namrata Goswami, “Naxalism/Left Wing Extremism in India: Purpose and Strategy” in S.D. Muni, ed., *IDS.A Asian Strategic Review 2007* (New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2008), pp. 155-170. Also see “Chidambaram Exhorts Police Chiefs to Reinvent Security System in the Country”, September 14, 2009 at <http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=52610> (Accessed on May 14, 2012).

³ P V Ramana, “Red Storm Rising—India’s Intractable Maoist Insurgency”, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, May 15, 2008.

⁴ *Status Paper on Internal Security Situation*, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, 2008, p. 26.

Rationale for the Movement. Why is there a Naxalite movement in India now? Some analysts argue that the cause for the spread of the Naxal conflict in India is the well knitted linkage between the illegal mining industry in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand which results in a lucrative source of earning for the Naxal leadership and cadres.⁵ While that could be a valid cause, another cause for the Naxalite movement's expansion and consolidation is rooted in the inability of the legitimate political authority in India to provide avenues for structural uplift to the deprived sections of society in the affected states. According to the 2001 census, about three quarters of Dantewada district (most affected by Naxal violence) consists of 1220 tribal villages. Of these, 1161 have no medical facility, 214 have no primary schools, and the literacy rate is a meagre 29 per cent for men and 14 per cent for women.⁶ Similarly, two other Naxalite-affected states, Bihar and Jharkhand, among the poorest states in India, have a literacy rate of 47 per cent and 54 per cent respectively, far behind Kerala, with a 93 per cent literacy rate, and the national average of 65 per cent. Consequently, tribals and lower castes, amongst India's poorest communities, form the Naxals' cadre base. Ironically, there are Naxalite-affected areas like Abujmarh in Chhattisgarh which remain un-surveyed and lack any civil administration.⁷ This situation seems to have not changed much in 2011.⁸

The Status Paper on the Naxal Problem, tabled in Parliament by former Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil on 13 March 2006, also stated that:

The naxalites operate in vacuum created by absence of administrative and political institutions, espouse the local demands and take advantage of the disenchantment prevalent among the exploited segments of the population and seek to offer an

⁵ Jason Miklian and Scott Carney, "Fire in the Hole", *Foreign Policy*, September-October 2010 at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/16/fire_in_the_hole?page=full (Accessed on May 23, 2012).

⁶ See 2001 Census at <http://www.censusindia.net> (accessed 5 December 2006).

⁷ Ramachandra Guha, "Revolutionaries", *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), 26 June 2006.

⁸ See 2011 Census at <http://censusindia.gov.in/> (Accessed on May 12, 2012).

alternative system of governance which promises emancipation of these segments from the clutches of 'exploiter' classes through the barrel of a gun.⁹

Similar views are expressed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in almost all the meetings of the chief ministers of Naxalite-affected areas.¹⁰ In his April 2006 speech, Manmohan Singh indicated that it was a matter of grave concern that the Naxalites provided a sense of empowerment to the deprived sections of society through violent means because of the absence of civil administration and police in some of the affected areas.¹¹ In subsequent meetings with chief ministers of Naxal affected states, the Prime Minister called for a gentler approach to root out dissident violence by addressing the grievances of tribal populations who support the Naxal movement as an alternative to a better life. In the Chief Minister's Conference on Internal Security held in New Delhi on 7 January 2010, the Prime Minister called for better coordination between the Centre and the states in tackling the Naxal violence. He also argued for setting up of 'Special Intervention Units' in the states in order to respond quickly to violent incidences and restore law and order.

Stated Purpose of the Naxal Movement. The Naxalites state their main political purpose as establishing an alternative state structure in India by creating a "red corridor" in Naxalite-affected states, stretching from the border of Nepal to central India to Karnataka in the south through violent struggle.¹² To achieve this political objective, which

⁹ "Status Paper on the Naxal Problem", March 13, 2006 at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/06Mar13_Naxal%20Problem%20.htm (Accessed on 12 December 2010).

¹⁰ See Prime Minister Inaugurates Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security, February 01, 2011 at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=69478> (Accessed on March 23, 2012).

¹¹ Prime Minister's Speech at the Chief Ministers' Meet on Naxalism, 13 April 2006, at <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content4print.asp?id=311> (accessed on 14 December 2006).

¹² Press Release of the CPI-Maoist on the 9th Congress, January–February 2007, at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/19feb07.htm> (accessed on 23 March 2010). Also "The People's Guerrilla Army", at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/PGA-Constitution.htm> (accessed on 23 March 2011).

requires local support, Naxalite rebel leaders take up causes like protecting people's rights of *Jal, Jangal* and *Jamin* (water, forest, and land) and providing justice through their committees like the *Sangam* and *Jan Adalat* (people's court).¹³ Local support is crucial for the Naxalites for cadre recruitment, intelligence, logistics, and territorial control. This dimension of the Naxalite movement was observed by the author in a field visit to Naxal affected areas in Odissa's Gajapati, Nayagarh and Kandamal districts in November 2008. According to Director General of Police, Odissa, M. Praharaaj, the Naxalites take up "livelihood issues" of the tribal population in these affected districts and the loss of faith in Indian democracy coupled by a weak state presence here further motivates local people to take sides with the Naxalites.¹⁴

Strategy of the Naxal Movement

The Naxalite movement engages in guerrilla warfare against the Indian security forces, as propounded by Mao Tse Tung. In *Yu Chi Chan* ('Guerrilla Warfare', 1937), Mao delineated factors such as terrain, communications, popular support, quality of cadres, base areas, technical aid, surprise attacks, and relative military capability of the opposing side as crucial for victory.¹⁵ The theory and practice of revolutionary warfare has three distinctive phases. These are: first, organization, consolidation, and preservation of regional base areas situated in isolated and difficult terrain; second, progressive expansion, which includes attacks on police stations, sabotage, terror tactics, elimination of persons with alternate viewpoints, and procurement of arms and ammunition from the enemy, and third, destruction of the enemy through conventional battles including mobile warfare, protracted conflicts, negotiations, and unified command and control structures.¹⁶ In practice,

¹³ See Independent Citizens Initiative, *War in the Heart of India: An Enquiry into the Ground Situation in Dantewada District, Chhattisgarh*, 20 July 2006. Rabindra Ray, *The Naxalites and their Ideology* (New Delhi: OxfordUniversity Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Author Interview with M. Praharaaj, Director General of Police, Odissa, Cuttack, November 19, 2008.

¹⁵ Samuel B. Griffith, *On Guerilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1961): 39.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 20–22.

transition between the three phases might take years or decades. The objective of guerrilla strategy is gradual control of territory and increased perceived local legitimacy of rebel ideology. Once that occurs, there is relative loss of legitimacy for state forces.

Maoist Constitution

The political message for mobilizing membership is carved out in the Maoist constitution. It was released in September 2004 after the merger between the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist-People's War—CPI (ML) (PW) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI).¹⁷ It states that the Communist Party of India—CPI (M) is representative of the Indian proletariat and its ideological foundation is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Its political objective is overthrow of what it calls the semi-colonial, semi-feudal system under neo-colonial form of indirect rule, exploitation and control in India of the oppressed masses. This struggle will be carried out through armed agrarian revolutionary war i.e. the Protracted People's War with area wise seizure of power. While it aims to gradually spread to the cities, the countryside will remain the centre of gravity of the party's work.

Identity based narratives are very crucial for the Naxals as they provide the outfit with an emotional and social rallying point. The social network process of the outfit explains background factors like cultural, ethnic, tribal and class based affiliations propelling party relationships. The structure of relationships assumes a patterned mode of mobilization utilized by the Naxals to attract recruits to the cause. Most of the factors dominating a Naxal mobilization strategy pre-dated the formation of the group. Consequently, by understanding the inner workings of the relationship on which the rebel group mobilizes is an important starting point. The resources that Naxals tap into are not only dictated by their own organizational goals but also represent the contextual characteristics of a situation. Revolutionary jargon is then enmeshed with pre-existing social and economic conditions which are

¹⁷ See "Party Constitution CPI (M)", <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/partyconstitution.htm> (Accessed on March 12, 2011).

institutionalized through the mechanism of the party. Most Naxal cadres are affected by similar antecedent and contextual circumstances binding them closely together.¹⁸ Any resident of India, 16 years and above, and belonging to a worker, peasant, toiling masses and/or any other revolutionaries, and ingrained in Marxist-Leninist philosophy can be mobilized into party membership.¹⁹

What does a close reading of facts on the ground indicate regarding Naxal mobilization strategies? Though the support for Naxals was high in the 1980s, especially in Andhra Pradesh with a strong pledge from landless peasants, women, middle class and students fired up by an ideology that promised emancipation, the gradual change in selective violence and increased emphasis on mobilization of the common people around genuine grievances to more indiscriminate violence in the 1990s led to erosion in the support base.²⁰ In a nutshell, the resilience of the group to consistently manage a hold on the support base without overt dependence on intimidation as a strategy of mobilization suffered. Similar to the *Shining Path* of Peru, the Naxal ideology degenerated from people based to dogmatic leader based ideology. The loss of support base affecting its mobilization strategy was admitted by none other than Ganapathy, General Secretary, CPI (M).²¹

One must however understand that despite the movement's loss of support in the Telangana area in Andhra Pradesh, it has gradually spread to the *Nallamala* forest in the same state. Also, given the Maoist goal of regime change and destruction of the oppressed structure of society in India, their mobilization strategy include amongst others, a wide ranging network of "Janathana Sarkar" (people's government), to replace the feudal nature of society. Mobilization is based on issues of local grievances, and protests by front organizations, social and

¹⁸ Observations, Field Trip, Odissa, November 2008.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Naxals Government Rethinking Strategy", *The Hindu*, September 9, 2006 at <http://www.hindu.com/2006/09/04/stories/2006090405501100.htm> (Accessed on February 8, 2008).

²¹ "Interview with Ganapathy, General Secretary", CPI (Maoist) at http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/interview_ganapathy.htm (Accessed on March 4, 2008).

economic cooperatives, cultural activities like street plays and *Jan Adalats* (People's courts) for dispensing justice. Also, the revolutionary doctrines are emphasized in meetings through *gram sabhas* and consultations with the common people. The CPI (M) has also established regional bureaus further sub-divided into state, special zonal and special area committee jurisdictions, where the processes of mobilisation have been defined and allocated to local leaders.²² In its 2004 "Urban Perspective" document, the Maoists targeted urban centres also. Two principal 'industrial belts' were also identified as targets for urban mobilisation: Bhilai-Ranchi-Dhanbad-Kolkata; and Mumbai-Pune-Surat-Ahmedabad.²³ Cross-border mobilization is also becoming a real problem. Each Maoist guerrilla zone has its own independent military, political and administrative structures for activating a mobilization strategy. Local Naxal bodies take up issues of livelihood in the tribal and other rural areas. For example, in Chhattisgarh, after the Naxal groups took up the issue of picking of tendu leaves in Chhattisgarh, the tribals employed for the job are now better paid. It is also true that the contractors' exploitation of tribal labour in forest operations has reduced considerably in these areas. Tribal control of land and mineral resources is a priority Naxal agenda, thereby forswearing mobilization around its ideology. They also take up irrigation in dry land farming, primary education and health programmes in remote areas.²⁴ Take for example, the CPI (ML)-Liberation strategy in central Bihar. This group followed Charu Mazumdar's strategy of mass organization and built up on its mass base under the leadership of Vinod Misra in the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, the People's War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh followed a similar strategy and gradually spread from Telangana to Bihar and beyond through networked mobilization throughout the 1990s.²⁵

²² Ajai Sahni, "Left Wing Extremism in India Evolving Strategies for Containment" at www.satp.org/ajaisahni.htm (accessed on May 06, 2012)

²³ "Urban Perspective: Our Work in Urban Areas" at <http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/PGA-Constitution.htm> (Accessed on March 3, 2008).

²⁴ Manoranjan Mohanty, "Challenges of Revolutionary Violence" at <http://naxalrevolution.blogspot.com/2006/08/challenges-of-revolutionary-violence.html> (Accessed on February 5, 2008).

²⁵ Ibid.

The merger of the CPI (M) in 2004 further enabled increased mobilization. Other splinter groups like the CPI (ML) under Kanu Sanyal with organizations like the CPI (ML) Unity Centre work as front organizations for mobilizing support. There are numerous other front organizations like Janashakti led by Nagi Reddy and Chandra Pulla Reddy who work as front organizations primarily in Andhra Pradesh. One can also witness the workings of organizations like People's Democratic Students' Union (PDSU), Sthree Vimukti Sanghatana (Women's Liberation Organization), Indian Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (AIKMS), local squads (dalams) who take active part in mobilizing the support base. Across Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odissa, etc, the Naxalites utilized issues of land rights, women's rights, payment of minimum wages, dignity and self respect.²⁶ In Bihar, organizations like All India Students' Association (AISA), Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha, All India Coordination Committee of Trade Unions, All India Progressive Women's Association and Jan Sanskritik Manch took part in the mobilization phase. This pattern of Naxalite mobilization and counter mobilization on the basis of caste resulted in a counter-force movement called the Sena (private army of landowners) phenomenon in Bihar.²⁷ These include the Ranvir Sena, the Kuer Sena, the Bhumi Sena, Lorik Sena, Sunlight Sena, Bramharshi Sena, Kisan Sangh, and the Gram Suraksha Parishad. However, despite such a concentrated effort at mobilization, Naxalites do not reflect a Che Guevara romance with revolutionary struggle. The Naxals often utilize harsh methods of intimidation, especially in rural areas, to solicit support.²⁸

The Naxalites have also vowed to oppose and resist the formation of the 300 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) terming those efforts to form "de facto foreign enclaves" thereby enabling foreign and local

²⁶ Sanjay Kumar Jha, "Naxalite Movement in Bihar and Jharkhand", http://www.asthabharati.org/Dia_Apr05/Sanjay.htm (Accessed on March 1, 2008).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Namrata Goswami, n. 2 Also "The Adivasis of Chhattisgarh" at <http://www.achrweb.org/Review/2006/117-06.htm> (Accessed on February 4, 2008).

multinational companies to grab prime agricultural lands.²⁹ This was one of the key decisions taken by the 9th Unity Congress of the Maoist party held in 2007. The Unity Congress also asserted that “We should support ‘just struggles’ of nationalities and sub-nationalities that demand a separate state for their development. Kashmiris and various nationalities of the North-East, such as the Assamese, Nagas, Manipuris and Tripuris, have been long waging an armed struggle against the Indian Government for their right to self-determination, including the right to secede from the so-called Union of India.”³⁰ Linkages between the Naxalites and the People’s Liberation Army in Manipur (PLA) came to light when PLA cadres, N. Dilip Singh, head of PLA’s external division and Arun Kumar Singh Salam, a lieutenant were arrested in Delhi in 2011 while making elaborate plans to form a “strategic united front” with the Naxalites in India. Following their arrest, it was also revealed that the PLA had trained and armed the Naxalites in Jharkhand and Odissa in 2009 and 2010 respectively. There were plans to train Naxalite cadres in the PLA camps in Myanmar in 2012.³¹

The Naxal plans to spread their movement to Assam was revealed by Assam police officers and intelligence sources especially to upper Assam districts like Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Golaghat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, etc.³² Three guerilla zones have been identified by the Naxals in Northeast, mainly Assam-Arunachal Pradesh, Assam-Nagaland, and Assam-West Bengal mainly for the procurement of arms and training from Northeast insurgent groups.³³ The Naxals are believed to have

²⁹ “Maoist to Resist Formation of SEZs”, http://www.thesouthasian.org/archives/2007/the_news_about_naxals.html (Accessed on February 24, 2008).

³⁰ See “Unity Congress: 9th Congress of CPI (Maoist)”, *Peoples March*, February 15, 2008 at <http://ajadbind.blogspot.in/2008/02/unity-congress-9th-congress-of.html> (Accessed on May 28, 2012).

³¹ See National Investigation Agency Press Release of May 21, 2012.

³² Field interview with security personnel by the author, April 09-10, 2012. Names withheld on request by interviewees.

³³ Nihar Nayak, “Growing Maoist Activism in Assam: Sinister and Calculated Moves”, IDSA Strategic Comment, February 24, 2012 at http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/GrowingMaoistActivismInAssam_nnayak_240212 (Accessed on March 21, 2012).

supported the anti-dam protests in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.³⁴ Nearly 78 persons in Assam have been identified as regular cadres of the Naxals especially in Dhemaji and Tinsukia districts.³⁵ The general concern of police sources is that the anti-talk faction of the ULFA led by Paresh Barua may try to establish strong linkages with the Naxals and provide them with arms from its base in Myanmar and China.³⁶ The small arms network is one of the strongest in the Northeast running all the way from Thailand, China, and Cambodia via Myanmar to Manipur and Nagaland.

It is important to note that a critical analogy, which Mao makes to the guerilla movement, is by comparing guerilla to fish and the people to the water in which they swim. He writes that if the political temperature is right, the fish however few in number will thrive and proliferate. He thereby reiterates that the principal concern of all guerilla leaders is to get the water to the right temperature and keep it there. In Mao's own words:

Without a political goal, guerilla warfare must fail, as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with aspirations of the people and their sympathy, cooperation and assistance cannot be gained.³⁷

Important in the Indian context, however is to find answers to the above arguments posed by revolutionary protagonists. Motivations often captured in development goals as articulated by Maoists are pointers in order to understand how issues and needs are articulated to mobilize people.

It is important to note that most of the Naxal affected states are tribal dominated and the districts are the interior regions, where administrative

³⁴ Field visit by author to dam site, East Siang district, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, March 2011.

³⁵ See talk by Jishnu Barua, Former Home Commissioner of Assam on "Security and Development Challenges in Assam", February 17, 2012 at <http://www.idsa.in/event/SecurityandDevelopmentChallengesinAssam> (Accessed on March 21, 2012).

³⁶ Field Interviews, n.32.

³⁷ Griffith, n.15, p. 43.

architecture and development schemes have not reached. Issues of discontent in most of the states are connected to the rights to land, forests, mining, development and caste based discrimination. As a development strategy the government has stressed on the urgent implementation of development projects/policies of the government including Backward Regions Grants Fund, Panchayat (Extension to Schedule Areas) Act of 1996, National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and the Schedule Tribes and other traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and Bill on National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007. With all these efforts in place, reports have indicated towards poor implementation and translation of these schemes to the grassroots, primarily due to conflict prone environment.

Motivation has also been defined by the Maoist constitution as the willingness to exert high levels of effort towards organizational goals, conditioned by the ability to satisfy some individual needs. This definition is important because it points towards two essential elements to understand motivation. These are: interests and the objectives of the concerned actors. Where interests broadly define the willingness to exert high levels of effort, objectives denote the promising ability to satisfy those interests. This causal relationship between interests and objectives can be found in locating answers by identifying the felt needs and grievances of the people in the affected states and the world view of CPI (Maoists).³⁸

As mentioned before, the answers to some of the issues raised above are found in issues relating to forest rights, land reforms, caste based

³⁸ According to the party constitution, the party would advance socialism and henceforth continue to advance communism by continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of proletariat. The ultimate aim is to establish communist society. The rights and duties enlisted under the Article-21 of the party's constitution states that the members of CPI (M) should subordinate their personal interests to the interests of the party and the people and should fight for the interests of the great masses. They should be concerned about the problems of the people, try for their solutions. They must not only practice for themselves but should relentlessly fight with a proletarian class outlook against discrimination based on gender, caste, nationality, religion, region and tribes and ruling class policies of divide and rule. Article -22 further states that with the aim of helping each other, he/she must develop the method of collective functioning by comradely criticism and self-criticism. See Party Constitution, CPI (M), n. 17.

discrimination and gender inequalities, development induced displacement etc. In fact the resolution passed at the Ninth Party Conference in 2007 throws some light on the issues, which are the priority agenda of the Maoists.³⁹ These are:

Caste Based Discrimination and Gender Inequalities: The Ninth Party Congress highlighted the victimization of Adivasi women, highlighting sexual exploitation of the women living in the *Sabwa Judum* camps in Chhattisgarh and forced recruitment of teenage girls as special police officers. Pointers have also been made to the suppression of peasant movements against land acquisition in Singur, West Bengal, etc. The resolution also speaks about brahmanical violence, where low caste women are often the victims of physical and psychological violence by the upper-castes.⁴⁰ Whether these assertions are true is debatable. But the CPI (M) by raising these issues rally people around their cause by shaping perceptions based on ideology.

Religious Minorities and Nationality Struggles: Some states where Naxalism has spread its tentacles have witnessed communal conflicts. Referring to the Babri-Masjid demolition in 1992 and the Gujarat episode when Muslims lost their lives in 2002 and other “hate campaigns”, the CPI (M) has called upon minorities to unite against Hindu fascists.⁴¹ An unequivocal support is also given to the struggles of Kashmiris, Nagas and Meiteis and right to self-determination of all the oppressed communities have been demanded.⁴²

Agrarian situation in country: As per the 9th Party Congress of the CPI (M),

The Congress reaffirmed the general line of the new democratic revolution with agrarian revolution as its axis and protracted

³⁹ The agenda points have been drawn from the Press Briefing issued by the Maoists in February 2007 and the consequent resolution passed by the Maoists in 2007.

⁴⁰ Resolution on State of Violence Against Women, 9th Congress, CPI (M), March 19, 2007, n. 30.

⁴¹ Resolution against Hindu fascism, 9th Congress, CPI(M), March 19, 2007, n. 30.

⁴² Resolution against Nationality Struggles, 9th Congress, CPI (M), March 19, 2007.

people's war as the path of the Indian revolution that had first come into the agenda with the Naxalbari upsurge.⁴³

This line of argument can also be found in the resolution passed by the Naxalites on farmer suicides. The document draws attention to suicides in Vidarbha, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. In fact, the press release issued by the CPI (M) mentions “an assessment of the changes taking place in the agrarian situation especially in Punjab within the semi-feudal framework and its impact on our tactics” as an important pointer for their tactics to be employed in their overall movement.⁴⁴ Waiving of debts of peasantry, restoration of agricultural subsidies, and investment in irrigation, proper prices of agricultural products and ban on MNCs have been forwarded as the main tasks which the New Democratic Revolution can undertake.

SEZs and Development induced displacement: Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are on the top of Maoist agenda. Issues of SEZs have been defined as life and death issues of the masses. In an interview, Ganapathy, General Secretary, CPI (Maoist) stated the “we intend to mobilize masses against the conspiracies and treacherous policies of the rulers to snatch the land of the people and hand over the same to the MNC in the name of development through the creation of 100s of SEZs.⁴⁵

Reflecting the contradictions of the Indian society, these resolutions somewhere tap the ideal society which the Maoists aim for. As already reflected by some examples cited above, the culture of fear and development policies seem to be the dominant elements in defining “motivations”. It is rather easy for the Maoists to carry out this kind of propaganda as they are not responsible to deliver the promised ideals any time soon. Hence, to exaggerate state atrocities, lie about

⁴³ CPI (Maoist) completes its much-awaited historic Unity Congress—9th Congress—A Turning-Point in Indian Revolution, Press release, CPI (Maoist), February 19, 2007.

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Interview with Ganapathy, General Secretary, CPI (Maoist), May 13, 2007 at <http://naxalresistance.wordpress.com/2007/05/13/interview-with-ganapathy-general-secretary-cpimaoist/> (Accessed on February 03, 2012).

state violence, and showcase their own ability to deliver basic needs to the common people is based on tall promises, opinions and ideology with an aim to promote disorder.

Recruitment

It is important to note the use of coercion in Naxal recruitment. The policy of the Naxalites of forcibly recruiting one cadre from each Adivasi family, compelled many families to give the female members to the Naxals. Hence, traditional Adivasi social taboos were challenged and destroyed by the Naxalites and resentment against the Naxalites grew. In 1992-93, a rebellion against the Naxalites was silenced after the Naxals killed 70 Adivasis in Chhattisgarh.⁴⁶ Naxalites have been responsible for the recruitment and use of children in hostilities. The Asian Centre for Human Rights interviewed nine Naxal cadres at Bangapal Relief Camp within the Bangapal Police Station who claimed that they were below 16 years.⁴⁷

Besides forced recruitment for part time cadres, recruitment is also targetted at educated university students affiliated to revolutionary student movements, clandestine urban networks, ethnic and tribal appeals and rural bases. Political indoctrination is a part of the recruitment strategy. Forging alliances with local populations like farmers, peasants, and tribal leaders is a well-honed option. Naxals, originally, as a resource scarce group, appealed to social issues and ideology and caste/class basis for recruitment. Gradually, the group even utilized short term financial endowments as a basis for recruitment resulting in low quality/uncommitted cadres. Recruitment strategies include the following:-

- i) Ideological indoctrination.
- ii) Economic and social Issues.

⁴⁶ See “The Adivasis of Chhattisgarh Victims of Naxalite Movement and Salva Judum Campaign” Asian Centre for Human Rights, March 22, 2006 at <http://www.achrweb.org/Review/2006/117-06.htm>(Accessed on July 16, 2012).

⁴⁷ For more on child recruitment by the Naxals, see “Naxals increasingly using child soldiers to swell its ranks”, *India Today*, May 29, 2012 at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/child-soldiers-now-swell-naxal-ranks/1/137474.html> (Accessed on May 29, 2012).

- iii) Coercion.
- iv) Promised future benefits from recruitment.
- v) Participatory political organizations.
- vi) Better education and health care.
- vii) Recognition and redistribution of land.

One thing which is never clear is how collective benefits motivate individual recruitment tendencies and participation. In order to understand this, individual incentives, prestige, and micro-benefits and their impact need to be analyzed.⁴⁸ Incentives need not necessarily be of a monetary nature, but food ration to the family, land issues, private goods, positions of authority, and security in unstable environment help recruitments. Ethnical, tribal and religious identities also propel recruitment. Shared identities and social networks work to a great extent in collaborative efforts. Similar existing structural conditions also motivate people to join the Naxal movement. Similarity of outlook and preferences is a crucial antecedent condition. Community's sharing of norms and preferences with a rebel groups matter also. Highly committed cadres have been recognized as investors in an organization by Weinstein.⁴⁹ Highly committed recruits signal their commitment by show-casing their adherence to long term objectives; with low committed recruits, it's vice versa. There is also a tremendous willingness to absorb costs. A group will have both high committed and low committed cadres. Resource rich Naxal groups will attract opportunistic recruits; low resources will only attract highly committed individuals. What helps recruitment the most is the fact that the rebel leaders are embedded in pre-existing social networks formed around sub-ideological factors like religion, caste, class, ethnicity, and culture. The necessity of checking background, costly screening and reputation only matters when a group is careful of the kind of people it has.

⁴⁸ See Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, pp. 96-126.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

It is rather interesting to note the similarity in recruitment practices all over the world with regard to rebel recruitment. With regard to Naxal recruitment policies, the concerned primary unit, responsible for induction of new members, activates an information procedure to investigate the background of a potential new recruit. Mostly, new potential recruits are streamlined through recommendations by concerned party cell/unit which has to be later on approved by next higher party committee. The potential new recruit is admitted into the party as a candidate member after which he/she should be observed for a minimum period of time which varies according to the social base of the participant. New recruits from working class, landless-poor peasants and agricultural laborers are observed for six months whereas a one year observation period is set aside for recruits from middle class peasants, petty bourgeoisie and urban middle class; and two years for those coming from other classes and other parties. By the end of the candidature period, the concerned party unit reviews the recruit's work and either gives full membership or extends his/her candidature by another six months, by explaining the reasons. This decision is reported to the next higher committee. Higher committees may change or modify the decision taken by the lower committee. SAC/State Area Committee will finally approve. Membership fees are Rs.10 per annum,⁵⁰ an amount that could change depending on the economic situation of the party member. Promotions are based on the micro dynamics of an organizational set up. Community leaders are a crucial information source in these cases for the cadres' overall performance. Naxals possess both professional cadres and part-timers. Professional cadres are the mostly highly committed, based on a long term participation in the revolutionary movement and are not looking for quick monetary incentives. Whereas part timers are not counted for passionate adherence to the cause, they come nonetheless handy for extortion raids and attacks on police stations. They are also utilized for low end jobs and are not given full information of the outfit's activities especially at the higher level.

⁵⁰ Party Constitution, n. 17.

⁵¹ Bhavna Vij-Aurora, "Blazing Saddles", *Outlook*, April 03, 2006 at <http://m.outlookindia.com/story.aspx?sid=4&aid=230770> (Accessed on July 16, 2012).

Training

As revealed in Naxal literature and data available in the public domain, the CPI (Maoist) now has around 10,000 to 15,000 cadres who are adept in guerilla warfare, with another 45,000 over ground cadres. It is also indicated that they possess an arsenal of 20,000 modern weapons, which includes mostly SLRs, the AK Series of rifles, gelatin sticks and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). According to a joint Oxfam International, Amnesty International and International Network on Small Arms, there are 40 million illegal weapons available in India out of 75 million illegal small arms available world-wide.⁵¹ Most of these arms include Kalashnikovs and M-16s.⁵² Worse still, over 1,500 illegal arm manufacturing units exist across Nalanda, Nawada, Gaya and Munger districts in Bihar as well as Gorakhpur and Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh.⁵³

In this context, the Peoples' Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) of the CPI (M) has developed into an efficient guerrilla force trained on the lines of a professional armed force. The training pattern of the Naxalites has become clear after one of their top leaders, Misir Besra was arrested by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) from the jungles of Jharkhand in September 2007. According to Besra, the Naxal training stretches from three to six years depending on the task ahead, based on their goal objectives as well as intelligence on the Indian security forces' training in counter-guerilla operations. Mostly local youths are preferred for military operations in an area; locals always have an edge over outsiders with regard to local terrain and cultural knowledge. Besra informed his interrogators that Naxals will upgrade their training to cross border coordination between regional bureaus since they are trying to establish bases in the Andhra-Chhattisgarh-Odisha border areas. This is part of the now oft-quoted Dandakaranya region. As a result, to achieve the task, new platoons and companies are planned.⁵⁴

⁵² Gobind Thakur, "The Siege Within", *South Asia Post*, 13/1, April 15, 2006 at <http://www.southasiapost.org/2006/20060415/features.htm> (Accessed on March 12, 2008)

⁵³ Rajat Kumar Kujur, "The Naxal Quest for Fire Power", at http://www.ipcs.org/Terrorism_militaryIndex2.jsp?action=showView&kValue=2130&military=1015&cmd=b&status=article (Accessed on February 5, 2008)

⁵⁴ See Vinod Jha, "Strike Force", February 24, 2008, at http://www.indianexpress.com/sunday/story/276327._.html (Accessed on March 23, 2012).

The 9th Congress of the Naxalites supposedly held at Bheemband forest on the Bihar-Jharkhand border also argued for sophisticated training in guerrilla tactics as the political objective of the Naxalites is to spread to newer areas like Assam, Nagaland and to further increase their hold on West Bengal. Consequently, they have formed the Eastern Regional Command.⁵⁵ Incidentally, the 9th Congress was held after a span of 37 years, the 8th being held way back in 1970.⁵⁶

For purposes of training and operations, the PLGA is divided into squads comprising nine to ten men, including the leader and his assistant. Two to four such squads form a platoon which has a leader and his assistant. Platoons are also assigned a political officer, who carries out the propaganda. Two to four platoons form a company, with its own leader and assistant. These units are under the command of the area commander. Battalions are formed from the companies. Battalion units are better equipped and organized thoroughly. Discipline is strict and personnel highly superior than the others. The recruitment age is from 16 to 45. Two types of forces operate—offensive and defensive. There are different levels of training for offensive, defensive, ambushes, police station attacks, land mine blasts, and propaganda activities. The enemy is the source of supply of military hardware.⁵⁷

Training is a carefully crafted affair, says a police officer who has been tracking their growth over the years. “A recruit from Bihar or Jharkhand could be sent as far away as Kerala for training,” he points out.⁵⁸ For attacks on police stations, a core group of armed personnel will be selected from the regional bureau cadre. This core group is supported by the armed militia. The militias are the part-timers who re-mingle with the villagers once an operation is successfully completed, but the core-armed personnel are full time professionals. As a result, there is no default learning of training techniques. Rather, the PLGA has

⁵⁵ “CPI-Maoist on the 9th Congress, January-February 2007” at <http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/19feb07.htm> (February 16, 2008).

⁵⁶ See Interview with Ganapathy, n. 45.

⁵⁷ See “The People’s Guerrilla Army”, at <http://satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/PGA-Constitution.htm> (Accessed on March 3, 2008).

⁵⁸ See Kujur, n. 53.

developed a clear doctrine for operations and training as well as an “institutional memory of successes and losses”. This memory helps them during the conduct of ambushes and operations as well as provides guidance to younger recruits. A young recruit goes through a process of observation and is not given weapons immediately. He/she has to prove during operations that they are capable and controlled as support back up to more seasoned armed personnel.⁵⁹

Other important factors of organizational sustainability and effectiveness depend to a large extent on task allocation, role performance, and level of allegiance. In other words, what are (a) the tasks allocated to the members to facilitate the strategic vision and aim of the party, (b) what roles are the party members expected to play at large to achieve the goals of the revolution and (d) to what extent a person can go to prove his or her authenticity to the cause of the Maoists.

Task allocation and Role Performance

While the organizational framework and the ideology of the CPI (Maoists) shapes the tasks to be allocated to members, the roles are deeply conditioned by the essential tiers through which the tasks are allocated.

The Maoist documents clearly state the tasks for the Naxal cadres and leadership. The primary units which look at the policy and military decisions are the Central Committee and the Politburo. The politburo deals with political issues along with the Central Committee at the top and consists of thirteen members primarily responsible for making policy decisions for the party. The Central Committee is further divided into two units: Central Military Commission, which looks at the procurement of arms through seizures and the Central Technical Unit, which looks at the production of arms.

The Central Military Commission is followed by five regional bureaux⁶⁰. Under each regional bureau there is a Zonal Military Commission,

⁵⁹ See “The People’s Guerilla Army”, n. 57

⁶⁰ Regional Bureaus are established in all southern states as well as U.P, Delhi and Haryana.

which is responsible for executing armed operations. A Regional Military Commission supervises a group of State Military Commissions or Zonal Military commissions. People's militia is at the bottom of this structure. However, the people's militia, often called dalams, work in close coordination and command with the Zonal Committee members in launching attacks.

At present there are four special zonal committees, Andhra-Odissa Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC), Chhattisgarh Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) Jharkhand-Bihar-Odissa Special Zonal Committee (JBOSZC), North Telengana Special Zonal Committee (NTSZC).

The AOBSZC and the JBOSZC function in close coordination with the CPI-Maoist Central Committee and the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee.⁶¹ The AOBSZC covers the Maoist affected districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Gajapati, Nayagarh, Rayagada and Ganjam and has a bureaucratic organizational structure with two main bureaus: the South Bureau includes the Malkangiri Division and the North Bureau includes the Basdhara Division.⁶² According to Satish Gojibhie, District Superintendent of Police, Odissa "The Maoists in Malkangiri District use extortion money – collected from traders and village level politicians – to buy latest equipment, including satellite phones and modern weaponry".⁶³ He adds further that the insurgents in the district are 'financially sound'. In fact, according to a CPI-Maoist AOBSZC leader, Sriramulu Srinivasa Rao, a surrendered member of the special zonal committee, collection amounts to Rs two crores every month." The DSP adds, "It is evident that village level politicians such as ward members, Sarpanch and some non-government organizations are providing them with regular cash".⁶⁴ Another report states that Naxals

⁶¹ *Orissa Assessment 2008*, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/Assessment/2008/Orissa.html> (Accessed on May 12, 2012).

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ "Maoists in Orissa go hi tech: Police", *Daily News & Analyses*, November 03, 2007 at http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_maoists-in-orissa-go-hi-tech-police_1131479 (Accessed on May 21, 2012).

⁶⁴ *Orissa Assessment 2008*, n. 61.

in Chhattisgarh finance their operations by levying “taxes” of around 12 per cent on contractors and traders.⁶⁵ According to a report in March 2008, the Rajya Sabha was informed that Naxalites had a budget of Rs 60 crore for procurement of weapons and explosives during 2007-09.⁶⁶

The North Telangana Special Zonal Committee (NTSZC) functions as a State committee within Andhra Pradesh and, according to the sources, regional bureaus function as a link between the Central Committee and the state committees.⁶⁷ The NTSZC is the most powerful body in the Maoist hierarchy after the Central Committee, given that six members of the Central Committee belong to it⁶⁸.

Thus as is gathered from the above analysis, Zonal Committees constitute important economic and military bases.

The militias or the local squads constitute the lowest rung of the structure. Primary units are divided into two main units: the dalams and the sanghams; dalams (squads) are responsible for armed operations, and as mentioned above work in close coordination under the leadership of Zonal Committees and the state committees. The sanghams take responsibility of propagating the Maoist agenda and holding *Jan Adalats*.⁶⁹ The leaders of the dalams are rotated or transferred cyclically to other dalams and have five to eight members.⁷⁰ These

⁶⁵ “Inside India’s hidden war”, *The Guardian*, 9 May 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/may/09/india.randeepamesh> (Accessed on May 12, 2012).

⁶⁶ “Naxals have Rs 60 cr budget for weapon procurement”, *Times of India*, 12 March 2008, at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Naxals_have_Rs_60_cr_budget_for_weapon_procurement/articleshow/2858231.cms (Accessed on March 03, 2012).

⁶⁷ “State police gather key details on Maoist strategy”, *The Hindu*, June 10, 2005 at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2005/06/10/stories/2005061015890400.htm> (Accessed on June 03, 2011).

⁶⁸ “Joint operation hits Maoists hard”, *Times of India*, 19 March 2008 at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Joint_operation_hits_Maoists_hard/articleshow/2879595.cs (Accessed on January 06, 2012).

⁶⁹ Rajat Kumar Kujur, “Left Wing Extremism in India: Naxal Movement in Chhattisgarh and Orissa”, IPCS Special Report, June 2006, at <http://www.ipcs.org/IPCS-Special-Report-25.pdf> (Accessed on June 01, 2011).

⁷⁰ “Maoists form crack teams to counter manpower shortage”, *The Times of India*, 25 December 2006 at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/916151.cms> (Accessed on March 03, 2012).

dalams recruit locals and send them to the various Maoist training centres in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh from Odissa.⁷¹ In Chhattisgarh, it is estimated that there were 70 local guerrilla squads (LGSs) and 30 military dalams functioning under the Dandakaranya Zonal Committee in 2006. Fifteen Maoist dalams reportedly operate in Maharashtra. The sanghams usually appeal to the people through informal song and dance groups. In a reported incident in Maharashtra, *Jan Natya Mandals* along with the presence of dalams in olive green uniform tried to motivate certain locals. Confronting protests, the dalam chopped off the arm of a local school teacher. Though not killed, the teacher serves as a living reminder of naxal brutality and terror. This culture of fear has helped getting potential recruits from the local populace.⁷²

In another reported incident, as part of a major redeployment exercise in January 2008, Naxals conscripted cadres from the neighbouring Chhattisgarh for stepping up their presence in strategically important strongholds in Khamman, Andhra Pradesh. Sometimes, local tribes are used as support groups and act as human shield.⁷³

Research also suggests that around 25 per cent of Naxal cadres comprise of women. Though women are not reported to be in the top decision-making rungs, stray incidents of arrests of leaders have been reported. Upper caste violence against women, rape, and sexual exploitation are the main issues around which women are being mobilized and recruited.⁷⁴ The CPI (Maoist) also raised an all women

⁷¹ Dalams operating in Malkangiri currently include the Kalimela dalam, the Poplur dalam, the Motu dalam, the Jhanjavati dalam, and the Korkonda dalam, among others. Orissa Assessment 2008 at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/Assessment/2008/Orissa.html> (Accessed on May 06, 2012).

⁷² According to an estimate in Maharashtra, seventeen *Dalams* are active in Gadchiroli, three in Gondia and three in Chandrapur, see Charul Shah, "Who are the Naxalites", September 06, 2007, at http://www.cybernoon.com/DisplayArticle.asp?section=fromthepress&subsection=specialreport&file=September2007_specialreport_standard220 (Accessed on February 02, 2012).

⁷³ "Central Military Commission planned in Orissa Attack" at <http://paulsoren.wordpress.com/2008/02/02/cpi-maoist-declares-its-presence-in-state/> (Accessed on January 03, 2012).

⁷⁴ See CPI (Maoist) Press Release, 2007.

battalion in the Dandakaranya region, named the 'National Park Dalam', headed by Nirmal Ekka, a medical graduate.⁷⁵ A study argues that most women combatants in armed conflicts were victims of detention, sexual assault, torture by government police, military and militia forces. Some of the women were rejected and divorced by their husbands. Some others had witnessed the execution of their brothers and sisters or parents by government forces and had been threatened with execution.⁷⁶ A context based study in India is needed specifically to locate the motivations of women joining Naxal cadres.

The Central Technical Units (CTUs) of the CPI (M) have developed expertise in making landmines, grenades and other explosive materials used in detonating landmines. According to a classified report by the Intelligence Bureau, "The Central Technical Committee of the outfit has undertaken technological up-gradation including R&D and manufacturing capability".⁷⁷ Maoist rebels have set up CTUs in Jharkhand to repair weapons and manufacture landmines and grenades. The four districts where CTUs have been set up are Ranchi, Lohadagga, Gumla and Latehar.⁷⁸ This tight-knit structure can be explored further by drawing insights from the driving forces which sustain this structure. One of the critical issues therefore is to locate the dynamics of allegiance found within the CPI (Maoist).

Dynamics of Allegiance

Allegiance factors are closely related to choices, which the recruits have in front of them and can also be drawn from the control mechanisms⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Kujur, n.69. ⁶ Dyan Mazurana, "Women in Armed Opposition Groups Speak on War, Protection and Obligations under International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law", Geneva Call, August 26-29, 2004, p.27.

⁷⁷ "Maoists may now target urban areas: IB, 31", October, 2007, at <http://paulsoren.wordpress.com/2007/10/31/maoists-may-now-target-urban-areas-ib/> (Accessed on March 12, 2012).

⁷⁸ "Maoists set up technical unit in Jharkhand", *The Times of India*, September 05, 2007, at http://news.webindia123.com/news/ar_showdetails.asp?id=709050616&cat=&n_date=20070905 (Accessed on May 01, 2012).

⁷⁹ Weinstein refers to investment in defection, organizational culture and structures of hierarchy and delegation as the primary defining elements for controlling defections. See Weinstein, n. 48.

which the Naxalites employ to keep the recruits within the system. The nature of training and the reciprocal security they receive can be considered another factor. The operational aspects of *Jan Adalats* throw some light on how defections can be controlled or how siding with the state can become lethal. From July to September 2007, in a span of just two months, around eight people were killed by the Naxals after trials in kangaroo courts⁸⁰. The most common way of punishing a person is by cutting off the limbs or slitting the throat. All this is done in front of the village people and publicly displayed.⁸¹

Important cues can also be drawn from the incentives the state provides for cadres that have surrendered. According to a report, in 2006, around 1,999 Naxals surrendered in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh. However, many of them have been kept in chains and do not have the right of freedom of movement. In a statement, P. Sashidhar Reddy (Janata Party) pointed out that surrendered Naxalites were forced to make rounds to the government offices seeking the promised reward amount and subsequent rehabilitation package. Many of them were going back to the Naxalite movement out of disgust at the attitude of officials.⁸²

A counter-insurgency operation like the one in Chhattisgarh, *Salwa Judum* is another factor deterring the return of recruits to the mainstream since surrendered cadres are included in this body. Inclusion in another armed body is not what surrendered cadres look for as an alternative. Also, ex-naxal cadres are targeted by the Naxals when they join the *Salwa Judum*. Lack of “development” and ineffective implementation of schemes and imposed development policies need to be revisited in this context as part of bringing back the cadres and stopping people to join the movement.

⁸⁰ *Naxal Conflict Monitor*, June–September, ACHR, 2007.

⁸¹ *Naxal Conflict Monitor*, October, ACHR, 2007. <http://www.achrweb.org/ncm/NCM-VOL-02-03.pdf> <http://www.achrweb.org/ncm/NCM-VOL-02-03.pdf> (Accessed on March 03, 2011).

⁸² “House panel for cell to monitor naxal rehabilitation”, *The Hindu*, Dec 21, 2007, <http://www.thehindu.com/2007/12/21/stories/2007122159880800.htm> (Accessed on April 09, 2012).

The lack of enabling conditions by the state for reintegration and rehabilitation appears to be another factor explaining allegiance. It is difficult for cadres (men and women) who have been indoctrinated to use guns to reintegrate back into the society and lead a normal life.

Ground Realities of the Naxal Conflict

When one analyses the ground situation in the Naxalite affected areas with regard to the tactics and strategy of the outfit, the logic is not very difficult to decipher. The Naxalites usually target the police stations and loot the armouries. According to the Annual Report of the Union Home Ministry for 2005-06, 509 police stations across eleven states reported Naxal violence in 2005. According to the Status Paper on Internal Security, September 1, 2008, the number of incidences went up to 1,565 in 2007 as compared to 1,509 in 2006 with a resultant 236 police personnel and 141 Naxalites killed in 2007 as compared to 157 police personnel and 274 Naxalites killed in 2006.⁸³ In 2008, 175 police personnel lost their lives as compared to 110 Naxalites.⁸⁴ In 2009, the number of Naxal incidences totaled 2,258 resulting in 908 deaths. Jharkhand, with a maximum of 742 incidents was the most affected, followed by Chhattisgarh with 529 incidences, Odissa with 266 incidences, West Bengal with 255 incidences, Bihar with 232 incidences, and Maharashtra with 154 incidences.⁸⁵ Out of the 908 deaths, 290 died in Chhattisgarh followed by Jharkhand with 208 deaths, West Bengal with 158 deaths, Maharashtra with 93 deaths, Bihar with 72 deaths, Odissa with 67 deaths and Andhra Pradesh with 18 deaths. The year 2009 also witnessed a number of arrests of Naxalites totaling 1,981. Out of 1,981, 421 were arrested in Chhattisgarh, 367 in Jharkhand, 358 in Andhra Pradesh, 341 in Bihar, 176 in Odissa, and 143 in West Bengal.⁸⁶ In 2010, the number of incidents from Naxal violence was

⁸³ See "Status Paper on Internal Security" September 1, 2008, n. 4, p. 25.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "2258 Naxal violence incidences, 908 deaths, 1981 arrested in 2009", at http://www.mynews.in/News/2258_naxal_violence_incidents,_908_deaths,_1981_arrested_in_2009_N39743.html (Accessed on March 04, 2010).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

2,212 with a death count of 1,003.⁸⁷ Amongst the states, Chhattisgarh suffered the highest incidents of 625 with 343 dead whereas Bihar and West Bengal witnessed 307 (incidents) with 97 (deaths) and 350 (incidents) with 256 (deaths) respectively.⁸⁸ 2011 witnessed 389 civilian deaths and 124 security personnel deaths with 1,476 incidents.⁸⁹ In 2012 up until April, the violent incidents came down to 461 incidents, with 137 people dead. The maximum deaths from Naxal violence occurred in Jharkhand, totalling 68 followed by Chhattisgarh with 22 deaths, Maharashtra with 20 deaths, Odissa with 16, Bihar with 10 and Andhra Pradesh with just one.⁹⁰

The worst attack on a police station in 2007 occurred on March 15, when around 200 Naxal cadres attacked the Rani Bodli police station in Dantewada district, in which 55 out of 79 police personnel were killed and a large quantity of ammunition was looted. On 15 February 2008, in the most daring attacks on police stations so far, more than 150 Naxal armed cadres attacked the Nayagarh police station, the local armoury, and a police training centre, just 85 km from Bhubaneswar, and killed nearly 15 police men and looted a large amount of arms, especially the self-loading rifles variety. The surprising element in the Nayagarh attacks was the fact that out of the 150 armed Naxal cadres, around 40 were women, who were allegedly very aggressive. The Naxalites stayed at Nayagarh town for more than two hours (2230 hours to 0030hours) that night and also simultaneously attacked the police stations in Daspalla and Nuagaon towns.⁹¹ This is a strategy of simultaneous attacks that the Naxalites usually follow as a diversionary

⁸⁷ See MHA Report 2010 at [http://mba.nic.in/pdfs/AR\(E\)1011.pdf](http://mba.nic.in/pdfs/AR(E)1011.pdf) (Accessed on May 12, 2012).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Naxal Hit Areas” Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Lok Sabha, November 22, 2011 at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/DATA_%20Extent_Naxal_Violence.pdf (Accessed on May 29, 2012).

⁹⁰ “Naxal Violence claimed 137 lives this year: Govt”, NDTV, April 24, 2012 at <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/naxal-violence-claimed-137-lives-this-year-govt-201711> (Accessed on April 25, 2012).

⁹¹ “Nayagarh Attacks” at http://www.thehindian.com/newsportal/world-news/14-policemen-killed-in-daring-maoist-strikes-in-orissa_10018203.html (Accessed on November 12, 2008). Insights gathered during field visit by the author in October 2008 to Nayagarh, Orissa.

tactic to confuse the police as to the exact target area. For instance, on 13 November 2005, 150–200 armed Naxal cadres along with 800 sympathizers attacked Jehanabad jail in Bihar, freeing 341 prisoners and looting a huge quantity of arms and ammunition. Simultaneously, attacks were also launched on the District Court, District Armoury, and a paramilitary camp.⁹² On 24 March 2006, Naxalite cadres simultaneously attacked the local police station, jail, treasury, tehsil office, and State Armed Police camp in Udayagiri town, Gajapati district of Odissa, killing three policemen, freeing 40 prisoners, and looting arms and ammunition.⁹³

The success of these attacks exposed the incompetence of the state intelligence apparatus. During field interviews in Odissa, it was suggested by the police officers stationed at Nayagarh, Gajapati and Kandamal districts that deterring Naxalite attacks can prove difficult as the police intelligence is rather weak and it is difficult to create local intelligence networks which could provide credible information on Naxalite movements in the area.⁹⁴ One potential source could be the support base that gradually decreased due to indiscriminate Naxal violence.⁹⁵

Cross-Border Linkages

The Prime Minister had warned in an Annual Conference of Directors General of Police and heads of Police Organizations in New Delhi on 4 November 2004 that cross-border linkages of the Naxalites constituted “an even greater threat to India than militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East”.⁹⁶ He repeated the warning in the Chief Ministers’ meeting on 16 April 2012. The formation of the Coordination Committee of the Maoist Parties and Organizations in

⁹² K. Balchand, “Naxalites lay siege to Jehanabad, free cadre from jail”, *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 14 November 2005.

⁹³ “Maoists storm jail in Orissa, free 40 prisoners”, *The Hindu*, 25 March 2006.

⁹⁴ Author Interviews with local policemen at *Kandamal* and *Nayagarh* districts, Odissa, November 14–18, 2008.

⁹⁵ “Naxals Government Rethinking Strategy”, *The Hindu*, September 9, 2006 at <http://www.hindu.com/2006/09/04/stories/2006090405501100.htm> (Accessed on February 8, 2008).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

South Asia (CCOMPOSA) in 2001, which includes ten Maoist groups from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, is a matter of concern. In a joint statement issued on 1 July 2001, followed by a subsequent declaration in August 2002, the CCOMPOSA cited its chief aims as resisting not only US imperialism and globalization, but also the “centralized” Indian state and its internal repression of minority people, through the Naxalite People’s War and India’s expansionist designs backed by US imperialism in South Asia.⁹⁷ In August 2006 CCOMPOSA at its Fourth Conference in Nepal reiterated its anti-India stand and reaffirmed its commitment to spread protracted people’s war to capture state power through violent means in South Asia.⁹⁸

State Response to Naxalism

Political Measures

According to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Naxalism is the biggest challenge to India’s internal security.⁹⁹ As a response mechanism, the Prime Minister in his speech at the second meeting of the Standing Committee of Chief Ministers of Naxalite-affected States on 13 April 2006 advocated a coordinated effort under a Unified Command structure to deter Naxalism. He stated that “a lot of responses require coordination among states—in intelligence gathering, in information sharing, in police responses”.¹⁰⁰ Political leaders have also realized that Naxalism is not just a law-and-order problem but is a result of low levels of development in tribal areas.¹⁰¹ Consequently, the central

⁹⁷ See “Declaration of CCOMPOSA”, at http://cpnm.org/new/ccomposa/cco/cco_dclr.htm (accessed on 9 April 2007). For the joint statement see <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/southasia/documents/papers/CCOMPOSA.htm> (accessed on 9 April 2007).

⁹⁸ S. Chandrashekar, “Maoist Fourth Conference of CCOMPOSA continues with anti-India resolutions”, at http://naxalwatch.blogspot.com/2006_09_01_archive.html (accessed on 9 April 2007).

⁹⁹ “Naxal Problem needs a Holistic Approach”, Ministry of Home, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, July 22, 2009 at <http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=50833> (Accessed on May 28, 2012).

¹⁰⁰ “PM’s Speech at the Conference of CMs on Internal Security” April 16, 2012, n. 1.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

government under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the Backward Regions Grant Fund has provided funds to the states to cover all poor families in Naxal-affected areas under the poverty alleviation schemes.¹⁰²

In 2006, a high-level coordination centre was also set up, headed by the Union Home Secretary, with the chief secretaries and directors general of police of Naxalite-affected states as its members. This coordination centre meets regularly to chart a unified politico-military response to deal with Naxalism. Obstacles to such a unified response are, however, many. First, the political context of the affected states differs. States that are ruled by political parties with political ideologies and loyalties different from those of the ruling party at the Centre may impede smooth coordination. This disjuncture strengthens the Naxalites, who are guided by a unified political purpose. In order to address the problem of coordination, the Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security has been held in New Delhi since 2009.

Secondly, turf battles between the local police and paramilitary forces in an affected area hamper an effective military response. A case in point is the ego clash between the Mizo battalion and the police in Chhattisgarh. There was also the problem of command coordination between the Mizo battalion commandant and the Chhattisgarh police officer stationed at Sukma related to issues of seniority between the two forces.¹⁰³ Thirdly, the tribal populations in the affected states constitute a vital political constituency for state politicians. They are wary of endorsing a unified politico-military policy of dealing with Naxalism for fear that it might lead to disproportionate use of force by state authorities in tribal areas, resulting in tribal alienation.

In 2009, Home Minister, P. Chidambaram offered to hold talks with the Naxalites if they were willing to give up violence. This approach continues to inform government policy, though in 2009 during a

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ This issue came to light during an interaction with Mizo battalion commandant based in Sukma with a researcher during his field trip to Chhattisgarh, 2007. Name withheld on request of researcher.

72 days cease-fire the Naxals continued their violent activities, which was termed by the Home Minister as ‘bizarre’. He stated that barely three hours after Naxal leader and chief spokesperson, Koteswar Rao alias Kishenji offered the cease-fire on 22 February 2010, the Naxalites attacked a joint patrol party of the West Bengal police and the CRPF in Lalgarth.¹⁰⁴ Hence, the credibility of the Maoist cease-fire is under question. This discrepancy in behaviour also makes one question the so-called unity of the Naxalite leadership. Despite proclamations of a unified command structure since 2004 under the CPI (Maoist), the limitations of the Naxal leadership and movement must also be well gauged. The case of the expelled Maoist Odissa leader, Sabyasachi Panda in August 2012 is pertinent in this regard.¹⁰⁵ The CPI Central Committee termed him as a renegade. Also, the concept of People’s War depends on “a unified movement and creative leadership, committed and intellectually sophisticated cadres, a supply of arms, ammunition and money and, of course, the growing support of the population”.¹⁰⁶ Besides these, the concept of ‘People’s War’ rests on the ability of the Naxals to dominate huge swathes of territory, infiltrate into cities and create pockets of dissent. In this context, the Naxals are at a disadvantage since India’s urban population is rather large today. In 2009, 100 cities in India had populations over 400,000 people, and 42 cities had more than one million people. Significantly, most Indian cities are outside Naxal influence. Attacking these cities and controlling them will also require massive concentration of Naxals which is virtually impossible given the Indian state’s security architecture. At present, the Naxals are limited to the forested areas of Central India, which results in limited influence beyond the *Adivasi* belt. If they choose to come out of the forested areas and threaten India’s economic upsurge, which is mostly concentrated in the cities, the combined strength of the Indian

¹⁰⁴ “Maoist offer bizarre: Chidambaram”, *The Indian Express*, March 04, 2010 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/maoist-offer-bizarre-chidambaram/586116/> (Accessed on March 04, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ “Sabyasachi Panda expelled from CPI-Maoist”, Rediff News, August 11, 2012 at <http://www.rediff.com/news/report/sabyasachi-panda-expelled-from-cpi-maoist/20120811.htm> (Accessed on August 24, 2012)

¹⁰⁶ Kanti Bajpai, “Limits of People’s War”, *The Telegraph*, January 21, 2010 at http://www.telegraphindia.com/1100121/jsp/opinion/story_11992016.jsp (Accessed on March 4, 2010)

paramilitary forces, the police, and the army will be beyond their capacity to match.¹⁰⁷

Counter-revolutionary Operations

Location, isolation, and eradication form the basis of countering rebel groups militarily.¹⁰⁸ *Location* entails identifying the rebel groups' base areas, which are mostly in thick jungle terrain, through reconnaissance; *isolation* indicates separation of the Naxal cadres from their support base, involving movement and resettlement of local communities; *eradication* is based on sound intelligence and operational flexibility of the counter military operations with high degree of mobility to pre-empt rebel strategy.

Location of Base Areas

The central and state governments have undertaken security measures to locate the base areas. For instance, Dantewada, Kanker, and Bastar districts of Chhattisgarh have been identified as the key base areas. Former Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police, Swaranjit Sen, identified the northern districts of Andhra Pradesh as a Naxal base area; on 20 January 2005 he disclosed that Naxalites had planted 2000 kilograms of gelatine-based mines in this region. In the Dandakaranya region the Naxalites are functioning through 18 dalams divided into four divisional committees.¹⁰⁹

Isolating the Naxalites from the Support Base.

Isolation does not simply mean physically segregating the rebels from the local population. The state must also actively strive to discredit the political message of people's emancipation that the rebels espouse.¹¹⁰ In this direction the Chhattisgarh government launched in June 2005 a

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Griffith, n. 15, pp. 32–33. Also see James D. Kiras, "Terrorism and irregular warfare", in John Baylis et al., *Strategy in the Contemporary World: An Introduction to Strategic Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 208–32.

¹⁰⁹ IDSAs Consultation-Workshop, *Maoist Violence in India: Resolution and Prevention*, 25 August 2006 (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2006).

¹¹⁰ Kiras, n. 108.

so-called people's movement named *Salwa Judum*, meaning "peace hunt" in the local Gondi tribal dialect. The movement was launched by a few villagers in Kutru angered by Naxal interference in the local trade of *tendu* leaves (used for making bidis).¹¹¹ However, later on, it was alleged that maintaining law and order in Dantewada and Bastar was outsourced to the Salwa Judum cadres, some of them as young as 15–16 years in age. Some 5000 such cadres were made Special Police Officers (SPOs), given a rifle each and paid Rs 1500–2000 a month. Poorly trained, ill equipped and immature, some of the *Salwa Judum* cadres themselves looted many tribal villages. The leader of the Opposition in Chhattisgarh, Mahendra Karma of the Congress party, made this movement his political platform. In the process, the leadership of the movement lost its tribal face (all leaders are now non-tribal). According to Dr. K.S. Subramanian, a former Director General of Police, and who has been involved in understanding the Naxal conflict:

While official sources maintain that the campaign, led by a local legislator is spontaneous with tribal people joining in large numbers, local enquiries revealed a different picture... In the name of *Salwa Judum*, the tribal people are forced to join a far from spontaneous mobilization. Hundreds of people are being killed and corruption is high in the rank and file of the movement.¹¹²

At the height of the Salwa Judum activity in 2006, nearly 43,740 tribal villagers were displaced in Bastar and Dantewada and were placed in 17 ramshackle roadside camps.¹¹³

Eradication of Naxalites

Security Measures. In 2006 the central government deployed nearly 37,000 central security forces in Chhattisgarh and 30 companies in Jharkhand.

¹¹¹ See Independent Citizens Initiative, n. 13: 9. Also Ramachandra Guha, "Counter-Revolutionaries", *The Telegraph*, 27 June 2006.

¹¹² See Saji Cherian, "Chhattisgarh populist follies, confounded state", at http://www.satp.org/satporgrp/sair/Archives/4_33.htm (accessed on 21 March 2007).

¹¹³ See *Naxal Conflict in 2006* at <http://www.achrweb.org/reports/india/naxal0107.pdf> (Accessed on July 12, 2012). Also Robert G. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*, Praeger, New York, 1966.

In August 2006 the Centre announced the possible use of air transport in thirteen Naxal-affected districts for transporting security personnel, food and medical supplies if not for hardcore military operations. It also contemplated the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in Chhattisgarh for intelligence gathering.¹¹⁴ Individual states have also raised their special police forces, drawing recruits from Naxal-affected areas.¹¹⁵ Mine-protected vehicles (MPVs) have also been provided to these states under the Police Modernization Scheme. Additional “India Reserve Battalions” with an estimated cost of Rs. 20.75 crore per battalion have been sanctioned for the Naxal-affected states. In order to carry this through, the Central government sanctioned eight India Reserve Battalions for Andhra Pradesh, six for Chhattisgarh, three for Jharkhand, and five for Odissa.¹¹⁶ It has also instituted police reforms through the “Scheme for Modernization of the State Police Forces,” and up-gradation in training of state police forces through the Ministry of Defence, Central Police Organization, and Bureau of Police Research & Development.¹¹⁷ Significantly, sometime in mid-2009, according to media reports, the Government of India launched a coordinated joint operation by the paramilitary and state police forces in the border areas of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. However, there was a lack of clarity on task allocations and coordination. There was confusion on the chain of command in this joint operation, the number of troops deployed, and the composition of the security forces.¹¹⁸ The ground reality in Chhattisgarh today is that 20,000 troops are stationed there, including troops from the CRPF, BSF, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and *Sashastra Seema Bal* (SSB), to fight the Naxals. According to T.J. Longkumer, Inspector General of Police, Bastar, “The first step was to secure the roads. Ninety to

¹¹⁴ See “Naxalite antidote ten troopers for a rebel”, *The Telegraph*, April 24, 2006.

¹¹⁵ See “Special forces for Naxal-hit states mooted”, *Deccan Chronicle* (Hyderabad), 4 September 2006.

¹¹⁶ See *Status Report on Internal Security*, no.4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 36.

¹¹⁸ Aman Sethi, “Green Hunt: the anatomy of an operation”, *The Hindu*, February 06, 2010 at <http://beta.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article101706.ece> (Accessed on March 01, 2010).

ninety five per cent of casualties of security forces occur on the roads.” He stated that “We have started road security operations and identified ambush prone areas.” It is the next step that is proving controversial. “Forces shall actively enter villages and nab Naxal elements,” he added.¹¹⁹ Sangams, which are village level bodies set up by Naxalites, have been targetted in police action in Chhattisgarh resulting in the arrest of 499 Sangham members.¹²⁰

Surrender Policies. Naxal-affected states have also announced surrender policies. The Jharkhand government offered Rs. 50,000 to surrendered Naxalites plus a monthly allowance of Rs. 2000, one acre of agricultural land, and educational and health benefits to their children. The Chhattisgarh government offered up to Rs. 3 lakh for weapon surrender. The Odissa government announced Rs. 10,000 for surrender, Rs. 20,000 for arms surrender, and Rs. 2 lakh of bank loan without interest for two years.¹²¹ But there is no effective intelligence mechanism to identify Naxal cadres. Often, tribal youths surrender as Naxal cadres; many of them even join the Naxal movement to reap these benefits.

Socio-economic Measures. The Planning Commission set up a sixteen-member expert group in July 2006 to study the root causes of Naxalism. The expert group studied the causes of severe displacement, forest-related issues, loss of tribal land, and extreme low levels of human development in Naxal-affected areas.¹²² The Ministry of Tribal Affairs also asserted in its National Tribal Policy draft of 21 July 2006 that scheduled tribes were suffering from a deep sense of deprivation and alienation on account of social, political, and economic factors resulting in acute poverty and lack of adequate opportunities, which

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ “Jharkhand offers sops to Naxals to surrender”, *The Asian Age* (New Delhi), 22 April 2006. Also, “Naxalite can take home rewards on his head: Chhattisgarh’s new plan”, *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 23 September 2006.

¹²² “Govt. sets up expert group to look into menace of Naxalism”, at http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_news.asp?id=390453 (Accessed on 14 April 2007).

manifested in violent resistance.¹²³ As a follow-up, the Ministry of Home Affairs allocated Rs. 23,000 crore in 2006 for Naxal-affected states.

The Planning Commission's evaluation of the Integrated Tribal Development Project identified the lack of institutional mechanisms to oversee implementation and hold persons/institutions accountable for misuse of funds.¹²⁴ Funds allocated for the tribals get diverted elsewhere, bypassing their intended beneficiaries, and thus fuelling the Naxalite cause. To undo this lacuna, under the Backward District Initiative, a component of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojna, in 2007-2008, 147 districts were covered under a non-lapsable amount of Rs.45 crores. The scheme of Backward Regions Grant Fund was also initiated for 250 districts. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) has also been initiated in almost all districts of the country.¹²⁵ The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has also been utilized for rural road connectivity.

Legislative Myopia. On 21 March 2006 the Chhattisgarh government enacted security legislation, formally known as the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act 2005 (CSPSA). The CSPSA's main objective is to deter individuals and organizations from engaging in disruptive activities in Chhattisgarh. It allows persons to be held on mere suspicion and imprisoned for two to three years without any system of appeal. The non-democratic nature of this legislation looks likely to alienate the local population further.

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), recognizes the tribal communities' right of self-rule through local institutions. The tribal areas of the Naxal-affected states come under its ambit. However, PESA has not been implemented in letter and spirit in many of these states. Rather than empowering the tribals, existing

¹²³ See "Draft national tribal policy released", at <http://www.empowerpoor.com/relatednews.asp?report=332> (Accessed on 18 January 2007).

¹²⁴ *Naxal Monitor*, "Naxal Conflict in 2006", January 10, 2007, Asian Centre for Human Rights at <http://www.achrweb.org/reports/india/naxal0107.pdf> (Accessed on June 18, 2007)

¹²⁵ Status Paper on Internal Security, n.4, p. 39.

power structures try to assimilate tribal societies into a so-called mainstream, refusing in the process to recognize their distinct culture and lifestyles.¹²⁶ The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution also protects the tribals' land and natural resources from non-tribals in nine states: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Odissa. However, most of these states have come up with policies that facilitate the use of tribal land for industrial and commercial purposes.¹²⁷

Andhra Experience

The most prominent case of a successful response to Naxalism is Andhra Pradesh's experience. In the late 1990s, the Naxalite movement in the North Telangana (NT) districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam was on the verge of expanding to the classic 'strategic offensive' stage. "The adjacent South Telangana districts were in the 'preparatory' stage of a guerilla zone, while Nallamala forest and the North coastal districts bordering Odissa and Chhattisgarh were also in a similar phase."¹²⁸ Andhra was therefore becoming the symbol of revolutionary warfare in India.

However, a strong state response to the Naxalite movement by way of the Grey Hounds, an elite commando force raised by Andhra Pradesh to exclusively deal with the problem, succeeded in curtailing Naxal activity and its leaders and cadres fled to the neighbouring state of Odissa. Another important facet of the Andhra response besides the use of force was the utilization of the "civil vigilante groups" against the mass mobilization strategy of the Naxalites. The police also utilized the surrendered Naxalites in anti-Naxal operations under names of "Cobra" and "Tigers" to systemically oust leaders of Naxal frontal

¹²⁶ Smriti Kothari, "To be governed or be self governed", at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/jolio/fo0007/00070180.htm> (Accessed on 23 March 2007).

¹²⁷ Also Louise Tillin, "Unity in diversity? asymmetry in Indian federalism", at <http://publius.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/37/1/45> (Accessed on 18 March 2007).

¹²⁸ Srinivas Reddy, "The Maoist Challenge", at http://www.india-seminar.com/2007/569/569_k_srinivas_reddy.htm (Accessed on December 12, 2008).

organization. Interestingly, along with a police response, the counter-revolutionary operations also involved a developmental response including schemes like *Janma Bhoomi*, Joint Forest Management (JFM), which provided people the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the forest. The cornerstone of the Andhra Pradesh response is however an effective surrender and rehabilitation policy coupled with a well-developed intelligence network. These provided the police with the base for launching operations at the village level and assisting the armed reserve forces and Grey Hounds to optimize the benefits of coordinated work. Police stations were fortified and several Naxal attacks averted. The classic military principle of keeping a way out if surrounded on all four flanks was applied in fighting Naxalism, enabling cornered cadres a means of escape so that they do not fight recklessly.¹²⁹ Hence the key elements in the Andhra Pradesh model are:

- Effective surrender and rehabilitation policy.
- Culture of police leadership.
- Infrastructure development.
- Sound knowledge of local terrain.
- Grass roots involvement in anti-Naxal operations.
- Development schemes to back police response.
- Incentives to police for good work.
- Superior intelligence coordination and assessment.
- Operations based on local intelligence.

A word of caution is in order. Though the Grey Hounds have done a commendable job in Andhra, utilizing them in unknown terrain could prove disastrous. On June 16 and June 29, 2008, in two successive raids in Odissa's Malkangiri district, Naxals ambushed and killed 38 troopers including 36 Grey Hound personnel. The latter were attacked

¹²⁹ Srinivas Reddy, "Success of A.P. Model in Containing Naxalism", *The Hindu*, March 30, 2006 at www.hindu.com/2006/03/30/stories/2006033010091400.htm (Accessed on June 11, 2012).

in a boat in the Balimela Reservoir. The June 29 incident involved personnel from Odissa's Special Operations Group (SOG).¹³⁰ These incidents brought to the fore the fact that despite specialized skills in warfare, these personnel must be provided with detailed intelligence on routes and specific intelligence on Naxal presence. Also, Grey Hounds can be effective so long they are backed by a sound political and social response. The biggest lesson from the Andhra Pradesh response is the fact that a comprehensive strategy of simultaneously activating a surrender and rehabilitation policy, superior intelligence network, local help (surrendered Naxalites), and the use of specialized counter-guerilla force are the necessary tools to counter Naxal violence. The next chapter deals with another theatre of internal conflict in India: the Northeast of India.

¹³⁰ Ajai Sahni, "Fighting the Maoist with Mantras", at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/7_2.htm (Accessed on December 12, 2008).

III

NORTHEAST ARMED ETHNIC INSURGENCIES AND THE STATE'S RESPONSE

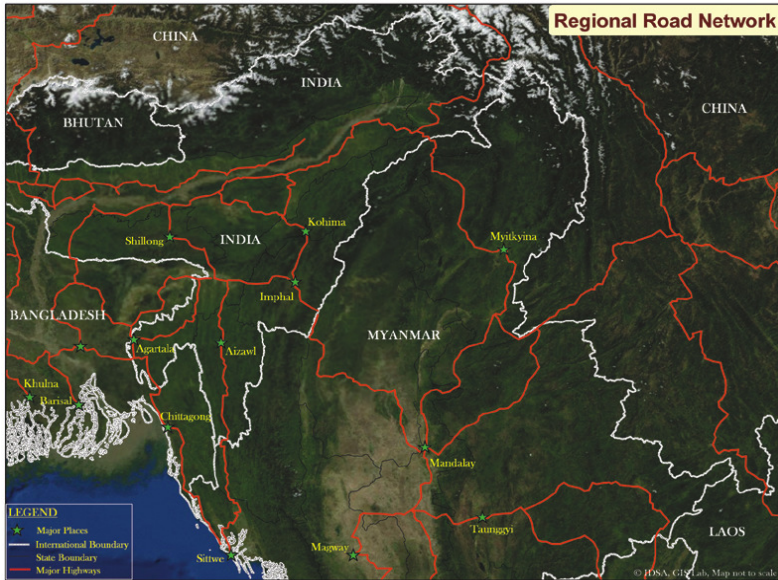
One of the most geo-strategic landscapes of India is its northeastern region. Situated between China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar and with an international border stretching up to 4,500 km, the region holds the promise of acting as a bridge between India and Southeast Asia in years to come. Also, the rise of China and its territorial claim on one of the states of the northeast, Arunachal Pradesh, has brought about international attention on the Northeast as a potential source of conflict between two of the rising powers of Asia. Historically, the region has been connected to the rest of Southeast Asia and China *via* the ancient Silk Road, and then later on during World War II when the theatre of conflict was in Myanmar (then Burma). It was then that the Ledo Road or otherwise famously known as the Burma Road was built in order to connect Assam with then Burma.¹

India has also recognized the strategic significance of its Northeast. Several measures have thereby been undertaken under the aegis of India's "Look East" policy envisioned in 1991 by then Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao. First amongst these measures has been a proposal to build the "Asian Highway" and "Asian Railway Link" and "Natural Gas" pipeline. The proposed geographical niche for the Asian Highway is the Imphal (India)-Tamu (Myanmar) road going on to Kalembo railway onto Mandalay in Myanmar. A four lane Asian Highway is also sought between New Delhi-Singapore linked to Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Pen, Bangkok, Vientiane, Yangon, Mandalay, Kalembo, Tamu, Dhaka, and Kolkata. Road construction has already started from Tamu to Kalembo, Myanmar. There is also a plan to construct a 1,360km Trilateral Highway from Moreh (India) to Mae

¹ See Thant Myint-U, *Burma and the New Crossroads of Asia Where China Meets India* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), pp. 225-247.

Sot (Thailand) through Bagan (Myanmar).² Moreh in Manipur is seen as the key to India's "Look East" policy.³ According to Manipur Chief Minister, Ibobi Singh, "Moreh is the most strategic international trading point in the region".⁴ His view was reiterated by then external affairs minister Pranab Mukherjee in his visit to the region in June 2007.⁵

Figure I: Asian Highway



The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility, aimed at establishing connectivity between Indian ports on the eastern side and Sittwe port in Myanmar through a riverine transport corridor and road

² See *North Eastern Region Vision 2020*, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and North Eastern Council, Agartala, May 13, 2008, p. 275. Also see Namrata Goswami, "Looking "East" through India's North East", *IDS.A Occasional Paper No.2*, June 2009, pp. 5-30.

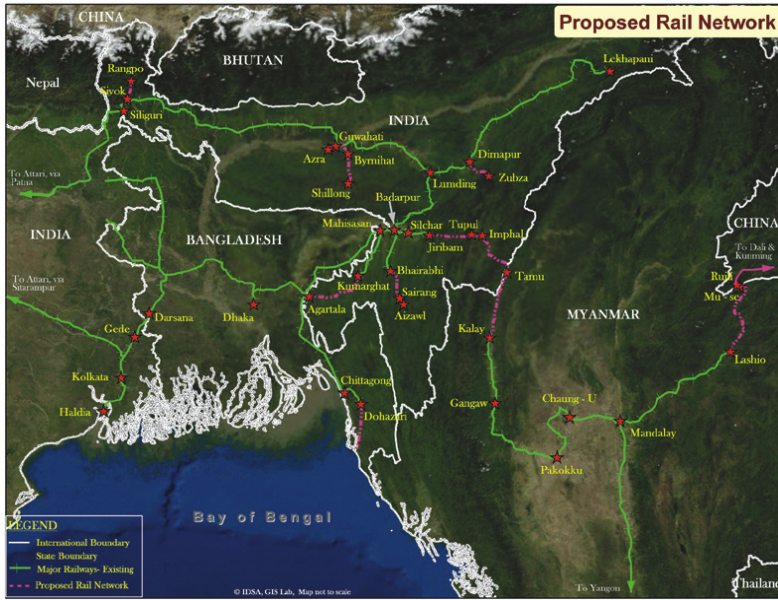
³ Field Visit by author to Moreh, Manipur, August 09-12, 2008. Moreh was showcased as the connecting links in interviews with local communities including the Kuki Hill Tribal Council, representing the major Kuki tribe in that area, the Moreh Chambers of Commerce, the Tamil Sangam, local policy makers as well as security personal.

⁴ Graham Lees, "Burma is the key to India's 'Look East' Economic Strategy" July 19, 2007 at <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=941> (Accessed on August 23, 2011).

⁵ See "Speech by the Minister of External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee, in Avtar Singh Bhasin, ed., *India's Foreign Relations-2007 Documents, Part II*, Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of External Affairs (New Delhi: Geetika Publishers, 2007), p. 1479.

in Mizoram, is envisaged as providing an alternate trade route to the Northeast.⁶ For purposes of Burmese gas transfer through the Northeast, India is planning to invest \$100 million in improving the old colonial Burmese port of Sittwe on the west Myanmar coast.⁷ It is hoped that with deeper ties between these countries, the largely illegal flow of goods through Moreh (Manipur) into other Northeastern states from South East Asia will become legalized.⁸ In this context, it is arguably possible for the Northeastern states to develop individual economic relations with, for instance, Thailand or Vietnam. Many analysts are of the firm belief that this kind of a two way model will create a truly federal system of democracy in India.⁹

Figure II: Asian Railway



⁶ For more on the Kaladan project, see Ashok B. Sharma, "India, Myanmar expects Kaladan project to increase border trade", *The Financial Express*, April 04, 2008 at <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/India-Myanmar-expects-Kaladan-project-to-increase-border-trade/292285/> (Accessed on May 5, 2012).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jairam Ramesh, "North East India in a New Asia" at <http://www.manipuronline.com/NorthEast/January2006/northeastindia12> (Accessed on August 12, 2007).

⁹ Sanjib Baruah, *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Another initiative that has been conceptualized is the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation and the Kunming Initiative undertaken by India and China respectively to reach out to Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Mekong-Ganga Corporation was launched by India on 10 November 2000 at Vientiane, Laos to boost cooperation in tourism, culture and education. The signatories were India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.¹⁰ These countries also agreed to undertake joint transportation projects including the trans-Asian highway. This initiative is India's most significant venture in the region. The notable aspect of the Mekong initiative is that it does have the potential for direct flights between Guwahati-Ho Chi Minh City-Imphal-Hanoi. For China, the Kunming Initiative linking the Chinese province of Yunnan with Myanmar, India's Northeastern states, and Thailand holds promise of greater economic interaction. It is also argued that Northeast India must be allowed to revive its old historical, cultural and traditional ties with South East Asia, taking a clue from other significant trans-border linkages like that of Basque, Catalonia, and Ireland, where the European Union enables "transnational politics of recognition", which empowers them from a marginalized existence in their own states.¹¹ In this context, the old Stillwell Road connecting Margherita-Ledo in Assam through Myanmar's Hukawng and Magaung valleys to the Yunnan province in China and built by Joseph Stillwell and the 14th Allied Army during World War II could be a potential road link.¹²

On the surface, the various agreements, bilateral and multilateral frameworks appear poised to succeed. The incentives for increased trade are enormous, given the contiguous landscape, common lifestyles between the peoples overlapping borders as well as the promises of a better life once the Asian highway and railway is set in place. There are

¹⁰ See Chandan Irom, "What Happened to India's Look East Policy: The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation", at <http://www.manipuronline.com/Features/January2002/mekongganga19.htm> (Accessed on August 24, 2008).

¹¹ Baruah, *Durable Disorder*, n. 9.

¹² See "Stillwell's Road" at <http://www.chindit.net/stillwell.html> (Accessed on August 4, 2011).

however a few pressing challenges, which have to be dealt with before the people of the Northeast are ready for a massive opening up to South East Asia. At present, the greatest impediment to the development of the Northeast is the challenge of armed ethnic insurgencies.

Armed Ethnic Insurgencies in Northeast India

The Northeastern region of India has been plagued by instability, insurgency, and social unrest since India's independence. Leading the host of violent actors is the National Socialist Council of *Nagaland* (Greater Nagaland) led by Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah—NSCN (IM) formed on 31 January 1988, followed by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland—S.S. Khaplang—NSCN (K) dominant in Naga inhabited areas. In 2011, a new NSCN (Khole-Kitovi) group was formed as a breakaway faction of the NSCN (K). Some of these areas fall within Manipur, which has also been grossly disturbed by armed violence with the formation of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) on 24 November 1964. Another significant Manipuri separatist armed group known as the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and its armed wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been engaging in armed struggle since 1978. The RPF and the PLA are suspected of being trained in Maoist guerrilla warfare by the Chinese in the 1960s and 1970s and both outfits aim at violent revolutionary change to bring about a classless society in Manipur. Another armed group is the *Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup* (KYKL), which has taken up social afflictions such as fighting corruption, drug trafficking and sub-standard education practices. Still another group, known as the Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), was established in the 1970s with the objective of fighting for Manipur's independence from India.

Assam has also been plagued by insurgent violence since 1979 with the formation of the United Liberation Front of *Assam* (ULFA). The hills districts of Assam; namely, Dima Hasau and Karbi Anglong, also suffer armed groups like the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) and the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) since the 1990s. The Bodo areas in Assam are disturbed by the existence of the armed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). It is also important to note that most of these insurgent groups have thrived primarily due to strong external influences. Countries like China in the 1960s and the

1970s as well as Pakistan and later on Bangladesh have supported most of these outfits by making available arms, training and most importantly, base areas for underground camps. Things have however improved with Bangladesh since 2008 with the coming of Sheikh Hasina to power. The ULFA leadership including Arabinda Rajkhowa, the Chairman of the outfit was arrested in December 2009 near the India-Bangladesh border. In 2010, Bangladesh handed over the leader of the NDFB, Ranjan Daimary, to India.¹³

States like Tripura and Mizoram have however succeeded in quelling insurgent violence by a mixed strategy of conflict resolution, better governance, and meeting people's basic needs. For instance, conflict resolution in Mizoram is a success story in the Indian context. With the signing of the Mizo Peace Accord between the Union government and the Mizo National Front (MNF) led by Pu Laldenga in 1986 after 20 years of insurgency and the grant of statehood in 1987, peace reigns in Mizoram as compared to the other insurgency-prone Northeastern states. Another factor that led to this success is addressing the root causes of a conflict.

In this context, the antecedent causes of the Mizo conflict included dissatisfaction with the *Lal* (chieftainship) system, the British colonial policy residue of treating Mizo-inhabited areas as 'excluded areas', resulting in separatist tendencies, lack of civic amenities, economic backwardness, and the continuous insensitivity and regional hegemony of Assam. Mizo society had started reacting against the oppressive rule of the chiefs even before independence and this took on an organized political form under the aegis of the Mizo Union (MU), which was formed on 9 April 1946.¹⁴ Besides fighting the chiefs' oppressive rule, the other main objectives of the MU were autonomy

¹³ Subir Bhaumik, *Insurgencies in India's North East: Conflict, Co-option and Change*, East West Center Washington Working Papers, Washington D.C., July 10, 2007. Also see "Bangladesh hands over NDFB Chief Ranjan Daimary to BSF", *The Times of India*, May 1, 2010 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-05-01/india/28287637_1_d-r-nabla-ndfb-anti-talks-faction (Accessed on August 27, 2012).

¹⁴ 'Re-unification Movement after the British Rule in India', at http://www.zogam.org/history.asp?article=history_1921 (Accessed February 2, 2008).

in matters of land, customary laws, culture, and identity, and recognition of the Mizo dialects. The then interim government of India made an attempt to address these issues by setting up the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee of the Constituent Assembly in 1947, which was headed by then Assam Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi. The committee recommended the provision of District Councils in Article 244 (2) of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution whereby Autonomous District Council status was accorded to Lushai Hills. The more proximate cause of the Mizo conflict was, however, triggered off by the 1959 bamboo flowering and consequent rodent population explosion, which damaged cash crops on a large scale. This resulted in a massive famine in Mizo areas, with both the Assam and Union governments unable to deliver relief to the affected people. Consequently, Laldenga, a former Indian Army soldier, formed the Mizo National Famine Front in 1959, and it succeeded in providing famine relief through local initiatives. On 22 October 1961, Laldenga turned the Mizo National Famine Front into an insurgent outfit, the MNF, whose objectives were complete independence from India, improvement in the socio-economic status of the Mizos, and replacing the exploitative local chieftainship (*Lal*) system with a democratic village council. On 28 February 1966, the armed wing of the MNF, the Mizo National Army (MNA) struck violently, capturing 11 towns in the Mizo Hills. Independence was subsequently declared by the MNF on 1 March 1966. The Union Government was able to transform this situation of conflict escalation by acceding to the demand for greater autonomy by according Mizo areas the status of a Union Territory on 21 January 1972. The final resolution package included the grant of full-fledged statehood to Mizo Hills within the Indian federal structure in 1987. This met the core demand of the Mizos for greater political representation and led to conflict de-escalation.¹⁵

This chapter elaborates on four main armed ethnic groups in the Northeast. These include the NSCN (IM), the ULFA, the UNLF and

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis, see Namrata Goswami, "The Indian Experience of Conflict Resolution in Mizoram", *Strategic Analysis*, 33/4, 2009, pp. 579-589.

the PLA. The four armed groups have been singled out for study for three specific reasons.

First, these four groups are most dominant in their area of operation.

Second, the four groups have succeeded in sustaining their armed movement for more than 30 years, a long time, as per the literature on non-state armed groups.¹⁶

Third, for peace to descend on the Northeast, conflict resolution with these four groups will have the greatest impact.

The Four Main Armed Groups in the Northeast

Nagaland. The Naga ethnic conflict has a long historical trajectory tracing back its roots to 1918 with the formation of the Naga Club by 20 members of the Naga *French Labour Corp*, who had served in World War I. The wartime knowledge motivated the few who had come in contact with the European battlefield to politically organize themselves as a distinct ethnic political entity. The club included membership across tribes, including Angami, Ao, Konyak, Lotha, Rengma, Sema, Yimchunger, etc. It is rather interesting that the local British administrators at that time did not dissuade the formation of the Naga Club. The club submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929, in which it stated that the people of Naga areas and that of mainland India had nothing in common between them. Therefore, it would benefit both to stay separate and form their own political entity as and when the British left India. In 1946, the club was further reinforced with the formation of the Naga National Council (NNC) under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo, a charismatic leader belonging to the Angami tribe. Phizo had been trained by the British especially Major General Wingate during World War II on the Burma Front against Japanese forces and he utilized that knowledge to impart training in guerrilla warfare to the NNC members.¹⁷ Significantly, a Nine Point Agreement

¹⁶ Jeremy Weinstein, *The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁷ See “Chindits Special Force Burma 1942-44”, <http://www.chindits.info/> (Accessed on April 22, 2008).

known as the Akbar Hydari Agreement was signed between NNC leaders T. Sakhrie and Imkonglba Ao and the Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari on 29 June 1947. The Agreement gave the Nagas rights over their land as well as executive and legislative powers, but within the ambit of the Indian Constitution. The Agreement, not surprisingly, was rejected by Phizo. On 14 August 1947, the NNC led by Phizo declared independence, a day before India attained its own independence. Again not surprisingly, the Centre rejected Phizo's stand. The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were a tumultuous period in Naga history with militancy on the rise coupled by the state's military response propelled by acts like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, amended in 1972. The cross-fire between the state forces and the NNC resulted in non-combatant deaths as well as human rights violations. Though efforts at peace was tried by the Union Government with the grant of statehood to Nagaland in 1963 and the establishment of a peace mission in 1964, it was the loss of bases in East Pakistan in 1972, with the emergence of a new nation-Bangladesh, as well as the constant pressure from Indian security forces that motivated the NNC under Z. Huire to sign the Shillong Accord of 1975. The Shillong Accord however repeated the tragic story of the Nine Point Agreement, in that it split the Naga rebel movement. The Shillong Accord was the proximate cause for the formation of the original unified National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). Replicating Phizo's aversion to the Hydari Agreement, Muivah, Swu and Khaplang condemned the Shillong Accord as a sell out to the Union government and formed the NSCN in Myanmar in 1980. Subsequently, due to intense differences between Khaplang, Muivah and Swu, the NSCN split and formed the NSCN (IM) while Khaplang formed the NSCN (K) in 1988. Incidentally, both the NSCN (IM) and the NSCN (K) are under cease-fire with the Union government since 1997 and 2001 respectively.

Assam. The radical turn in Assamese nationalism can be traced back to the influx of illegal migrants from East Pakistan after Partition in 1947 and later since 1971 onwards after the formation of Bangladesh. This massive migrant flow created immense anxiety amongst the Assamese middle classes and the rural masses, who resented the rapidly changing demographic profile of the state and the loss of land to the Bengali migrant. Also, violent protests erupted on the Union government's decision to transport crude oil from Assam to a refinery at Barauni, Bihar, a move viewed as exploitative of Assam's natural

resources. Along with the exploitation of oil, the revenue earnings of which mostly went to the Centre, the revenues from Assam's other famous product—tea—were also going to the head offices located in West Bengal. Mass agitations against Delhi's perceived exploitation of Assam's resources thereby ensued. The most proximate cause of the Assam Agitation (1979-1985) was however malpractices in the electoral procedure in 1978, when in a Lok Sabha by-election, 45, 000 illegal migrants' names were found on the voter's list. The first strike against this was kick started on 8 June 1979. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) led an agitation demanding the 1951 National Register for Citizens be utilized to determine the citizenship of all those living in Assam. Subsequently, the 1983 state elections resulted in tremendous voter malpractices. This provoked massive protests from Assamese society. The state's heavy-handed response to this dissent stoked the embers of one of the most persistent of violent ethnic movements in Assam—the ULFA. The ULFA was formed on 7 April 1979 at Ranghar, in Sivasagar, a sight of historical significance since the time of the Ahom rule. Most of the recruits of the ULFA were drawn from the Asom Jatiyabadi Parishad (AJYCP), which professed Marxism and advocated the Assamese right to dual citizenship and self-determination or Swadhin Asom (Independent Assam). From 1992 onwards, it widened its support base to include all non-Assamese by stating that theirs was a movement for all Asombashis (people who resided in Assam). ULFA seeks to revert Assam's status to the Ahom ruled Assam, pre-1826 treaty of Yandaboo between the British and the Burmese, which ushered in British rule in Assam.¹⁸ ULFA's Vice Chairman, Pradip Gogoi stated that his organization's political objectives were "Sovereign, Socialist Assam" in which "All indigenous people must stay, all others must leave".¹⁹

Manipur. The UNLF, founded by Arambam Samaranda Singh, draws its credence from the historical argument that Manipur was forcefully inducted into India in 1949. The outfit is based on a leftist ideology

¹⁸ Sanjib Baruah, "The State and Separatist Militancy in Assam: Winning a Battle and Losing the War?" *Asian Survey*, 34/10, October 1994, pp. 863-897.

¹⁹ Seema Hussein, "Exclusive Interview, Pradip Gogoi, Jailed ULFA Vice Chairman", *The Week News Magazine*, July 20, 2003 at <http://www.the-week.com/23jul20/events/9.html> (Accessed on January 5, 2007).

vis-à-vis the economic and social alienation of the people of Manipur. The outfit's support base is mostly from Meiteis inhabiting the Imphal valley as well as the Dima Hasau district of Assam. Samaranda was killed by suspected KYKL militants on 10 June 2001 and the current leader and chairman is Raj Kumar Meghen. Others include General Secretary Th. Sanachou, Secretary of Defence, A. Wangpa, Secretary of Organisation, M. Nongyai. The UNLF women's wing leader is Nganbi Devi followed by Banti Devi as deputy leader.²⁰ By the 1990s, the outfit had a declared strategy of armed protracted conflict against India for the liberation of Manipur. Indeed, the UNLF has a rather strong following in Meitei areas of Manipur and there exists a critical belief amongst its cadre base and sympathizers that it is important to have ethnically armed aligned groups as the Meiteis sincerely fear the NSCN (IM)'s agenda of Nagalim (Greater Nagaland).²¹ The Nagalim map includes all Naga inhabited areas in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Manipur had erupted into violence in 2001 when the Union government extended the cease-fire with the NSCN (IM) to Naga inhabited areas in Manipur. The resistance turned so violent that the Union government had to revoke the move. The situation, in fact, reflects the classic "security dilemma" faced by states at the systemic level. When one state arms itself, it leads to insecurity in neighbouring states. Consequently, the best way to protect oneself is to increase one's own armament. This situation also gets reflected when two or more ethnic groups occupy the same space. When one ethnic group arms itself, other ethnic groups also arm themselves creating a vicious cycle of "violence" versus "counter-violence".²²

²⁰ See Bobby Sarangthem, "United Liberation National Front (UNLF)" at <http://www.eastarmy.nic.in/combatting-militancy/unlf-01.html> (Accessed on March 23, 2008). Also data compiled after conducting interviews in Manipur in 2008 and 2011. Names withheld on request of interviewees.

²¹ See Namrata Goswami, "The Naga Narrative of Conflict: Envisioning a Resolution Roadmap", *Strategic Analysis*, 31/2, March 2007, pp. 287-313. Also field observations made by the author in a visit to Manipur, August 10-20, 2008.

²² See Caroline A. Hartzell, "Structuring the Peace: Negotiated Settlements and the Construction of Conflict Management Institutions", in T. David Mason and James D. Meernik, ed., *Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Post-War Societies* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.31-52.

Another significant armed group in Manipur is the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA). The PLA was formed on 25 September 1978 under the leadership of N. Bisheshwar Singh with the primary objective of liberating Manipur from India. The group's prime motive is to form a united front with all other revolutionary secessionist groups in Northeast India to fight against India. The PLA's political arm is the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF). In 1981, Bisheshwar Singh was arrested in an army operation, and henceforth the PLA is led by Irengbam Chaoren as President and Ngouka Pravin Sarma as Vice President. Besides fighting for secession of Manipur, the PLA, in July 1996, formed a special task force known as "Staforce", which enforces strict restrictions on the sale of alcohol and drugs in Manipur, as well as fights political corruption within the state. In September 2007, the outfit imposed a ban on the chewing of betel leaf as a part of its anti-tobacco campaign.²³

According to Indian security personnel, the PLA is the most lethal insurgent group in Manipur. Unlike other insurgent groups like the UNLF or KYKL, the PLA has remained united and committed to the cause of Manipur's secession since its inception in 1978.²⁴ In fact, the outfit is so fiercely protective of its unified nature that when Bisheshwar Singh contested the state assembly elections in 1995, he was shot down by PLA cadres. The outfit observes February 25 as Independence Demand Day in Manipur since 1995.

Reasons for the Existence of the Armed Ethnic Groups

Amongst the several reasons for the existence of armed ethnic insurgencies in the Northeast are: political motivation, the availability of arms, popular support, space, and external support.

²³ "People's Liberation Army" at http://cdpsindia.org/manipur_mgp.asp (Accessed on October 15, 2011).

²⁴ Interview with military intelligence, Imphal, Manipur, August 2008. Names withheld on request of interviewee.

Political motivation: Politics forms the core of insurgent groups' strategy of violence.²⁵ Most insurgent groups garner popular support for their violent activities by citing a political cause, significantly important to the target population. According to Mao Tse Tung, the promise of mobilizing for revolution will exist in any country where the formal administrative structures fail to meet its basic obligations of providing the minimum standard of life to its citizens.²⁶ Political mobilization is the first vital phase in any armed movement in order to acquire critical mass and create the space for conflict escalation. Historical evidence also suggests that there is very little hope of destroying an insurgency once it survives the first phase and succeeds in acquiring a level of social support.²⁷ It must also be noted that insurgent groups construct a "social imaginary"²⁸ based on real or perceived political alienation and cultural subjugation by dominant 'others', thereby vindicating the need for violent assertion of legitimate concerns of the insurgent groups' social base. Insurgent leaders also behave like socially powerful individuals by openly projecting their armed cadres, weapons and financial prowess in the area of their operation.²⁹ This visible showcasing attracts unemployed youths in areas where the state is unable to provide decent alternative livelihoods.

The NSCN (IM) cites political reasons for the use of force. It argues that its political objective is Naga territorial unification and sovereignty based on the outfit's historical narrative of Naga independent status before the British occupied Naga territories in the nineteenth century.³⁰ Thuingaleng Muivah, the General Secretary of the NSCN (IM) asserted

²⁵ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 283-85.

²⁶ Samuel B. Griffith, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1962), pp. 5-6.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 27-43.

²⁸ Bettina E. Schmidt and Ingo W. Schroder, eds., *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 4.

²⁹ Field observation of NSCN (IM) and other insurgent groups' leaders in Assam and Nagaland, 2007-2011.

³⁰ Goswami, "The Naga Narrative of Conflict", n. 21, pp. 134-154.

the importance of the political objectives for the outfit's use of violence.³¹ He also committed to improve the overall economic and social conditions of Nagas, knowing full well that such arguments strike an emotional chord amongst the Nagas as development in these areas is dismal. The ULFA utilizes the politics of Assamese exploitation at the hands of New Delhi in order to vindicate its demand for a separate Assamese ethnic homeland.³² The ULFA argues that Assamese political identity will only get due recognition if Assam becomes an independent entity. The narrative of exploitation and being culturally different from the rest of India is a recurring rallying point, be it the NSCN (IM), the ULFA, the UNLF or the PLA. Based on this political narrative, youths from these areas are motivated to join the armed movements: the NSCN (IM) has an armed cadre strength of about 5,000 while the ULFA has less than 1000 armed men and women. The UNLF has a cadre strength of 2,500.³³ It has an armed wing known as the Manipur People's Army (MNA). The outfit has a Secretary of Defence, a Secretary of Organization, a Secretary of Publicity and a Women's wing.³⁴ Its stated political goal is to fight for the secession of Manipur from India. The PLA, with cadre strength of 1500 armed men and women identifies its struggle against India as a fight against political and economic exploitation of Manipur. The outfit is inspired by the Maoist ideology of Peoples' War, based on guerilla warfare and the three phases of conflict: the strategic defensive, strategic equilibrium and strategic offensive stages. The PLA states that the people of Manipur will continue to suffer neglect and economic backwardness

³¹ The 6th Naga Peoples' Consultative Meeting was held on July 27, 2007 at Camp Hebron near Dimapur, Nagaland, which I attended as an observer. The meeting comprised nearly 5000 Naga peoples' representatives from Naga areas in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. Civil society organizations like the Naga *Hobo* (Apex Council) representatives, Presidents of Tribal *Hobos*, Naga Mothers' Association, Naga Students' Federation, Human Rights Organizations, Village Headmen Association, Senior Citizens' Forums, members of the intelligentsia and media were also in attendance.

³² Field Visit to Assam, February 10-20, 2009.

³³ Phanjoubam Tarapo, *Bleeding Manipur* (New Delhi: Har Anand Publications, 2003), p.27.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

as long as they continue to stay in India.³⁵ Most of its ideological musings can be found in its journal titled Reflection.³⁶ The PLA repeatedly asserts that it is not limited to the cause of the Meiteis but is representative of the Nagas, Kukis, Chins, as well as other smaller tribal groups in Manipur thereby forming a trans-tribal organizational base.³⁷ In this regard, it is unlike the UNLF who claims to be the sole representatives of the Meiteis.

The Availability of Arms: Insurgent groups utilize violent means for political ends when the opportunity for armed rebellion exists in a given situation. This is well conceptualized in conflict literature as the ‘feasibility’ factor. The feasibility hypothesis argues that “where rebellion is materially feasible, it will occur”.³⁸ The material conditions for an armed rebellion to exist are financial and military. The easy availability of arms in Northeast India enables the NSCN (IM), the ULFA, the UNLF and the PLA to sustain their armed movements. All four insurgent groups possess the AK series of rifles, M-12, M-16, M-20, Carbine Assault Rifles-4, M-23 LMG, M-203, RPG-2, 5 and 7, 40 and 60 mm mortars, SLR, .303 rifles, Luger 9mm (Chinese made), TNT and RDX.³⁹ The internet and mobile telephones are routinely used for communication using coded texts.⁴⁰ Small arms are also easily available from across the border especially in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Of the UN estimated 640 million illegal small arms in the world, 40 million small arms are in India alone with Manipur accounting for 32 per

³⁵ “Peace talk would be self defeating: RPF”, *The Sangai Express*, September 25, 2011 at <http://thesangaiexpress.manipur.us/2011/09/25/sangai-express-news.php%3Fnewsid=9187.html> (Accessed on November 18, 2011).

³⁶ “Reflections”, *The Sangai Express*, September 25, 2011 at <http://thesangaiexpress.manipur.us/2011/09/26/sangai-express-news.php%3Fnewsid=9208.html> (Accessed on November 18, 2011).

³⁷ Field interview by author with Manipur University, March 2011. Name not revealed for protection of source.

³⁸ Paul Collier, *et al.*, “Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War”, *CSAE WPS/ 2006-10* (August 2006), p. 5.

³⁹ A.S. Shimray, *Let Freedom Ring, Story of Naga Nationalism* (New Delhi: Promilla, 2005), p. 167.

⁴⁰ Visit to CampHeron, NSCN (IM) Headquarters near Dimapur, Nagaland, July 27, 2007.

cent.⁴¹ This availability of small arms had made it possible to escalate violence levels. The PLA now aims to utilize Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) as a means to achieve its political goals.⁴²

Popular Support Base: An insurgent group critically depends on its popular support base for purposes of funding, base areas, recruitment, food supply and intelligence networks.⁴³ Since insurgent groups portray themselves as representatives of a particular ethnic group or community, popular support adds to the legitimacy of the group.⁴⁴ The NSCN (IM), the ULFA, the UNLF and the PLA's local support for their armed movements depends on their ability to reflect the genuine grievances of the people in the affected areas like perceived feelings of alienation and deprivation, political marginalization in the Indian national mainstream, cultural minority status, poor economic development and absence of infrastructure, and denial of ethnic identity assertion. The violent state response to the NSCN (IM) and the ULFA was resented to a large extent by the local people given the representative-ness of the groups in society.⁴⁵ There are numerous songs dedicated to the NSCN armed revolt in Naga society.⁴⁶

Violence is also utilized as a viable tool to get support from the insurgent group's target population based on "fear and intimidation".⁴⁷ ULFA is known for its terror tactics of killing non-Assamese Hindi-speaking people, especially migrant workers from Bihar. Most societies affected

⁴¹ See "Small Arms Survey" at <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/issueareas/inventories/inventories.html> (Accessed on November 12, 2009). Also see "India 'must lead on ATT'", at <http://www.controlarms.org/en/events/global-week-of-action-1/india> (Accessed on November 12, 2009).

⁴² "People's Liberation Army (PLA)" at http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4590 (Accessed on November 17, 2011).

⁴³ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, n. 16, pp. 163-197.

⁴⁴ Interviews with NSCN (IM), July 2007 and August 2008, Nagaland and Manipur.

⁴⁵ Interviews with civil society actors like the *Naga Hobo*, the Naga Mothers' Association, the Naga Students' Federation (NSF) in Nagaland, 2007 and Manipur, 2011.

⁴⁶ See the documentary, *The Naga Nation*, 2005

⁴⁷ Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 3-7.

by insurgent violence in India support insurgents out of a need to “self-preserve” because if they do otherwise, they fear some kind of physical harm given they inhabit remote inaccessible terrain still not penetrated by the state.⁴⁸ Usually, insurgency affected societies suffer from high stress levels and genuinely fear destructive social forces prevalent among them. The violence between the NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) for territorial domination is well known in this regard. In 2008, heavy inter-factional killings between the NSCN (IM), NSCN (K), and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Unification [NSCN (U)], vitiated the atmosphere in Nagaland. On 9 July 2008, clashes between the NSCN (IM) and the NSCN (U) in Diphupar village led to the death of a few insurgents. Earlier, on June 24 that year, the NSCN (IM) launched a frontal attack on the headquarters of the NSCN (U) in Vihokhu village killing some 10 of the latter’s cadres. The main reason for factional violence is the imperative of controlling territory. Villages in and around the designated camps are full of cadres of the three factions who openly carry arms and run extortion networks. Nevertheless, the NSCN (IM) is the dominant actor and controls the population to a large extent in these villages through its wide social network as well as the greater firepower it wields. However, villagers indicate that the November 2007 split in the NSCN (IM) shook the outfit’s morale to a large extent. This is because Azheto Chophy and the 100 or more NSCN (IM) deserters who went on to form the NSCN (U) enjoy a well established social network in the area and pose a real challenge to the NSCN (IM)’s authority.⁴⁹

It must be noted that it is crucial for Naga insurgent outfits to dominate the areas in and around Dimapur since it enables them to control the flow of goods to other areas in the state. Most commodities in the Dimapur market are subject to NSCN (IM) taxes, which is a major resource generator for the outfit. For instance, in order to have a safe passage through the highways in Nagaland, one has to pay the armed

⁴⁸ Namrata Goswami, “The Naga Narrative of Conflict, n. 21, pp. 287-313.

⁴⁹ Namrata Goswami, “A Way Out of Naga Factional Violence”, July 23, 2008 at http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/AWayOutOfNagaFactionalViolence_NGoswami_230708 (Accessed on July 17, 2012).

groups. To start a business, a business pass has to be issued by the armed group that dominates a particular area. Migrant workers have to apply for work permits to work in Nagaland. For instance, in Dimapur, work permits are issued by either the NSCN (IM) or NSCN (K) on payment of Rs.150 to 200. To build a house on one's own land, a tax amounting to 10 per cent of one's basic pay has to be paid to the armed groups.⁵⁰

Despite cease-fires between the Union government and the insurgent outfits, the cult of violence continues to dominate the social fabric in Northeast India. The NSCN (IM)'s fratricidal killings against the NSCN (K) had vitiated the atmosphere in Naga areas for many years. In 2006 and 2007, nearly 30 or so combatants on both sides lost their lives in factional clashes. Phek district was one of the most affected district with NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) caught in open cross-fire throughout July-August 2007. Ironically, on 25 July 2007, a day after the Joint Forum Working Committee (JFWC) of Nagaland *Gaon Burab* (village headmen) Federation and Nagaland *Doabasi* (elders) Association made the formal declaration of ceasefire among the Naga underground factions in Dimapur, the NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) clashed in the heart of Phek town. Around 400 to 500 rounds were fired, gripping the town people with fear for their lives. These factional clashes have not abated even after pressure from civil society groups to give up violence. Against this backdrop of violence, the Deputy Commissioner of Phek, Maongwati argued that the District Level Coordination Group, a branch of the Ceasefire Monitoring Group, had decided on 9 April 2008 to set up highway patrolling to deter violence.⁵¹

On 14 May 2012, the issue of factionalism again raised its ugly head when the NSCN (IM) refused to take part in the May 21 reconciliation meeting to be held at Chiang Mai in Thailand. The main bone of contention was the Union Government's decision to engage the NSCN

⁵⁰ Field interviews by author with local communities in Dimapur, Diphupar, Kohima, July 21-28, 2007. Names withheld on request of interviewees.

⁵¹ See "Phek Admn, public cautions faction", *Nagaland Post*, April 15, 2008 at <http://www.nagalandpost.com/Statedesc.asp?sectionid=58545> (Accessed on April 16, 2008).

(Khole and Kitovi) faction led by erstwhile *ato Kilonser* (Prime Minister) of the NSCN (Khaplang) faction, Kitovi Zhimoni and senior leader, Khole Konyak. In 2011, the NSCN (Khaplang) faction suffered from a major split when Khole Konyak and Kitovi fell out with S S Khaplang, the Chairman of the outfit and formed the new faction. Significantly, in the immediate aftermath of the split, the Khole-Kitovi faction tried to reconcile with the NSCN (IM) but differences between Muivah and Kitovi nipped that goal in the bud.

In this context, there are three major issues that are emerging in the Naga conflict. First, the split in the NSCN (Khaplang) has created a major dent in the influence of the outfit. S S Khaplang is from Myanmar and hence depended on leaders like Khole and Kitovi for his support base in the Naga inhabited areas of India. With the split, the support base of the outfit in Naga inhabited areas of Nagaland has reduced significantly. Secondly, for the first time ever in the Naga peace process, there is the possibility of the Union government engaging another armed Naga actor, the NSCN (Khole and Kitovi), besides the NSCN (IM) in peace talks. Third, the NSCN (IM), which views itself as the sole representative of the Naga people in peace talks, is being increasingly threatened on its home turf by the NSCN (Khole and Kitovi) faction. While NSCN (Khaplang) is a major threat to the NSCN (IM) as a rival armed actor, its influence in terms of social legitimacy in Naga inhabited areas in India has been limited at best, due to the fact that its Chairman Khaplang belongs to Myanmar. This dimension has been further vindicated by the fact that the Myanmar government has signed a cease-fire with the NSCN (Khaplang) on 9 April 2012. The Khole-Kitovi faction is however, a real challenge to the NSCN (IM)'s sphere of influence given the fact that both leaders are from Nagaland. Hence, their demand to be included in a peace dialogue with the Union government holds far more weight in Naga society than the NSCN (Khaplang) faction.⁵²

⁵² Namrata Goswami, "Dividing will not rule", *Outlook*, May 23, 2012 at <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?281001> (Accessed on May 30, 2012).

The PLA has a history of brutal punishment if the cadres show lack of discipline or try to defect. As was stated earlier, the PLA gunned down its own founding member, Bisheshwar Singh, when he tried to contest for the Manipur state assembly elections in 1995. Based on the strategic use of violence while at the same time showcasing its commitment to social causes, the PLA has increased its influence in several districts of Manipur, namely, Imphal, Thoubal, Bishenpur, Chandel, Churachandpur and the Jiribam sub-division of Imphal valley. It has also recruited Meitei cadres from Assam's Cachar district.

In this context, the ULFA increasingly attacked Hindi speaking people especially from the year 2005 onwards. In January 2006, it killed nearly 55 Hindi speaking people across Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Tinsukia and Dhemaji districts.⁵³ In 2007, it changed its area of operation and struck in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam killing 14 Hindi speaking people on 11 August. The violence was speculated to be the handiwork of the 27th battalion of ULFA in collaboration with *Karbi Longri* Liberation Front (KNLF).⁵⁴ According to Assam's chief minister, the bigger issue in the recent violence was also the diabolical link between the ULFA and Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI), which had to be broken if one hoped to bring down the killings.⁵⁵

The UNLF broke up into two factions, one led by Meghen and the other led by Namojiam Oikam, the UNLF (Oken group), in 1990 resulting in a bloody factional clash leaving more than 100 people dead. The Oken group subsequently submerged with other groups like PREPAK and formed the KYKL. The UNLF through the MNA has accelerated its violent activities against the security forces. In 2008 alone, it killed more than 10 security personnel. On 15 March 2008, the UNLF claimed that it had killed more than five 24th Assam Rifles personnel in Minnou village near the Myanmar international border, under Moreh

⁵³ See "Dealing with ULFA's Terror" at <http://www.idsa.in/publications/stratcomments/InternalSecurityCluster220107.htm> (Accessed on January 17, 2006).

⁵⁴ "Karbi Anglong massacre toll goes up to 14", *The Assam Tribune*, August 13, 2007, p. 1.

⁵⁵ "ULFA under influence of ISI, Gogoi", *The Times of India*, August 12, 2007 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2007-08-12/india/27953530_1_ulfa-leaders-paresh-barua-people-s-consultative-group (Accessed on May 8, 2012).

police station in the Chandel district. UNLF spokesman Tombi Singh stated that its 293rd battalion had carried out the attack on the Assam Rifles outpost.⁵⁶ Similarly, on 21 February 2008, the outfit claimed that it had killed five security force personnel at Muolvaikhup village under Kamjong sub-division in the Ukhrul district. The spate of such violence and the counter-violence by the state forces has increased the death toll on both sides substantially.⁵⁷

Space: The geography and terrain of a particular place is critical for the continuation of insurgent movements. Without supportive terrain, lightly armed, highly mobile insurgent cadres stand little chance to offset the technological superiority of the stronger power. Moreover, since regular armies are mostly aimed at force concentration, irregulars units based on force dispersion surprise the adversary by tactics of hit and run, surprise attacks and deception.

The NSCN (IM) functions in the hill districts of Chandel, Senapati, Ukhrul and Tamenglong in Manipur and Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh. They also utilize the hill tracts of Kohima, Tuensang and Mokokchung districts in Nagaland spilling over into the hill tracts of Myanmar. The outfit has also gradually penetrated into the hill districts of Assam. The terrain is densely forested and weather conditions are extreme. According to Punthing Shimrang, a leader with the outfit, the NSCN (IM) has a policy of recruiting youths with good knowledge of local terrain.⁵⁸ For instance, given the fact that Mokokchung in Nagaland is gradually becoming a target area for extending influence, the NSCN (IM) is recruiting youths from the Tzurang valley in Mokokchung district.⁵⁹ According to Colonel Rai,

⁵⁶ See Shubir Bhaumik, "Rebels Kill Six Indian Soldiers", March 16, 2008 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7299156.stm (Accessed on March 18, 2008).

⁵⁷ See "United National Liberation Front" at http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/manipur/terrorist_outfits/unlf.htm (Accessed on March 13, 2008).

⁵⁸ Author Interview with Punthing Shimrang, NSCN (IM) leader, Diphupar, Nagaland, July 25, 2007.

⁵⁹ Interview with *Naga Hobo* and Naga Students' Organization representatives, Dimapur, Nagaland, July 27, 2007.

Commandant, Assam Regimental Centre, Shillong, Meghalaya, the NSCN (IM) is known for its ability to use terrain to its advantage.⁶⁰

The ULFA has also been successful in taking advantage of space within Assam to spread its armed movement. The districts of Assam are not very well connected and it is difficult to penetrate the thickly forested areas in the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh-Bhutan borders to where ULFA retreats whenever a counter-insurgency operations by the state is underway.⁶¹ The added advantage to the insurgents is an intimate knowledge of the terrain, as compared to the security forces. Given the Northeast terrain is hilly and not easily accessible because of incessant rain during the months of April to July, an insurgent group once established, takes years to be detected and countered by the state.

Manipur offers the ideal space for the UNLF and the PLA to function. Its terrain is forested, hilly and it shares a 398 km highly porous border with Myanmar. While the UNLF and the PLA are active in the Imphal valley which is a flat area, the hills surrounding it offer excellent opportunities to lay ambushes and take shelter in the advent of counter-insurgency operations. Till about the early 1980s, the PLA did not target the security forces. This was reverted in 1989 when it was involved in the killing of an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, Vandana Mallick in an ambush near Imphal. The PLA's ability to keep its cadres under tight control, its networked social linkages and intelligence, and bases across the border in Myanmar offers it distinct advantages in the terrain it covers.⁶²

External Support: Perhaps one of the most critical dimensions of insurgent groups is external support. Support from neighbouring countries could be political, moral, military, economic, territorial or cultural and based on ethnic ties.⁶³ A 2010 RAND study on insurgencies

⁶⁰ Interviews with Assam Regiment, Shillong, Meghalaya, July 2007.

⁶¹ Field Visit to Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border, March 2011

⁶² Insights drawn from interview with the 5 Mountain Division, Imphal Manipur, 2008.

⁶³ Kanti P. Bajpai, *Roots of Terrorism* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2002), pp. 98-104.

indicates that without external support and available sanctuaries, no internal insurgency can thrive over a period of 10 years.⁶⁴

The Northeastern states share a 4500-km highly porous border with China in the north, Myanmar in the East, Bangladesh in the southwest and Bhutan in the northwest whereas it precariously clings to the rest of India by a 22 km narrow strip of land in Bengal known as the “Chicken’s Neck” (See **Figure III**). Both the ULFA and the NSCN (IM) had/have training camps in Myanmar and Bangladesh. Significantly, the unified NSCN was formed in Myanmar on 31 January 1980, outside of Indian territory to fight against India for secession. In 1986, ULFA established linkages with the unified NSCN. Both armed groups had strong connections with the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) of Myanmar.⁶⁵ Southern Bhutan also offered a safe haven for insurgent bases in the 1980s and 1990s. Things however changed in December 2003, when the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) and the Royal Bhutan Guards (RBG) comprising 6,000 military personnel forcefully expelled 3,000 insurgent cadres of the ULFA and KIO from Bhutan and destroyed nearly 30 training camps. Many top ULFA functionaries were also arrested. The ULFA then shifted to Myanmar and Bangladesh. The ULFA camps in Bangladesh remained a bone of contention between India and Bangladesh for long. Most of the top ULFA leaders like its Chairman, Arabinda Rajkhowa and Commander-in-Chief, Paresh Barua, operated from Bangladesh. It is only recently that there has been some gainful cooperation between India and Bangladesh in this regard and top ULFA leaders like Rajkhowa were arrested by Indian security personnel in the Bangladesh-Meghalaya border in December 2009.

⁶⁴ Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2010), pp. 34-48.

⁶⁵ Shelly Tucker, *Among Insurgents, Walking Through Burma* (Delhi: Penguin, 2000), pp. 82-85

Figure III: Northeast India



The NSCN (IM) takes the help of the Karen National Union (KNU) fighting the Myanmar junta since 1949.⁶⁶ The outfit has also ventured

⁶⁶ Renaud Egretreau, *Instability at the Gate: India's Troubled Northeast and its External Connections* (New Delhi: *Centre de Sciences Humaines*, 2006), p. 78.

into the Chinese black market in Yunnan province. Small arms are shipped by the NSCN (IM) through the Chittagong port in Bangladesh. Anthony Shimray was the NSCN (IM)'s procurement officer in the Philippines. He enjoyed deep connections with the Southeast Asian and Chinese small arms network until he was arrested by Indian security agencies in 2010.

The UNLF had established camps in East Pakistan which later became Bangladesh since 1964 onwards. In 1975, the outfit established relations with China with its leaders traveling to Lhasa to seek China's help. In 1990, it formed an alliance with the NSCN (K), the ULFA, and the Kuki National Army (KNA) and formed the Indo-Burma Revolutionary Front (IBRF) in order to wage a common struggle against India from Myanmar. It continues to have its underground camps along the India-Myanmar border on the Myanmar side of the border near Moreh.⁶⁷ The porous and poorly secured border with Myanmar makes it convenient for the UNLF to have bases in Myanmar.⁶⁸

The PLA has strong connections with the KIO in Myanmar with training camps located in the Somra tract. It has also established connections with the NSCN (K) headquartered in Myanmar. PLA training camps were also located in the Sylhet region of Bangladesh.

China also began to aggressively support revolutionary movements across the world after the Communist takeover in 1949. It has provided strong political, economic and logistical support to various insurgent groups in Northeast India in order to counter Western imperialism and Soviet revisionism in Asia. In return, most of these armed groups supported the "One China policy" with regard to Taiwan. The Nagas were greatly inspired by the Chinese idea of "Peoples' War" and "protracted struggle". In 1966, Muivah, then member of the NNC, led a 130-strong Naga guerilla force on a three month trek to Yunnan province in China, accompanied mostly by the Kachins. He later on

⁶⁷ Insights drawn during field visits to Manipur in 2008 and 2011. Also, interviews with Manipur People's Front, Moreh, August 13-14, 2008.

⁶⁸ Field visit to India-Myanmar border, August 2008.

moved onto Beijing to get political training, thus becoming the first Naga to visit China, followed by Isak Chisi Swu and Moure Angami in 1968. However, Deng Xiaoping's "good neighbour policy" stopped Chinese aid to these insurgent groups except for flow of illegal Chinese arms through the black market in Yunnan. The PLA continues to have links with China; it is now an established fact that Paresh Barua, the only ULFA leader who escaped arrest in December 2009 is in China.⁶⁹

Strategy and Nature of these Outfits. The NSCN (IM), ULFA, UNLF and the PLA have a declared strategy of protracted armed conflict. Interestingly, cease-fires are seen as phases to re-group, recruit, finance and re-arm. This has happened in most cases. The ULFA and the NSCN (IM) has decidedly re-armed and re-grouped during the cease-fire phase. The Governor of Assam, Lieutenant General Ajai Singh (Retd) in his address on 26 January 2006 on the occasion of Republic Day stated the ULFA had "regrouped and consolidated its weak positions" by taking advantage of the cease-fire during the period of indirect talks through the People's Consultative Group (PCG).⁷⁰ (The PCG was the 11-member civilian group formed by ULFA in September 2005 to talk to the Centre on its behalf). His views were also echoed by the Assam Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi, who stated that "in retrospect, I admit that the judgment may be a little wrong when we offered a ceasefire to the ULFA".⁷¹ Military operations against the outfit were suspended by the government from August 13 to September 24, 2006. During this period, the ULFA reorganized its units in the traditional stronghold of Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Tinsukia, formed new battalions like the 27th battalion and moved into new areas like Karbi Anglong.⁷²

⁶⁹ Saurabh Shukla, "Absconding ULFA Chief Paresh Barua hiding in China, says intelligence agencies", *India Today*, November 16, 2011 at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/ulfa-chief-paresh-barua-in-china/1/160288.html> (Accessed on November 29, 2011).

⁷⁰ "Assam Timeline 2007" at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/assam/timelines/index.html> (Accessed on March 5, 2007).

⁷¹ *The Sentinel* and *The Assam Tribune*, January 16, 2007.

⁷² "8 ULFA ultras arrested, Karbi Anglong Bandh Tomorrow", November 17, 2006 at <http://www.zenews.com/znews/articles.asp?rep=2&aid=336232&sid=REG> (Accessed on December 11, 2006).

While the ULFA enjoyed public support in the 1970s and the 1980s due to a growing Assamese disenchantment with state structures, it is important to note that over the years its ideology and violent practices have made Assamese society wary of its end goals. This change occurred with the killing of Sanjoy Ghosh, noted social activist. Ghosh, who headed the NGO AVARD-NE, was kidnapped by ULFA in July 1997 from Bongaon area of Majuli and was subsequently killed. Incidentally, on 20 July 2008, the man behind the killing of Ghosh, ULFA leader, Amrit Dutta was killed in an encounter with the CRPF and the police in Majuli.⁷³ The spate of kidnappings by ULFA in the 1990s also added to social discomfort. Added to this was the nexus between the ULFA and officials from the TATA Tea estates in Assam, including Executive Director S K Kidwai and General Manager S Dogra.⁷⁴ This nexus came to light after Pranati Deka, ULFA's Culture Secretary was arrested in Mumbai on 23 August 1997. While ULFA's credibility started dwindling when all these malpractices came to light, *Operation All Clear* launched by the RBA in December 2003 to weed out insurgent camps from Bhutan's territory further weakened ULFA's organization and leadership. In this military offensive, 30 ULFA camps were burnt down, and ULFA ideologue, Bhimakanta Burhagohain was detained and arrested.⁷⁵

In recent years, ULFA's claim of legitimate representation of Assamese aspirations for political sovereignty (if that is indeed the case) has also come under deep critical scrutiny since the outfit is non-transparent, run by a handful of men and women, who are extremely dictatorial in behaviour. Also, the violent means adopted by the ULFA had increased apprehension in Assamese society about the effectiveness and cost to Assam's overall economic and political progress as a result of the

⁷³ "ULFA leader behind Sanjoy Ghosh's death shot dead", *The Indian Express*, July 20, 2008 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ulfa-leader-behind-sanjoy-ghosh-s-death-shot/337866/> (Accessed on January 7, 2010).

⁷⁴ Nitin A. Gokhale, "The Garden Route to ULFA", *Outlook India*, September 22, 1997 at <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?204250> (Accessed on February 17, 2010).

⁷⁵ Dipankar Bannerjee and Bidhan S. Laishram, "Bhutan's "Operation All Clear": Implications for Insurgency and Security Cooperation", IPCS Issue Brief, no. 18, January 2004, pp. 1-4.

existence of such a violent force in their midst, the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration notwithstanding.

The capture and subsequent arrest of ULFA leaders like Aurobindo Rajkhowa, Chairman, ULFA, and Raju Baruah, ULFA Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Bangladesh in December 2009 is seen as the demise of the ULFA as a political force.⁷⁶ Rajkhowa was the main political propagandist of the ULFA and an original founding member. While Paresh Barua, Commander-in-Chief and one of the founding members of the ULFA is still at large somewhere in the Myanmar-China border area, Barua does not possess the political acumen to run an organization like the ULFA. Also, his whereabouts have been traced by Indian and Bangladeshi intelligence, and he is now believed to be involved in the drug trade in Myanmar. Hence, he has to confine himself to the Kachin and Shan states in Myanmar and could get into serious trouble in frequent crossovers to Yunnan province in China.⁷⁷

Coming to the NSCN (IM), while it has a strategy of negotiations with the Government of India, the outfit has also increased its cadre base from 1,000 in 1997 to nearly 5,600 in 2012. It has also increased its hold in Mokokchung, Tuensang, Mon and Dimapur in Nagaland, Ukhrul and Tamenglong in Manipur as well as across the border in the Dima Hasau district of Assam.⁷⁸ In March 2010, NSCN (IM) submitted a 30-point charter of demands, which included sovereignty for Naga areas. Since the demand for sovereignty by the NSCN (IM) is unlikely to be met, the Government's proposal for greater autonomy for Nagaland under article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution, which might include a separate Naga flag is a step forward.⁷⁹ It is however critical

⁷⁶ "ULFA Chairman Aurobindo Rajkhowa arrested in Bangladesh", *The Indian Express*, December 2, 2009 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ulfa-chairman-arabinda-rajkhowa-arrested-in-bangladesh/548924/> (Accessed on December 03, 2009).

⁷⁷ Mian Ridge, "Arrest of Arabindo Rajkhowa may tilt India's Assam Rebels to Peace", *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 9, 2009, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/1209/p06s04-wosc.htm> (Accessed on December 12, 2009).

⁷⁸ Field Visit by author to Nagaland, July-August 2007.

⁷⁹ "NSCN (IM) submits 30 point demand", *the Nagaland Post*, at <http://www.nagalandpost.com/ShowStory.aspx?npoststoryid=UzEmMjMxcNjE%3d-8GjrfjS1YXxcA%3d> (Accessed on March 04, 2010).

that the Government is strict on the NSCN (IM)'s activities of extortion, and arming of its cadres despite a cease-fire in place.

The UNLF started its overt violent movement in 1990 with the formation of its armed wing, the MPA. In December 1991, the MPA attacked Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel at the Loktak Hydel Power Project, 30 km from Imphal, resulting in the death of five CRPF personnel. Interestingly, such violence is not condemned outright by society as the reform agenda of the outfit has a wide ranging appeal in a society reeling under the influence of violence, drugs across the border from Myanmar and AIDS. Myanmar is a part of the golden triangle with Laos and Thailand and transports huge amounts of drugs and disease into India's northeast. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), poppy cultivation is on the rise in Myanmar with an estimated produce of 460 metric tons by 163, 000 households spread over 27, 700 hectares in 2007 alone.⁸⁰ Drug addiction and heroin use is rampant amongst the northeastern youths due to the easy availability of drugs from Myanmar through Moreh, Mokokchung and Champai, the three border districts in Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram respectively.⁸¹ Myanmar is also high on the number of HIV-AIDS cases with a 2 per cent count spilling over into the contiguous state of Manipur, which has become the highest HIV infected state in India. The correlation between injected heroin users and HIV-AIDS emanating from the Indo-Myanmar border is too obvious.

It has been observed by many security analysts that the ULFA, the UNLF, the PLA and the NSCN (IM) pretend to espouse people's causes.⁸² Such arguments are valid and worth engaging upon, but they fail to capture the reality. These rebel/insurgent groups are rooted in local civil societies. Young cadres might be misguided, impoverished

⁸⁰ See UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) fact sheet, 'Opium Poppy Cultivation in South East Asia 2007', http://www.unodc.org/pdf/research/icmp/fact_sheet_SEA_2007.pdf (Accessed on January 11, 2007).

⁸¹ UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 'Drug Use in the Northeastern States of India', http://www.unodc.org/india/drug_use_in_ne.html (Accessed on February 15, 2008).

⁸² Sanjib Baruah, *Durable Disorder*, n.9, pp. 99-106.

and illiterate, yet they believe that the present conditions of poverty and tribal melancholy can be redressed by an independent status. The Indian state's failure to directly deal with these radical ideologies is partly responsible for the failure to resolve the violent situation.⁸³

State Response to Armed Ethnic Insurgencies

The Indian state's response to insurgencies in the Northeast can be located within three conceptual parameters.

1. Proportionate use of force.
2. Use of dialogue and negotiations.
3. Structural changes.

Proportionate Use of Force

The significance of proportionality of force and non-combatant immunity is absolutely critical for the Indian state's response to insurgencies in the Northeast. Why is that so? Since the ULFA, the NSCN (IM), the UNLF and the PLA project a certain degree of society support, the disproportionate use of force by the Indian state can be counter-productive. The Kakopathar incident of 5 February 2006 in Tinsukia district of Assam is telling in this regard. Ajit Mahanta, a civilian, picked up by the army on suspicion of linkages to the ULFA was found dead after a few days in army custody. On 10 February, people from nearly 100 villages protested against Mahanta's death. The police opened fire on the protesters, killing eight people.⁸⁴ The ULFA reaped enormous benefits from the Kakopathar killings. Paresh Barua stated that "we have called for the strike to protest against inhuman crimes committed by Indian forces such as killing innocent people in its custody and firing on unarmed protesters."⁸⁵

⁸³ Nani G. Mahanta, "Accommodating the Third Voice in Conflict Zones", in Pushpita Das and Namrata Goswami, *India's North East New Vistas for Peace* (New Delhi: Manas, 2008), pp. 95-107.

⁸⁴ Anand Kumar, "Assam: Kokopathar Killings Gives Strength to Dying ULFA", at <http://www.saaq.org/%5Cpapers18%5Cpaper1733.html> (Accessed on 5 February 2007).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

It serves the purpose of democracies best when the military measures are limited. In this context, Assam has witnessed the gradual change in its overall counter-insurgency strategy due to the measured military responses by the army after the 1990s. The ULFA had tried to provoke the military to respond disproportionately by targetting non-combatants since 2000 but the restraint shown by state forces led to a public outcry against ULFA's violence, discrediting the group to a large extent.⁸⁶ Similarly, the increasing violence in Naga areas between factions⁸⁷ and the security forces' measured response has built a certain level of trust between the army and the locals in Nagaland. Safe passage through the state highways and protection of agricultural fields by the army had given respite to the populations of Diphupar and Chumukidima villages in Nagaland from the near daily extortion of money by insurgent groups who would routinely stop public transport and punish those who did not give them exorbitant taxes, sometimes lethally. This local attitude towards the army is a far cry from the 1960s and 1970s, when it was feared and routinely accused of human rights violations.⁸⁸ In Manipur, the security forces have also tried to restrain their use of force because of the social apathy against counter-insurgency operations and militarization of society.⁸⁹ While the Indian security forces have intelligence on the UNLF and the PLA's whereabouts, they have refrained from carrying out an all-out operation against the armed outfits, given the nature of public resistance to armed operations.

Use of Dialogue and Negotiations

According to Hal Sanders, of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue and the Kettering Foundation,

Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what

⁸⁶ Field Visit to the hill districts of Assam in July 2007 and interviews with local media, people and villagers.

⁸⁷ See "Wanyuh, others condemn factional clash", *Nagaland Post*, May 7, 2008 at <http://www.nagalandpost.com/Statedesc.asp?sectionid=59518>(Accessed on 7 May 2008).

⁸⁸ Interview with Naga *Hobo*, Apex Naga tribal body, Diphupar, Nagaland, July 2007.

⁸⁹ Insights from consultations with the army, police and civil society in Manipur, March 2011.

they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others' concern into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other.⁹⁰

If one assesses the Indian state's response to the armed conflicts in the Northeast, dialogue and negotiations have always been a serious alternative option. In the case of the Naga conflict, the dialogue started as early as 1947 with the Akbar Hydari agreement, the civil society interactions of the 1950s, the Naga Peace Mission of 1964, the Shillong Accord of 1975 and the now ongoing peace negotiations with the NSCN (IM) and the NSCN (K). With regard to the ULFA case, the jailed ULFA leaders have been released followed by "unconditional talks" with the outfit falling within the framework of negotiations. The ULFA has also submitted its "Charter of Demands" to the Union government during talks. While one could argue that there is not much hope for long lasting peace to settle in Assam given that ULFA leaders are forced to talk to the Union government under duress, it is important to note that this is not the first time the framework of talks has been utilized by the Government of India as a conflict resolution mechanism with the ULFA. In September 2005, efforts were made to reach out to the ULFA with the formation of the People's Consultative Group (PCG). At that time, the process failed as ULFA lacked commitment to the talks and instead increased its armed cadres during that period. This time, the anti-talk faction led by Paresh Barua could try create problems in the peace talks. However, Barua does not enjoy the same leverage as Arabinda Rajkhowa in Assamese society and hence will not be able to derail the peace process as some believe him capable of.

Structural Changes

The most important structural response is the grant of greater political autonomy and statehood. As early as 1947, the Interim Government appointed a sub-committee to the Constituent Assembly, the North-

⁹⁰ Bettye Pruitt and Philip Thomas, *Democratic Dialogue A Handbook for Practitioners*, GS/OAS, IDEA, UNDP, WashingtonD.C. and New York, 2007, pp. 20-21.

East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee under the Chairmanship of then Assam Chief Minister, Gopinath Bardoloi. The committee recommended setting up of autonomous district councils to provide due representative structures at the local level to the tribal population. The recommendation was later incorporated into article 244 (2) of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Nagaland has been accorded special status under constitutional law. Article 371 (A) states that no Act of Parliament in respect of religious or social practices of the Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice and ownership and transfer of land and resources will apply to Nagaland unless passed by the State Assembly. Statehood was also granted to Nagaland in 1963 followed by the North Eastern Areas (Re-Organization) Act of 1971 which granted statehood to Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura and Union Territory status to Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. In 1987, the Mizo armed conflict was also resolved by granting statehood to Mizoram through the Mizo Peace Accord of 1986.

Another structural change that is being envisioned through the 'Look East' policy is economic development and trade routes to South East Asia *via* land and sea to bring about prosperity to the Northeastern states. This policy could also have a beneficial effect by persuading people to reject violent means projected by the armed groups and embrace peace and development into their lives.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the best way to respond to armed ethnic conflicts of this nature is through the mechanisms of dialogue and negotiations. The use of force, while bringing down levels of violence and managing the conflict to an extent, has been unable to root out the insurgencies. Armed insurgencies continue to flourish despite an increase in security personnel, and the life of the common man continues to be insecure, while factional violence takes its toll in civilian lives. One of the most relevant lessons in dealing with non-state armed violence of this nature is that successful resolution mostly depends on the unity of the guerilla leadership. This was witnessed by India with regard to the Mizo armed conflict. The leadership of Ladenga and his ability to carry the entire MNF leadership with him was instrumental in the successful resolution of the conflict. Hence, the best way forward is a multiple steps formula: to ensure that law

enforcement is efficient enough to create disincentives for armed groups to continue arming themselves; to empower the common people: give them their due respect, their political rights and their economic basis for a decent livelihood, and show respect to their ethnic culture and identity, improve public transport, clean up corrupt government offices and make them people friendly, and truly project the idea of India as a democratic nation where people matter; and lastly, open up the northeastern borders to the rest of the world. Today's world belongs to the globalizers. The Northeast is truly a region that can benefit from globalization. Once the challenge of insurgencies is curtailed, the "look east" policy can be fully implemented in letter and spirit.

IV TERRORISM: A GROWING THREAT

India has been a victim of terrorism and insurgency since Independence. Violence against the state was first utilized by the Nagas as discussed in the earlier chapter. Multiple armed conflicts in the Northeast followed. Left-wing extremism also raised its ugly head through the 1960s. In the late 1980s, Kashmir, one of the most strategic states in India and sharing land borders with Pakistan, witnessed the rise of terrorism with visible support from Pakistan. Without the external hand, which includes base areas to terror groups, arms supply, financial help and training terror recruits in Pakistan, the Kashmiri terrorist groups could not have sustained themselves for so long. Since 1993, a new trend of terrorism emerged which was not territorially bound as those in the Northeast or Kashmir. This distinctive wave of terrorism targeted Indian cities with the political goal of discrediting India's economic growth by creating disorder. In 1993, a series of blasts in 13 places across Mumbai killed 257 people and injured 713. After a gap of nine years, in December 2002, a bomb blast in Mumbai's central station injured 25 people. In 2003, in three separate bomb blasts in Mumbai in January, March and August, 57 people were killed and 260 injured. In 2006, seven multiple bomb blasts on local trains in Mumbai killed 181 people. In November 2008, 166 people were killed in coordinated attacks by 10 men who came in via the sea from Pakistan.¹ In July 2011, bomb blasts in Zaveri Bazar, Opera House and Dadar left 21 people dead and 113 injured.² This urban terrorism is a growing threat and needs special emphasis since India's urban population will grow over the years with massive migration from rural to urban areas in search of

¹ "Terror attacks in Mumbai since 1993", *India Today*, July 14, 2011 at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/terror-attacks-in-mumbai-since-1993/1/144752.html> (Accessed on July 13, 2012).

² "Mumbai: Explosions Shakes India's Financial Hub", July 13, 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14141454> (Accessed on July 13, 2012).

better livelihood. This will make it the target of terror groups whose aim is to promote disorder in Indian cities to project the image of instability and lawlessness to the outside world utilizing instant media and the internet.

This chapter provides an assessment of this distinctive trend of urban terrorism in India. It primarily focusses on the year 2008, given the multiple terror blasts that took place in a single year, marking it as a ‘crucial case study’.³

Definition of Terrorism

There has been a lot of angst and debate in defining terrorism from the legal point of view. Most international lawyers argue that terrorism is an ambiguous and imprecise concept, and can serve no legal purpose whatsoever.⁴ Rosalyn Higgins, a renowned international lawyer and former President of the International Court of Justice went on to state in 1997 that:

Terrorism is a term without legal significance. It is merely a convenient way of alluding to activities whether of states or of individuals, widely disapproved of and in which either the methods used are unlawful, or the targets protected, or both.⁵

The events of 9/11 perhaps changed that discourse on terrorism with mounting US pressure on states to act against terrorism, and to define terrorist activities from a legal point of view. The Council of the European Union on 13 June 2002 defined terrorism as international acts that caused damage to government facility, transport infrastructure, etc thereby endangering human life and so forth.⁶ Terrorism could

³ Harry Eckstein, “Case Study and the Theory Development”, in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, ed., *Handbook of Political Science, Vol.7, Strategies of Inquiry* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley, 1975).

⁴ See R R Baxter, “A Sceptical Look at the Concept of Terrorism”, *Akron Law Review* 7, 1973-1974, p. 380. Also see Christian Walters, “Defining Terrorism in National and International Law” at https://www.unodc.org/tldb/bibliography/Biblio_Int_humanitarian_law_Walter_2003.pdf (Accessed on May 31, 2012).

⁵ Walters, n.4, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 5.

result in the creation of an atmosphere of fear, and cause civilian deaths in order to coerce a government to succumb to a particular political demand by the terrorist group. Any terrorist activity reflects the tactical goal of intimidating the target population in order to achieve the strategic purpose of coercing the government representing that population into certain political concessions. Terrorism appears to have a greater ability to coerce democratic governments than a dictatorship.⁷

The United States Department of Defense (DoD) defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological”.⁸ The U.S. Department of State defines terrorism to be “premeditated politically-motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”.⁹

While there could be several antecedent causes of terrorism, some of the most significant ones are a perceived sense of injustice by the aggrieved group, and a belief by that group that the use of violence will bring about a change.¹⁰ Thereby, most terrorist groups use their political ends for justifying violent means. Some scholars argue that such violent means have been successful in getting concessions from the target governments.¹¹ While still others argue that terrorism as a tactic and a strategy never works in favour of the terrorist groups in the long run.¹²

⁷ Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walters, “The Strategies of Terrorism”, *International Security*, 31/1, Summer 2006, pp. 49-80.

⁸ See “What is Terrorism?” at <http://www.terrorism-research.com/> (Accessed on May 31, 2012).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Author interview with Yasin Malik, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, India International Centre, New Delhi, January 11, 2010.

¹¹ Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2006), p. 65.

¹² Max Abrahms, “Why Terrorism does not Work?”, *International Security*, 31/2 (Fall 2006), pp. 42-78.

The Rise of Terrorism in India

India has suffered terrorism for many decades now. Most prominent has been terrorism in Kashmir which began in the 1980s. This terrorism is believed to have been mostly fuelled by Pakistan in order to separate the Muslim dominated Kashmir valley from India. Around 20, 000 civilians, 20,000 terrorists and 7000 security personnel lives have been lost as a result.¹³ According to the US Department of State, three foreign terrorist groups are active in Kashmir, namely, the Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).¹⁴ All the three groups were formed in the 1980s and 1990s. The HuM was formed in the mid-1980s and is based in Pakistan. The JeM was formed in 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar, a Pakistani national, with the political objective to incorporate Kashmir with Pakistan. The LeT was formed in 1993 as the military wing of the Markaz-ad-Dawa-wal-Irshad. The LeT is held responsible by the Indian government for the attacks on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 and the Mumbai attacks in November 2008.¹⁵

The hand of Pakistan in fuelling the *jihad* in Kashmir to create an environment of either *Azadi* (freedom) or joining Pakistan is evident. During the Afghan *jihad* in the 1980s against the Soviet Union, Pakistan trained 80, 000 *Mujahideen* in training camps established in Pakistan.¹⁶ Once the Afghan *jihad* was over with the end of the cold war and Soviet withdrawal, Pakistan turned its attention on India. At that time, Kashmir was going through a tumultuous phase in the 1980s. There were accusations that the 1987 state elections which witnessed the victory of the Congress-National Conference were rigged. Losing candidates

¹³ "India Revises Kashmir Death Toll to 47, 000", Reuters, November 21, 2008 at <http://in.reuters.com/article/2008/11/21/idINIndia-36624520081121> (Accessed on July 31, 2012).

¹⁴ Jamal Afridi, "Kashmir Militant Extremists", Council on Foreign Relations, July 09, 2009, at <http://www.cfr.org/kashmir/kashmir-militant-extremists/p9135> (Accessed on May 23, 2012).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ S. Kalyanaraman, "India and the Challenge of Hinterland Terrorism", *Strategic Analysis*, 34/5, 2010, p. 704.

were declared winners.¹⁷ Protests against these elections grew violent in 1988. These rigged elections provided the fuel to the losing parties like the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, the People's Conference and the Ittihad-ul-Muslimeen to become part of the main separatist alliance, the All Party *Hurriyat* Conference.¹⁸ The *Hizb ul Mujahideen* supreme commander and United Jihad Council (UJC) chief Syed Salahuddin had fought the 1987 elections under his real name, Mohammad Yousuf Shah but lost.¹⁹ Kashmiri leaders like Yasin Malik of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) also took to violence during that period (he renounced violent means in 1994).²⁰ Terrorism in Kashmir exists due to the ability of outfits like LeT and HuM to operate from Pakistan. The hand of Pakistan in fuelling home grown terror groups like Indian Mujahideen (IM) is also suspected especially through the LeT proxy.²¹ It was the IM that claimed responsibility for most of the terror attacks on Indian cities in 2008. The year 2008 also witnessed multiple bomb blasts in Assam in October of that year and the 26/11 terror attacks.

2008: The Year of Multiple Terror Attacks

Since 2008, terrorist attacks in India had gone up manifold. The Ahmedabad terrorist bombings of 26 July 2008 killed nearly 45 civilians and wounded 160 while the Bangalore bombings the previous day killed one and wounded six. This was preceded by the 13 May 2008 Jaipur terrorist bombings, which killed 80 civilians and injured more than 200. On 13 September 2008, five serial bombs shattered the weekend peace across several popular market complexes in New Delhi, killing 30 innocent civilians and injuring nearly 90.

¹⁷ Altaf Hussain, "Kashmir's Flawed Elections", *BBC*, September 14, 2002 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2223364.stm (Accessed on July 07, 2012).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Shujaat Bukhari, "We are not against dialogue: Hizb Chief", *The Hindu*, May 28, 2011 at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2057791.ece> (Accessed on July 13, 2012).

²⁰ Interview with Yasin Malik, n. 10.

²¹ Rajnish Sharma, "IM is a LeT Front, India tells Pak", *The Asian Age*, June 18, 2012 at <http://www.asianage.com/india/im-let-front-india-tells-pak-193> (Accessed on July 18, 2012).

An elusive outfit calling itself Indian Mujahideen (IM)²² claimed responsibility for the bombings *via* an email sent to national media houses 10 minutes after the first blast at Karol Bagh, one of the busiest marketplaces in the capital, Delhi. In that email, titled “The Message of Death”, the IM asserted that the reasons for the Delhi blasts included: the atrocities against innocent Muslims by the Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) after the Ahmedabad bombings, the Amarnath land dispute in Jammu and Kashmir, the killings of Christians in Odissa, the arrests of Students’ Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) activists on suspicion of alleged terror activities, the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the Gujarat riots.²³ The demolition of the Babri Masjid was stated by the IM as the reason for the radicalization of Muslim youth in society and the trigger for communal violence in India since 1992.

The IM also claimed responsibility for the Jaipur, Bangalore and Ahmedabad bombings. On closer scrutiny, the stated reasons for the terror blasts by the IM appeared to be a well-rehearsed rhetorical posturing for a target audience that included not only its social base and funders in India but also possible sponsors abroad. This explained the recurring acts of terror by a here thereto unknown outfit, which sought to establish its credibility as an effective actor. That was why in the email sent after the Ahmedabad bombings, the IM categorically demanded of the LeT not to claim responsibility for the blast for it would have minimised its own impact as an emerging India-based terror outfit.

The terror bombings were also meant to indicate the inability of the security agencies to thwart such terrorist activities. The email after the Delhi blasts states “Indian Mujahideen strikes back once more... Do whatever you can. Stop us if you can.”²⁴ Such language was hardly

²² Namrata Goswami, “Who is the Indian Mujahideen?”, February 03, 2009 at <http://www.idsa.in/background/IndianMujahideen> (Accessed on March 06, 2012).

²³ “Stop the heart of India from bleeding”, *Outlook*, September 13, 2008.

²⁴ See Namrata Goswami, “Averting Terror Attacks” at <http://www.idsa.in/publications/stratcomments/NamrataGoswami250908.htm> (Accessed on October 12, 2008).

surprising coming from a terror outfit, but what was perhaps alarming was its ability to carry out repeated attacks.

Other two terror blasts that subsequently followed the Delhi blasts were the 30 October 2008 terror blasts in Assam resulting in the death of 83 civilians and injury to 300. RDX and ammonium nitrate were used during the blasts. This aspect indicated that the terror outfit's objective was to engineer heavy civilian casualty.²⁵ The blasts in other cities like Jaipur, Ahmedabad or New Delhi earlier were of a lower intensity. In the immediate aftermath of the blasts, a hitherto unknown outfit calling itself Islamic Security Force (Indian Mujahideen) or ISF (IM) was held responsible for the blasts by the Assam Police based on an SMS it ostensibly sent to a Guwahati-based television news channel *News Live*, claiming responsibility for this dastardly act.²⁶ Incidentally, the ISF, without the link to the IM, was formed in 2000, during the Bodo separatist movement with the aim to protect the interests of Muslim migrant settlers in the Bodo-dominated districts of Assam.²⁷ However, no evidence of terror activities by the ISF had come to light before October 30. Moreover, the authenticity of the SMS was later questioned and the Assam police subsequently stated that it could be a "hoax" aimed at misleading the investigations. The Security Forces (SF) had also asserted that ULFA along with the Harkat-ul-Jehadi-e-Islami (HuJI) joined forces and carried out the attacks. (ULFA had denied any involvement in the blasts).²⁸ That the HuJI was involved was inferred due to the use of RDX. It was also argued by the SF that since ULFA was a discredited force in Assam, the outfit wanted to terrorize people

²⁵ Randeep Ramesh, "Deadly Bomb Blasts Rock North-East India", *The Guardian*, October 30, 2008 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/oct/30/india-terrorism> (Accessed on March 12, 2012).

²⁶ "ISF-Indian Mujahideen Claims Responsibility for Assam Blasts", *India Today*, October 31, 2008 at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/ISF-Indian+Mujahideen+claims+responsibility+for+Assam+blasts/1/19066.html> (Accessed on April 08, 2012).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "ULFA-HuJI main suspects behind Assam Blasts", IBN-Live at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/main-suspects-behind-blasts-in-assam/77162-3-1.html> (Accessed on April 09, 2012).

into supporting its so called cause of Independent Sovereign *Asom*.²⁹ This was, however, a highly unlikely proposition. ULFA had learnt its lessons after its 2004 indiscriminate bomb blasts at Dhemaji district which killed 10 school children and seven others.³⁰ The public outcry against the outfit at that time resulted in a diminished ULFA influence. Hence, ULFA would avoid targetting the ethnic group it claimed to represent for fear of fresh public outcry against the outfit. Also, ULFA had no base in Kokrajhar, and thus it was not easy for the outfit to carry out blasts there. Rationally speaking, the outfit would also refrain from being openly seen as collaborating with HuJI in deadly terror attacks in ethnic Assamese inhabited areas as that would further distance the outfit from its limited support base.³¹ The Assam Police also suggested that the National Democratic Front of *Bodoland* (NDFB) engineered the attacks on orders issued by its founder and chief, Rajan Daimary in September 2008. The attacks, it appeared, were due to the frustration of the NDFB at the lack of progress in talks between the outfit and the Union government.³²

The worst terror attack in 2008 was however the Mumbai terror attacks which spread across three horrific days (62 hours), from 26-28 November. Though comparisons with 9/11 were too far fetched, the surprise element in these attacks was the willingness of the terror outfit to engage the Indian security forces in a frontal battle. Earlier terror attacks had involved simultaneous bomb blasts in crowded market places and official complexes. In Mumbai, the seizure of its five star hotels and Nariman house and attacks on its main railway station by the terrorists involved a direct engagement by the terrorists with the

²⁹ Dilip Gogoi and Namrata Goswami, "The October 30 Terrorist Attacks in Assam", *IDSA Strategic Comment*, November 14, 2008 at http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/TheOctober30TerroristAttacksinAssam_NGoswami,%20DGogoi_141108 (Accessed on March 13, 2012).

³⁰ "Dhemaji Blasts ULFA's Biggest Mistake", *The Times of India*, May 27, 2011 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-27/guwahati/29590966_1_pranati-deka-ulfa-chairman-arabinda-rajkbhawa (Accessed on March 06, 2012).

³¹ Insights based on field work by the author in Assam between 2006-2012.

³² *Ibid.*

security forces.³³ It appears from post-facto intelligence interrogation of the lone arrested terrorist from the Mumbai attacks, Ajmal Kasab, a resident of Faridkot, a village in Pakistan's Punjab province that 10 LeT men left Karachi on November 21 and later hijacked a Porbandar-based fishing boat *Kubert* to enter Mumbai.³⁴ The entry to Mumbai was dramatic: the Gateway of India route. It appears that all the terrorists were well trained in marine manoeuvre and a special course known as *Daura-e-Shaiifa* in specialized raids into hotels and hospitals by its cells was imparted to them at the training stage. The terror cell mostly used the GPS to reach Mumbai through the sea on November 26, landing at Badhwar Park in Cuffe Parade and then split up into four batches targeting Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Oberoi Trident Hotel, Taj Hotel, Leopold Café, and Nariman House from around 2130h in the night. These were all well-chosen targets in terms of their performance value—elite targetting and simultaneous media attention. Another interesting aspect of these attacks was the targetting of the foreigners in the two hotels, especially Americans and British, in a way drawing the attention of channels like BBC and CNN round the clock and of world leaders as well. Ironically, their objective to get global attention through these terror attacks was perhaps a “mission accomplished” with the kind of Indian national media frenzy that followed the attacks. The other worrisome aspect of the Mumbai attacks was that while a small cell of the terror outfit had been eliminated, the overall leadership and masterminds of the Mumbai blasts are still at large and could possibly carry out another attack. It can be predicted based on the patterns of the earlier attacks that the terrorists will target urban centres like New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Lucknow or Raipur in the near future, given the wide coverage it receives and the state reaction it effectuates.

³³ See Namrata Goswami, “Mumbai Attacks: A Deadly Performance” at <http://www.idsa.in/publications/stratcomments/NamrataGoswami051208.htm> (Accessed on December 6, 2008).

³⁴ “US intelligence sees Lashkar-e-Taiba behind Mumbai attacks”, *The Times of India*, November 29, 2008 at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/US_intelligence_sees_Lashkar-e-Taiba_behind_Mumbai_attacks/articleshow/3772167.cms?TOI_latestnews (Accessed on November 30, 2008).

Also, industrial and upcoming areas like Bangalore, Jamshedpur and Chennai require strengthening of city security apparatus.³⁵

Another terror attack occurred on 13 February 2010 in Pune when the city's famous German Bakery was ripped apart by a powerful IED. The blasts killed nine people immediately and injured 32 others.³⁶ Customers in the German bakery are mostly foreigners, and the target could have been chosen in order to blacken India's image as a tourist destination the world over. There were also two major terror attacks in 2011: the serial blasts in Mumbai in July 2011³⁷ and the Delhi high court blasts in September 2011.³⁸ These bring us to the rather vital but hardly analyzed aspect of the "strategies" that these terror outfits usually follow in order to achieve their political objectives.

Strategies of Terrorism

In an interesting study on strategies of terrorism in *International Security* in 2006, Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walters indicate that terrorist outfits mostly engage in "costly signalling" or a violent signal of resolve to provide concrete evidence about their ability to enact "acts of terror" to achieve their goals.³⁹ Take for example the *al Qaeda*. Had it informed the US that it plans to kill around 3000 or so Americans on 9/11 unless the US withdrew its forces from West Asia, people would have disbelieved its intentions. Weak actors like terrorists therefore establish their "terrible" credibility by public display of violence. Kydd and Walters cite five strategic logics and goals of terrorist outfits. Strategic

³⁵ Namrata Goswami, "Dealing with Terror Strategies", *The Hindu*, New Delhi, August 5, 2008, p. 11.

³⁶ "Terror strikes Pune: 9 killed in blast in popular bakery", at <http://news.rediff.com/report/2010/feb/13/five-feared-killed-in-pune-bakery-blast.htm> (Accessed on February 23, 2010).

³⁷ "3 bomb blasts in Mumbai; 17 dead, 131 injured", *IBN Live*, July 14, 2011 at <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/twin-blasts-in-mumbai-15-injured/167291-3.html> (Accessed on August 04, 2011).

³⁸ "Briefcase Bomb at Delhi High Court Kills 11, Injures 62", *The Times of India*, September 07, 2011 at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-09-07/delhi/30122233_1_delhi-high-court-bomb-explosion-car-bomb (Accessed on February 03, 2012).

³⁹ Kydd and Walters, "Strategies of Terrorism", n. 7, pp. 49-80.

logics include attrition, intimidation, provocation, spoiling and outbidding. Terrorists utilizing attrition advertise to their adversary their ability to impose considerable costs on the target population over a period of time; intimidation is mainly aimed at coercing the target population to support the terrorists' cause; provocation attempts to induce the adversary to respond to terrorist acts with indiscriminate counterforce resulting in enormous hardship for the local population. Consequently, the population ends up supporting the terrorist outfits. Spoiling includes attempts by terrorist outfits to undermine any move against terror by moderates amongst the target population. Outbidding aims at convincing the target population that one terror outfit is more credible than others. Five principle goals are meant to be achieved by these strategic logics: regime change, policy change, territorial change, social control of the population, and status quo maintenance of an existing regime or territorial arrangement. Amongst these goals, the 9/11 attacks were primarily waged by *al Qaeda* to engineer US policy change in West Asia especially in regard to US troops stationed in Saudi Arabia.

The terror bombings in India were either for “territorial change” or “social control”. The LeT’s involvement in the Mumbai blasts was motivated by its goal of territorial change in Kashmir by incorporating it with Pakistan. SIMI and the Indian *Mujahideen* were more geared towards social control as they wanted to strengthen their own status amongst their present recruits as well as the target population. Subsequently, the Indian *Mujahideen* sent an email stating that it was a terrorist group to indicate its violent nature to the target population. It also openly requested the LeT not to claim responsibility for the attacks so that its own distinctive terrible credibility was established beyond doubt. Social control over the target population is also secured by discrediting the state’s capability to secure its citizens from terror attacks. We have also witnessed aggressive verbal attacks (spoiler tactics) by terror outfits against moderate Muslims defying terror.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Namrata Goswami, “*Dealing with Terror Strategies*”, n.35.

Use of Internet as a Strategic Tool

The use of the internet for raising money, propagate terror ideology and engineer recruitment is another significant aspect of modern day terrorism. The internet is widely used for purposes of propaganda, recruitment, information, and intelligence. It has become like a virtual sanctuary for cell based terrorism which is not territorially bound like the *al-Qaeda*.⁴¹ Terror handbooks, videos, and propaganda are uploaded into the internet for wide dissemination and publicity. Websites carry the message of terror groups to a wider audience and generate funds and recruits to their cause.⁴² Terrorists are also increasingly using the internet chat rooms to “share information, coordinate attacks, spread propaganda, raise funds, and recruit.”⁴³ Hacking of websites and carrying out virus attacks are some of the other cyber terror tactics. Hacking into security systems is another form of terror attack. One of the most famous cyber terrorists was *Irbabi 007* (real name Younis Tsouli) from London who gave seminars online on hacking techniques and how to securely distribute information on the internet avoiding detection. Tsouli succeeded in hacking into American university computers, spread al Qaeda’s message and also spread propaganda on behalf of Iraq’s insurgents led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Tsouli was skilled in programming, executing online attacks, media design, and hosting propaganda on password protected forums.⁴⁴ Password protected forums like *Muntada al-Ansar al-Islami* (Islam Supporters Forum) and al-Ekhlās (Sincerity) that Tsouli joined were used for military training and recruitment by the *al-Qaeda*. These two websites provided direct

⁴¹ David Kilcullen, “Counterinsurgency Redux,” *Survival*, 48/4, Winter 2006-2007, pp.111-130.

⁴² See report on “Terrorist Websites” at <http://www.terroristwebsites.info/> (Accessed on July 18, 2012). This websites list 429 different terrorist websites in which information about religion, ideology, and political goals of different outfits are mentioned. Also see Aleph at <http://english.aleph.to/pr/01.html> (Accessed on July 07, 2012).

⁴³ Eben Kaplan, “Terrorists and the Internet”, Council on Foreign Relations, January 8, 2009 at <http://www.cfr.org/terrorism-and-technology/terrorists-internet/p10005> (Accessed on June 19, 2012).

⁴⁴ Rita Katz and Michael Kern “Terrorist 007 Exposed”, *The Washington Post*, March 26, 2006 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/25/AR2006032500020.html> (Accessed on July 06, 2012).

contact between recruits and *al Qaeda* top leaders, and also led to distribution of ideology.⁴⁵

The use of the internet serves the purpose of terrorist groups because they operate in small cells and are not based in a single geographical area. Hence, for operational planning, the internet, satellite and mobile phones are being used extensively. This easy communication through the internet brings in the transnational character of terrorism. Terrorists can be anywhere and yet stay wired using technology. Even during attacks, the leader of a particular terror attack can give instructions via satellite phone. During the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the 10 LeT men broke up into small teams and were in touch with each other through the cell phone devices like Blackberries. They used the Global Positioning System (GPS) to steer their boat towards Mumbai. During the attacks at the Taj Hotel, the terrorists were continuously being instructed via satellite phone by their Pakistan based controllers. The instructions *via* the satellite phone included motivational talks, when to kill hostages, information on what the Indian media was reporting about the attacks, international responses to the attacks, etc.⁴⁶ In fact, in Mumbai, a virtual number 12012531824 used by the controller to talk to one of the mobile numbers with the terrorists was generated by a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) provided by *Callphonex*, a telephony company in the United States.⁴⁷ The internet is also used for technology transfers of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). This aspect has been observed when IEDs that first appeared in Chechnya were quickly used in Iraq or Afghanistan.⁴⁸ IEDs technology can be transferred via the internet or a CD-ROM.

The IM also extensively used the internet to spread its messages to recruit and spread its messages. Abdul Subhan Usman Qureshi, code name “Kasim” or “al-arbi”, the leader of the IM who signed the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Siddharth Varadarajan, “Dossier: Handler Used Virtual Number to Contact a Mobile with One of the Terrorists”, *The Hindu*, January 07, 2009 at <http://www.hindu.com/2009/01/07/stories/2009010760571200.htm> (Accessed on July 20, 2012).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Killkullen, n. 41.

email manifestos sent by the IM before and after the multiple blasts in 2008, is a software professional. In 1995, he obtained a diploma in industrial electronics and in 1996 a specialized software maintenance qualification from the CMS Institute in Marol. After obtaining these degrees, he joined Radical Solutions, an independent computer firm operating out of the Fort area in south Mumbai in November 1996. In 1999, he changed jobs and joined Datamatics, a major computer firm in Mumbai. However, somewhere in these years, Qureshi was also harbouring more radical ideologies and in 2001, he left his job at the firm stating in his resignation letter that “I have decided to devote one complete year to pursue religious and spiritual matters.”⁴⁹

As seen by the Mumbai attacks, it is also easier for the Pakistani based terror groups to spread their radical ideologies, make financial transfers as well as coordinate small cells in India through the internet. This is an aspect that would need to be grappled with and recognized as the next big challenge for the counter-terror forces in India. Besides this, there is another motive of terrorists using cyber. Terrorists aim to target critical infrastructure like transportation networks, banking and finance, fuel production, military complexes, etc. In achieving this end, the terrorists use Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS). Cyber attacks are also low cost as malicious software is easily available on the internet, and the added anonymity of the attacks creates a low risk situation.⁵⁰

Deterring Terrorism

India’s counter-terrorism strategy requires well-coordinated, specialized units with superior intelligence gathering and assessment skills. The government must also urgently activate effective countermeasures like law enforcement, covert operations based on sound intelligence against terror networks, and efficient bureaucratic coordination. The greatest successes against terror are planned attacks averted by state forces. This needs greater media coverage so that a sense of security is instilled

⁴⁹ Goswami, n.22.

⁵⁰ Amaresh Pujari, IPS, Tamil Nadu, “Cyber Terrorism World Wide Weaponisation” <http://cii.in/WebCMS/Upload/Amaresh%20Pujari,%20IPS548.pdf> (Accessed on July 23, 2012).

amongst citizens. Such preventive successes against terror also deprive terrorists of their most vital weapons: civilian deaths and the fear psychosis that spreads in society.

Institutional Challenges

Instead of addressing these security challenges, the reality in cities like Delhi and Mumbai is that most of the best trained police personnel are utilized for VIP security. Nearly 60 per cent of the 83,740 or more police personnel in Delhi are employed for securing VIPs and their movements. The living conditions of most police personnel are sub-optimal; they are made to work in conditions where even basic amenities are absent. Out of 76,613 Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) in Delhi, nearly 63,103 are yet to get housing promised to them. Also, the ratio of police personnel at the level of constables in Delhi is much lower than the mid-level ASIs, thereby coming in the way of a visible police presence on the ground. While special units to fight terror have been raised in cities like Mumbai, these have so far proved inadequate. The National Security Guard (NSG) is an elite counter-terror force but it is designed to serve only as a rapid reaction force and not a preventive force.⁵¹

Sophisticated Counter-Terror Technology

One of the effective means that can deter terrorism in civilian spaces is the installation of Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) in public places. This could provide images on suspicious activities. CCTV can also prove useful to avert terrorism as most terror outfits carry out reconnaissance of a likely target area before the actual attack. For instance, the IM had carried out reconnaissance on 11 September 2008 in its target areas in Delhi. This should have been caught on camera and assessed in areas like M-Block market, Ghaffar Market, and CP which had CCTVs functioning on September 11 and before. Yet not much

⁵¹ Namrata Goswami, "Delhi Terror Attacks: Need for Some Soul Searching", *IDSA Strategic Comment*, September 08, 2011 at http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/DelhiTerrorAttacksNeedforsomeSoulSearching_ngoswami_080911 (Accessed on March 21, 2012).

advantage could be taken of this available technology as vital HUMINT abilities required to assess pictorial data were either lacking or the police forces were lethargic as none amongst them had calculated that a terror attack could occur in Delhi around that time. What is worse is that the bomb that went off near the Prince Pan Shop in M-Block market in Delhi was placed just below the CCTV at an angle of 25 degrees. (The CCTV camera at M-Block market could only capture images at an 80 degrees angle range whereas higher quality CCTVs are capable of capturing images at angles as low as 5-10 degrees range in vertical viewing and 6-11 degrees range in horizontal viewing depending on the lens type). This further substantiates the fact that the IM unit had carried out extensive survey of the area and was also aware of the type of CCTV installed there. Significantly, CCTVs captured the image of the auto-rickshaw in which the suspected IM militant, who planted the bomb at Ghaffar market, travelled from Paharganj area to Karol Bagh.

Detering terrorism is, however, not an impossible task. Contrary to what the press might want us to believe, terrorists are not irrational actors. Though terror outfits might lack specified “return address”, focussed intelligence can find out elements in a “terror network”, which may not be motivated enough to “carry through” a plan of attack if the risks involved are too high. Deterrence against terror outfits can also work if the decision making within the terror outfit is influenced by some “cost-benefit” calculations. Thereby, holding at risk the political goals of an outfit could be the best effort at countering these groups. Indeed, terrorist outfits are rational actors with hierarchically ordered goals and strategies that best advance their goals. Since these organizations, though loosely structured, have a chain of command and control, there are specific actors fulfilling certain roles who can be deterred. According to Paul Davies and Brian Jenkins, two distinguished terrorism experts, the system of terror “comprises leaders, lieutenants, financiers, logisticians, foot soldiers, supporting population segments, and religious and ideological figures”.⁵² In fact, if states can make tracking

⁵² Robert F. Trager, *et.al.*, “Detering Terrorism It Can beDone”, *International Security*, 30/3, 2005-06, pp. 87-123.

the financiers of the terror network a priority, then there is good enough chance of averting terror strikes.

States sponsors of terrorism like Pakistan for instance can be more effectively deterred by bringing about diplomatic pressure from countries like the US as well as by skilfully “utilizing the tool of coercive diplomacy” on the part of India. To be credible, however, coercive diplomacy must be backed by the threat of military action but not actual action *per se* as that could lead more to instability than stability. The calculus of “probability of success” in military actions must also be carefully assessed. Significantly, terrorism must also be looked upon as a process, or a series of actions culminating in violence rather than a single act or event as the 9/11 attacks signify. The planning for 9/11 attacks began as early as 1996 when Muhammad Atta began recruiting in Hamburg in Germany. Over the next five years, he and his fellow accomplices arranged the weapons, visas, flight training, financing, and targets. This shows that at each stage of the terrorist attacks, there is an opportunity to detect these activities through focussed and superior intelligence and law enforcement.⁵³

The need of the hour is to also think in terms of a well-coordinated anti-terror force at the national level, perhaps something similar to the National Security Guards or “special forces” since the adversary is well coordinated and spread out across the states in a seamless web of small cellular units. India should establish a Federal Counter-Terrorism Mechanism, which will integrate the various intelligence agencies, state police, customs, border security, cyber and public health departments to counter terror attacks.⁵⁴ Terror prevention by security forces is, however, not enough. Civil society organizations especially representing the minority communities also need to be tapped into by the state in order to assuage the insecurities felt by these communities because of the illegal activities of a few amongst them. Indian national media also needs to be more objective in their news reporting and refrain from jumping to conclusions about who is a terrorist unless the guilt is proved

⁵³ Ibid.

in a court of law. Finally, terrorism as a coercive strategy rarely works. An analysis of the outcomes of terrorist attacks shows those outfits that attacked civilians rarely achieved their political goals.⁵⁵ Hence, the larger problem that states need to deal with is not whether the terrorists achieve their political goals; it is to undo the visible negative effect of civilian killings on the target population rendering them insecure. Hence, the starting point is to deny terrorists the ability to fund, train and plan such attacks. Once that can be achieved, the terrorists will find very limited room for manoeuvre to carry through their deadly attacks.

⁵⁴ Namrata Goswami, "Blood, Bullets and Beyond," *Mid-Day*, November 26, 2011 at <http://www.mid-day.com/news/2011/nov/261111-mumbai-news-Blood-bullets-and-beyond.htm> (Accessed on May 31, 2012).

⁵⁵ See Abrahms, n.12, p.49. Abrahms analyzed the strategic effectiveness of 28 terrorist outfits designated by the United States Department of State as foreign terrorists organizations since 2001. The most important insight that can be gathered from his work is that the stated objectives of terrorist groups are a reliable indicator of their actual intentions. Compounding 28 terrorists groups' political objectives, the author identifies a limited success rate of 7 percent (three out of 42 times).

V INDIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY

SITUATION: FUTURE

SCENARIOS

In the world of policy making and implementation, there is but little scope for a long term view on a state's policy, be it internal or foreign, as policy-makers are pressed for time to respond to present realities. The dynamism of India in this regard is only too intense. With a population of 1.21 billion according to the 2011 census,¹ coalition politics at the Centre, a federal structure with 28 states and 7 Union Territories, 22 official scheduled languages and thousands of dialects, India throws up many policy challenges (and opportunities) almost everyday. It is not easy to govern a country with such diversity and culture. Aspirations vary and expectations of the common people from the Indian state are high. Despite its overall economic performance with a GDP growth rate of more than 6 to 7 per cent per annum (which slipped to 5.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2011-2012),² India ranks 134 among 187 countries in the world according to the UN's "UN Human Development Report 2011: Sustainability and Inequality".³ This report analyses a country's long term progress in health, education and income. India's gender inequality is the highest in South Asia, even behind countries like Pakistan and Nepal.⁴

Thereby, the internal security challenges in India, which has the greatest impact on state security, are poverty and unemployment. Mired in

¹ "Census of India 2011" at <http://censusindia.gov.in/> (Accessed on May 30, 2012).

² "GDP growth rate slips to 5.3 per cent in 4th quarter, discloses Mukherjee", at <http://www.newstrackindia.com/newsdetails/2012/05/31/446-GDP-growth-rate-slips-to-5-3-percent-in-4th-quarter-discloses-Mukherjee.html> (Accessed on June 01, 2012).

³ See "Human Development Reports", <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/> (Accessed on March 03, 2012).

⁴ See "India Ranks 134 in Human Development Index", *The Hindustan Times*, November 02, 2011 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/India/Rising-power-India-ranks-134-in-human-development-index/Article1-764014.aspx> (Accessed on March 23, 2012).

inequalities, the consequences of poverty and unemployment are the armed internal challenges like Naxalism and Northeastern insurgencies. While the causes of such armed violence could be many, as stated in the chapters earlier, the reality that young Indian citizens risk their lives to take up arms against the state in such dire consequences is something we need to grapple with in a realistic manner.

In the light of this backdrop, this chapter identifies certain future trends that have emerged after a detailed study of Naxalism, the armed ethnic insurgencies in the Northeast and terrorism. It also offers three alternative future scenarios and certain policy recommendations.

The Art of Scenarios

Scenarios are stories or narratives that portray what might happen, why it might happen, and with what consequences. They are powerful tools for constructing a range of possible futures based on the interaction of key drivers. Scenarios make policy-makers aware of where they might be going right or wrong. They also help in developing policy and strategy in order to achieve a particular end state. Scenarios stimulate critical thinking and challenge established assumptions, allowing policy-makers to explore plausible futures in order to inform their present process of decision-making and planning. In other words, scenarios bring into sharp relief underlying variables/drivers which emerge as a result of interplay between factors that make up the reality of past and present. The key to scenario building is the ability to bring new thinking to bear on a subject. As Ratcliffe says, “Good scenarios always challenge and surprise—bad ones merely confirm current conceptions and perpetuate personal prejudices”.⁵

Origins

As a research technique, scenario building was pioneered by Herman Kahn in the 1950s while working at RAND. He was followed by Ted Newland, Pierre Wack, Jay Ogilvy, Paul Hawken, and Peter Schwartz.⁶ Kahn and Weiner defined scenarios as, “hypothetical sequences of events

⁵ John Ratcliffe, “*Scenario Building: A Suitable Method for Strategic Construction Industry Planning?*” Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland (2006), p. 3.

constructed for the purpose of focusing attention on causal processes and decision points”.⁷ Scenarios are not so much about predicting the future based on a short term analysis. Rather, they are about “perceiving” the future based on long term analyses of an issue with a particular purpose/goal in mind.

According to Peter Schwartz,

Scenarios provide a context for thinking clearly about the otherwise complex array of factors that affect any decision; give a common language to decision makers for talking about these factors, and encourage them to think about a series of ‘what if’ stories; help lift the ‘blinkers’ that limit creativity and resourcefulness; and lead to organizations thinking strategically and continuously learning about key decisions and priorities.⁸

Method Design for Scenario Building: Steps

- Step 1: Identifying key drivers/factors of the subject/issue under study;
- Step 2: The storyline/narrative of the scenarios; (critically based on review, field knowledge, discussions and expert opinions);
- Step 3: The relationship of each scenario with the key drivers must be clear;
- Step 4: Alternative scenarios (minimum of three, maximum of five);
- Step 5: Time horizon and time steps;
- Step 6: Highly flexible and adaptable;
- Step 7: The element of uncertainty;
- Step 8: Implications of the scenarios (consequences);

⁶ Peter Schwartz, *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the future in an Uncertain World* (New York, Doubleday, 1996).

⁷ H. Kahn and A. Weiner, *The Year 2000 A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 12.

⁸ Peter Schwartz as quoted in John C. Ratcliffe, “*Scenario-building: A Suitable Method for Strategic Construction Industry Planning?*” n. 5.

Step 9: Feed-back the scenarios to target audience;

Step 10: Discuss the strategic options;

Step 11: High degree of ownership.⁹

Most importantly, scenarios must not strive to get the right answer in just one single scenario. Instead, the scenario building exercise is mostly geared towards the unfolding of events as they occur. Scenarios must be highly researched and imagined. Weak scenarios are those that rely too much on speculation and are poorly researched. Based on the method of scenario-building, this chapter identifies the certainties and uncertainties related to Naxalism, Northeastern insurgencies and terrorism in 2030. Based on a mapping of these, three alternate scenarios have been visualized

Table I: Scenario Projection—2030
Mapping Certainties and their Consequences in 2030

Conflict Issues	Certainties	Consequences
Naxalism	1. Naxalism is an internal movement spread across more than 17 states in India. 2. Naxalism is based on a Maoist strategy of protracted war. 3. Naxalism has an armed force of 15, 000 to 20,000. 4. Naxalism is mostly widespread in remote areas lacking state infrastructure.	1. A police response based on brute force will further alienate the local people from the state. 2. The likelihood of the movement to spread in India overtime is high. 3. Springing up of more splinter armed groups is a distinct possibility. 4. Since rural India lacks basic amenities despite globalization and a 6 to 7 per cent GDP growth rate, the movement will draw more cadres and sympathizers.

⁹ Martin Rhisiart, “*Scenario Building*”, Futures Workshop, Cardiff University, 2006.

Conflict Issues	Certainties	Consequences
Naxalism	<p>5. Cadres mostly belong to backward sections of society whilst leaders come from a relatively educated base.</p> <p>6. The movement is about human dignity, deprivation, opportunistic extortions, money making and livelihood issues.</p> <p>7. Affected areas have spread widely since 2000.</p>	<p>5. Since "money making" and "human upliftment" are two contradictory consequences of the movement, more and more deprived young people will join the movement.</p> <p>6. The success of Naxal spread will bolster other armed groups in India.</p>
Northeast Armed Ethnic Insurgencies	<p>1. The rise of armed violence is due to ethnic issues, internal tribal conflicts, state apathy, lack of basic security, conflict over land, and unstable neighbourhoods.</p> <p>2. Mostly, youth in rural areas between the ages of 12-25 join these movements.</p> <p>3. Most armed groups are spread across a particular territory; hence, the goal is to dominate a particular piece of land.</p> <p>4. There is a "perceived sense of neglect" in the social settings.</p>	<p>1. The state will be unable to handle these differences due to growing ethnic differences by 2030.</p> <p>2. Youth bulge in the Northeastern states by 2030 means more recruitment for armed violence.</p> <p>3. Each territorially based tribe would support an aligned armed group due to failure of the state to guarantee their land.</p> <p>4. By 2030, if economic well being is lacking, more narratives of neglect will dominate the Northeastern landscape.</p>

Conflict Issues	Certainties	Consequences
Northeast Armed Ethnic Insurgencies	<p>5. Armed ethnic groups will not collaborate with each other or fight together against India.</p> <p>6. Most of the armed groups have their bases in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Myanmar.</p> <p>7. Easy availability of arms across borders makes it convenient for groups to carry on armed movements.</p> <p>8. These movements are of a protracted nature and do not have short end goals.</p> <p>9. Illegal migration from Bangladesh is creating a fear psychosis in northeastern states of being swamped by outsiders</p>	<p>5. The armed dissent will continue to be fractured even in 2030.</p> <p>6. In 2030, countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh will still remain vulnerable to insurgent penetration from India.</p> <p>7. Arms networks will become more sophisticated in 2030.</p> <p>8. The armed movements will continue in states like Assam and Manipur though Nagaland might witness a stalemate and decrease in violence by 2030.</p> <p>9. There will be violent response to the phenomenon of illegal migration.</p>
Terrorism	<p>1. Terror outfits in India are targetting civilians in market areas and other public places.</p> <p>2. They are mostly targetting cities and the urban sector.</p> <p>3. The terror outfits appear to have a web like structure with a network spanning across the nation.</p>	<p>1. More civilian deaths predicted by 2030 in terror attacks in India.</p> <p>2. Urban terror is going to take on a patterned terror curve.</p> <p>3. Many cellular terror networks will be connected across South Asian borders by 2030.</p>

Conflict Issues	Certainties	Consequences
<p>Terrorism</p>	<p>4. The use of "cyber space" for recruitment, financial flows, cyber attacks and propaganda is a growing feature of terrorism in India.</p> <p>5. Cross-border connectivity and bases in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan is an established fact.</p> <p>6. Groups like the LeT appear to be the prime motivator for other groups like the IM.</p> <p>7. Most of the Indian terror cadres belong to the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in India.</p> <p>8. The treatment of minorities in India appears to be a root cause of minority youths joining these movements.</p> <p>9. The inability of Indian intelligence to focus on different aspects of the terror networks is an alarming reality.</p> <p>10. The lack of training amongst Indian police for counter-terror is a growing concern.</p>	<p>4. Cyber-technology will be extensively used for subversive activities by 2030.</p> <p>5. Pakistan and Bangladesh will witness radicalization by 2030 and hence more youths joining terror movements.</p> <p>6. LeT will continue to fund and support terror outfits in India.</p> <p>7. The Indian state of UP will witness further polarization amongst its population by 2030 due to its caste based politics.</p> <p>8. Minority discrimination might lead to more discontent within India's democratic set up by 2030.</p> <p>9. Poor intelligence will bolster terror outfits to act with impunity.</p> <p>10. Averting terror is going to be difficult if police forces are not trained in fighting motivated and well trained terror cadres.</p>

Table II: Scenario Projection---2030
Mapping Uncertainties and their Consequences in 2030

Issues	Uncertainties	Consequences
Naxalism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The unity in the Naxal movement is an area of uncertainty. 2. The increased focus on deterring arms networks and fortifying police stations could create a dent in the Naxal weapons armoury. 3. The gradual spread of the state infrastructure could deter youth from joining the Naxal movement. 4. The arrests of Naxal leaderships are creating a crisis in the Naxal outfit. 5. The creation of a counter-narrative by civil society vis-à-vis Naxal narrative could counter the spread of Naxalism. 6. The rise of several threats in India could result in loss of focus by the state forces on Naxalism. 7. The lack of socio-economic development could result in more frustrations against India's democratic and bureaucratic set up. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Naxal movement could suffer from a factional break up by 2030. 2. Lack of arms could reduce the Naxal attacks on police stations. 3. Lack of recruitment base could dampen the Naxalite movement by 2030. 4. Lack of a hierarchically tiered leadership is the most deterring factor for any guerrilla movement especially Naxalism. 5. Civil society pro-state narratives could dampen the Naxal's alternative ideology of emancipation. 6. India's internal security threats could further rise by 2030 if not tackled in time and context well. 7. Indian democracy might lose its credibility if 40 per cent of its population continues to live in abject poverty by 2030.

Issues	Uncertainties	Consequences
Northeast Armed Ethnic Insurgencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Population bases in the Northeast's support for armed groups are uncertain. 2. Uncertain economic development in the North East based on "Look East" policy. 3. The nexus between local politicians and armed groups might continue. 4. Developments in Myanmar towards greater democratization might dissuade armed outfits from establishing camps in its territory. 5. The continuance of the NSCN (IM) might be a question mark due to the lack of a second tier of leadership. 6. Groups like ULFA cannot recover lost grounds regarding legitimacy in Assam. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armed groups might find it difficult to operate amongst a population base if support is meagre. 2. Lack of economic development will influence youths to join armed groups even by 2030. 3. Nexus between local politicians and armed groups could result in failure of democracy. 4. Lack of base areas in Myanmar will result in lower levels of violence in states like Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. 5. The weakening of the NSCN (IM) would have a spill-over effect on other armed groups in the region. 6. ULFA will not resurge in Assam.
Terrorism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That terror outfits will be thwarted. 2. Minority community youths especially from the rural areas could enjoy guaranteed employment. 3. That Hindu nationalism will decrease. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure to avert terror attacks might bolster more groups to utilize terror tactics for global attention. 2. More minority youths could view terror outfits as providing employment. 3. More radicalization of minority groups.

Issues	Uncertainties	Consequences
Terrorism	4. That Pakistan will stabilize and could act against the terror outfits in its territory.	4. There could be more terror strikes launched on India from Pakistani territory by 2030.

Source: Conceptualized by author based on the research method followed in the National Intelligence Council *Global Trends Report: 2025*.¹⁰

Based on an assessment of both the certainty and uncertainty parameters, three alternative scenarios are hereby offered.

Three Alternative Scenarios on India's Internal Security Situation in 2030

Scenario I: Pluralism Falters

Based on the above identified certainties, uncertainties and their consequences, let us move to 2030. In 2030, the alienation of an increasingly young population base in the conflict affected areas increases due to the slow progress of state structures in rural areas. Unemployment creeps in and creates strong pockets of dissatisfaction with the state. Naxal affected areas further deteriorate due to the lack of basic amenities like education, health and administration, more so due to the existence of violence amidst societies. Fear persists in affected societies, and India's pluralism and democratic ethos fails to uplift people out of poverty and destitution. In this scenario, forces like Naxalism gain as they succeed in getting more and more young people attracted to their movement. Since India's pluralism is weak, dissident voices in the Northeast also raise their ugly head and insurgent movements like the NSCN (IM) gain more legitimacy and importance in the territories they aim to control. Terror attacks in Central India also increases due to minority dissatisfaction, and civilian deaths is the price India pays for not doing

¹⁰ *Global Trends 2025 A Transformed World*, National Intelligence Council, Washington D.C., November 2008, pp. iv and v.

enough to strengthen the forces of pluralism, establish a social security net and leverage inclusiveness in the state structures and society. By 2030, India is faced with internal violent dissensions creating enormous obstacles to its overall economic and political growth and its image as a rising global power.

Scenario II: Democracy Succeeds

In this scenario, things are not so bleak. India's economic rise with a GDP growth rate of 8-9 per cent per annum creates enormous opportunities for employment, poverty alleviation and overall infrastructural development. By 2030, more and more Indian cities witness overall infrastructural development, better education and health facilities. Forces like Naxalism will suffer due to a lack of unified front, leadership weaknesses and decrease in its recruitment base as alternative jobs are available to youths in rural areas. The state structures penetrate remote places and better road networks also add to the spread of prosperity and democracy. Indian democracy succeeds in weaving a story of inclusiveness and different communities relate to the idea of India which has a place of dignity for every individual. People of the Northeast relate to India and its politics in a deeper sense as more and more youths from states like Assam, Manipur and Nagaland visibly take part in Indian media, politics, entertainment and hospitality industries. Terrorism is also deterred as Indian Muslim youths embrace this inclusive idea of India and see themselves benefitting from the state and civil society. By 2030, India is well on its way to great power status with its population fully supporting its rise.

Scenario III: The hand from outside stokes the fire

The violent non-state armed groups in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir have sustained themselves for so long due to their external linkages. Most of the separatist armed groups in Kashmir get support from actors within Pakistan, who view terror as a strategic instrument to keep India weak. The insurgent groups in the Northeast have also set up camps in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar, and procure small arms through the potent small arms network spanning across South East Asia. In 2030, the external hand will continue to stoke the fire within India, especially by countries like Pakistan and China. While Bangladesh and Bhutan will be aligning with

India in its fight against terrorism and insurgency, Pakistan and China, uncomfortable with India's rise as a great power, will continue to view internal problems within India as the only viable way to keep India weak. Hence, support will continue to flow in the form of training, arms and financial help. By 2030, India will align with the US and the European Union (EU) countries to deter the external hand in India. Much of that will also depend on India's own efforts at uplifting its poor population and offering better living conditions so that the external hand does not succeed in stoking the fire of discontent. Dialogue with countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Pakistan must be carefully structured so that cooperation is fostered at the regional level to counter such external hands.

Policy Recommendations

Naxalism

1. Structural conditions for the growth of Naxalism like poverty and livelihood issues must be resolved on a war footing by the state forces.
2. Hierarchical administrative structures must be made more flexible and open to represent the aspirations of the common man.
3. Infrastructure in the Naxal affected areas must be improved.
4. The motivation level and grassroots intelligence gathering of the police force should be improved.
5. Police reform and police adaptability regarding communication skills, intelligence gathering, culture of leadership, and infrastructure be improved.
6. Courses on conflict management to be imparted during police training.
7. Unlike the Naga inhabited areas in the Northeast, which enjoy a strong civil society ethos and a growing counter-narrative to insurgent violence, the Naxal areas lack a socially legitimate civil society base. The state must therefore encourage small civil society organizations to construct a narrative against violence and extortions in these areas.

Armed Ethnic Insurgencies in the Northeast.

1. Structural conditions like ethnic alienation, poverty, lack of infrastructure, absence of land rights should be addressed.
2. Processes of dialogue and negotiation with armed outfits must be conducted in a professional manner by people trained in negotiation techniques and not by generalized bureaucracy.
3. The conflicting issues between the Northeastern states like land issues/border should be settled at the local level.
4. India must ensure that countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar are not used by insurgent groups as launching pads for violence in its border states. Dialogue mechanism in all three countries need to be institutionalized and activated on a daily basis.
4. Revenues from these states must be utilized for the development of the states themselves since they are backward states compared to other more developed states in India.
5. Acts like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and amended in 1972 should be lifted from the Northeast in a phased manner as the common perception of this act is that it is unjust and repressive.

Terrorism

1. Deterring terror would require focussed resource-rich responses in dismantling the various links in the terror chain like finances, weapons networks, actors etc. Special forces with focussed expertise on dismantling terror finances, the networks, and the cells are a must. Since any act of terror is a process that starts much ahead of the actual strike, key intelligence on the process can only be tracked by personnel trained in counter-terrorism, which would avert attacks.
2. Vulnerable communities should be identified and the state's presence increased to deter them from falling prey to terror narratives of emancipation. This has to be done in a sensitive manner. State presence should first focus on providing good

governance in terms of health, education, employment, etc, and law enforcement done in a way that is sensitive to local culture.

3. The state's counter-terror mechanism must envision the creation of Special Forces meant specifically for the purpose of averting terror networks in India. These Special Forces must be established in vulnerable states like Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Manipur and Assam.
4. The state's land and coastal border security must be strengthened given the fact that terror attacks have been conducted and planned in the neighbouring states.
5. The state must also be well equipped to deal with the rising challenge of cyber-terrorism. Cyber specialization should be made a part of the counter-terror mechanism towards addressing hacking issues, tracing terror links in the virtual world, locating the computers, and countries where this transnational nature of terrorism originates, etc.

In conclusion, one can assume that in a situation where the challenges of governance, poverty, corruption and unemployment continue to remain high, Scenario I is likely to unfold. A state that is unable to provide the basic needs to its citizens will face internal dissent. These dividing issues within India will be utilized by external forces (Scenario III) to keep India weak internally so that its rise in the international system is obstructed. If India is able to deal successfully with the above mentioned challenges and bring about a just social and political order based on empowerment of common people, then the scenario that is most likely to unfold is Scenario II. Towards that end, the policy recommendations offered in this chapter will prove useful.

VI

CONCLUSION

India is a plural democracy based on constitutional liberalism which guarantees certain specific rights to the individual. The central ethos of the Constitution is a “Union of States” as per Article 1 of the Indian Constitution, whereby political, social and cultural plurality is the implicit assumption. Out of the mosaic of communities, tribes and cultures, the Indian state has established a common geo-political unit by granting regional autonomy based on a division of states as per language and ethnicity. The success of Indian democracy in conducting free and fair elections since 1951 is one of the most inspiring stories of the 20th and early 21st century. It is not an easy task to meet the aspirations of a young and dynamic population in a country which is still developing and yet to reach the levels of growth in the developed world. It calls for tremendous commitment on the part of its politicians, bureaucracy, the armed forces and civil society. There is only so much resource available to a state at a given time. Distributing these resources amongst a billion or so population in a just and equitable manner is another daunting task.

The father of the nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, placed people at the centre of politics. For him, words like nationalism and patriotism sounded hollow if the territory one was nationalistic or patriotic about tolerated poverty, hunger and disease. For Gandhi, the individual mattered most. Patriotism for him was about wiping the tears from every eye, about providing individuals a level playing field, where he or she can excel to the best of his or her capabilities and develop critical faculty.¹ Gandhi categorically stated that the institutions of the state,

¹ Bhikhu Parekh, “Truth and Dare”, *The Indian Express*, October 02, 2009 at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/truth-and-dare/524049/0> (Accessed on June 5, 2012).

therefore, must never lose sight of the fact that they exist to serve the people, and not some abstract idea of India which tolerates inequalities and human injustices.²

In many senses, the Indian state has tried to live up to that guidance provided by the father of the nation. It has followed a political path of inclusion, of keeping its several communities together, of being open to dialogue even with armed groups that fight for secession, and has offered mechanism to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner.

Despite that, India continues to face internal dissent. As is seen from the chapters of this monograph, the dissent has been long and has been violent resulting in the death of Indian citizens. The heart of India suffers from Naxal violence; Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast suffer separatist violence, and terrorist groups target India almost every year. What is perhaps disturbing is that most of the cadres and leaders of the armed groups are citizens of India. Their susceptibility to violence is utilized by the external hand to stoke the fire within India.

If one were to dwell deeper into the reasons of armed dissent in India, beyond the mercantile explanations of extortion networks, and opportunistic politics on the part of the armed groups, one would find that there is a tension between the idea of constitutional liberalism and democracy in India. While the Indian Constitution is one of the most liberal and exhaustive Constitutions in the world when it comes to peoples' rights, the practice of democracy in India has not lived up to that spirit of constitutional liberalism in letter and spirit. An overtly bureaucratized Indian state believes in accumulation of power and control, and the common complaint across India is that state institutions do not treat the common man with respect and dignity. Democracy is waged in the name of caste, class, and regionalism, thereby cutting across a state that should have ideally been a constitutional liberal democracy. For India to handle its lack of governance, and rampant

² Mohandas K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography The Story of My Experiments with Truth* at <http://www.matrubhumi.com/gandhiji/pdf/AUTOBIOGRAPHY.pdf> (Accessed on March 21, 2012).

corruption across the state and society, there is a need to get back to its Constitution, and relive the moral wisdom of Gandhi. For Gandhi, true love of country is when one has the courage to criticize its faults, in the hope that things will get better and the state will be made more responsive to the individual citizen. It is perhaps true that a country cannot give itself a new past but it can alter the future and help its chances of developing into a liberal democracy.³

For India to meet the needs and aspirations of its population, it is critical that the state is able to generate earned wealth. Private business and entrepreneurship should be encouraged in remote areas so that young men and women have an alternative means of livelihood. It is a fact that no young man or woman would take up arms against the state unless they see that as the only means available out of poverty for a decent living.⁴

This Monograph has dealt in depth with issues afflicting India's internal health. Though these issues appear as seemingly security driven, the socio-economic and emotional dimension attached to them cannot be overlooked by the state forces. The Chapter on *Future Scenarios* makes it clear that we have to deal with these issues for sometime and therefore the crafting of a long term policy document to handle these threats is in order. Though Naxalism and armed violence in Assam and Manipur have been identified as the main areas of concern by the Internal Security Reports of the Ministry of Home, the growing terror threats on India is another alarming development that requires dedicated study in order to unravel the root causes, locate the chains of the terror networks and act against the financiers of these acts. India also urgently requires a counter-terrorism manual at the national level in order to boldly state its policies while dealing with terror. Also, a coordinated approach involving security personnel, civil society actors, academia and the media is urgently required in order to deal with the various internal security threats plaguing the country.

³ Fareed Zakaria, *Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad The Future of Freedom*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 74-75.

⁴ Zakaria, n. 3, p. 75

One of the main causes of concern and internal armed dissent is the general perception that minorities are denied rights to land, their forests, and other natural resources. This has been a perennial complaint of the ethnic communities in the Northeast of India. The main reason for this perception is the fact that the constitutional rights that are available to the minority communities are neither known nor explained in an efficient manner by the state, including the political representatives of the minorities themselves.

For instance, let us take the example of the Naga ethnic conflict. The assertion that Naga culture, rights and privileges stand challenged within the Indian Union is an alarmist viewpoint. The reality is that the Indian Constitution provides enough guarantees to safeguard ethnic rights. In the face of ethnic demands from the hill areas of Assam for constitutional safeguards for their rights, the Interim Government in 1947 appointed a sub-committee to the Constituent Assembly, the North-East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee under the Chairmanship of then Assam Chief Minister, Gopinath Bordoloi. The committee recommended the setting up of autonomous district councils to provide due representative structures at the local level to the tribal population. The recommendation was later incorporated into Article 244 (2) of the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Nagaland has also been accorded special status under Constitutional law. Article 371 (A) states that no Act of Parliament in respect of religious or social practices of the Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving Naga customary laws and ownership and transfer of land and resources will apply to the state unless passed by the State Assembly.⁵ The Nagaland Tribe, Area, Range, and Village Council Act, 1966 also provides for a Tribal Council for each tribe, an Area Council for Kohima and Dimapur, a Range Council in the recognized ranges of Mokokchung and Kohima Districts as well as village councils in Kohima and Mokokchung.

⁵ J. S. Pandey, *Indian Constitution, Constitutional Law of India*, Central Law Agency, Allahabad, 1997, p. 600.

Besides the lack of an efficient dialogue between the state and the society towards explaining constitutional rights, another perennial fear of these minority communities is their hold on land. Land is a precious commodity to these communities. Ironically, these lands can be guaranteed only if the common man pays bribes to state officials. This situation makes communities vulnerable to look for security elsewhere; and armed groups fill that space.

A word of caution is in order here. The armed groups are not the Robin Hoods of yore; in fact far from it. Amitai Etzioni, a famous sociologist argued that it is time one stopped giving moral sanctity to self-determination since none of the armed groups demanding self-determination have the capacity to create democratic states given their destructive ideologies and exclusivist narratives.⁶ This is perhaps true concerning insurgent groups in the Northeast, who are authoritarian in the conduct of their affairs.

The last question with regard to the representative character of the insurgent groups is by far the most important. This is rather suspect, given the fact that most of the insurgent groups in the Northeast have failed to establish the depth of their representative character, beyond a limited cadre strength of 1,000-5,000 or so in a population of many millions. Local people express despair at insurgent activities like extortion and child recruitments. Also, none amongst the secessionist leaders can clearly articulate the state structures they envision or how they are going to treat minorities in the new states.

That said, one cannot shy away from the fact that the optimal functioning of state institutions are compromised by lacklustre institutional structures. The key lies in strengthening India's federal structure and institutions at the local level, establishing the rule of law on a firm footing and providing basic security to its citizens. For, without security there can be no constitutional liberty. One cannot always escape into

⁶ Amitai Etzioni "Anarchy Rules: The Evils of Self Determination", *Foreign Policy*, 89 (Winter 1992-93), pp. 21-35.

the oft-repeated argument that India is a fledgling democracy in order to rationalize its social inequalities and low levels of human development.

A nation is built by a visionary leadership that can inspire people to achieve and utilize their talent to the extent that makes the nation proud. One hopes to see that day when Gandhi's vision of a nation filled with proud, brave and self-confident people is witnessed in almost all pockets of India, including its most remote areas.

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The Monograph titled *India's Internal Security Situation: Present Realities and Future Pathways* deals with the internal security situation in India. It focuses on the Naxal conflict, the Northeastern ethnic armed insurgencies, and terrorism for a detailed study. The author argues that all the three conflict areas have antecedent conditions which are specific to that particular conflict and hence a comparative methodology is not useful to carry forth a work of this nature. Therefore, each conflict has been dealt with as a distinctive chapter. The first chapter provides the introductory observations; the second chapter offers an overview of Naxalism; the third chapter deals with certain significant insurgent groups in the Northeast; and the fourth chapter elaborates on the rise of terrorism in India. Based on the assessment of the three chapters including the introductory chapter, the fifth chapter identifies some "certainties and uncertainties" with regard to Naxalism, the armed conflicts in the Northeast and terrorism and their consequences in 2030. Based on this, three alternative scenarios are crafted and certain policy recommendations offered for consideration.



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