

राक्षस

ANIRVEDA

PURSUING SELF RELIANCE IN DEFENCE

INDIA'S STRATEGIC INDEPENDENCE ON FIRM FOOTING



India's Aerospace Might

Travelled a long distance yet
looking at Govt's support

Lok Sabha Election 2019

A make or mar for India's defence
indigenisation and Make in India

Lessons for 'Make in India'

To learn what to do and
what not to do!

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RAKSHA ANIRVEDA

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 5 | APRIL - JUNE 2019



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INTERNAL SECURITY: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Political will emphasised for resolution of disputes coupled with sound administration of development in conflict prone districts, ground based strategic communications to counter extremist narratives and efficient counter insurgency operations

By **DR MATHEW SIMON**

India is going through interesting times in terms of administering its internal security matters. It is interesting in the sense that in the aftermath of Pulwama terror attack and Balakot airstrike, the Indian government responded to the external threats with speed, precision and efficiency. Coupled with terrorism in the western frontier region are the issues related to depleting forces of left-wing extremists and stalemate in the peace talks in Northeast.

Other concerns that rattle the security agencies are the threats posed by radicalisation (jihadist and Khalistani) in the hinterland and the potent dangerous mix

of drug smuggling, illegal arms trade and terror financing.

The cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan through proliferation of terror

groups and networks has time and again been pushed back by the Indian security forces. Rise in the local recruitment in terror groups is a cause of concern for the security agencies. With the postponement of state assembly elections in J&K, the situation remains grim and precarious. The political climate is infested with debates on Article 370 and 35 A throughout the country time and again. The resolution of the conflict is best served by taking into account the interests and aspirations of the Kashmiris and integrity of India as a whole. The other significant matter is to arrest the jihadist narrative emanating from within and across the border by developing effective counter narratives to wean away the vulnerable youth from the pathways of terror.

The Maoist movement is on its back foot with many of its top ranking cadre surrendering owing to their disorientation with the ideology. The other related factor for the Maoist operational setbacks were the effective joint coordination of police and paramilitary forces in combing and search operations. The change of Maoist leadership at the top and guerilla tactics is factor to be borne in mind as regards to their ability to strike back. Several arrests of the over-ground workers of Maoist front organisations and their sympathisers in the previous

J&K INSURGENCY				
Year	No. of terrorist incidents	No. of civilian killed	No. of Security Force personnel killed	No. of terrorist killed
2014	222	28	47	110
2015	208	17	39	108
2016	322	15	82	150
2017	342	40	80	213
2018	614	38	91	257

Source: PIB, February 5, 2019

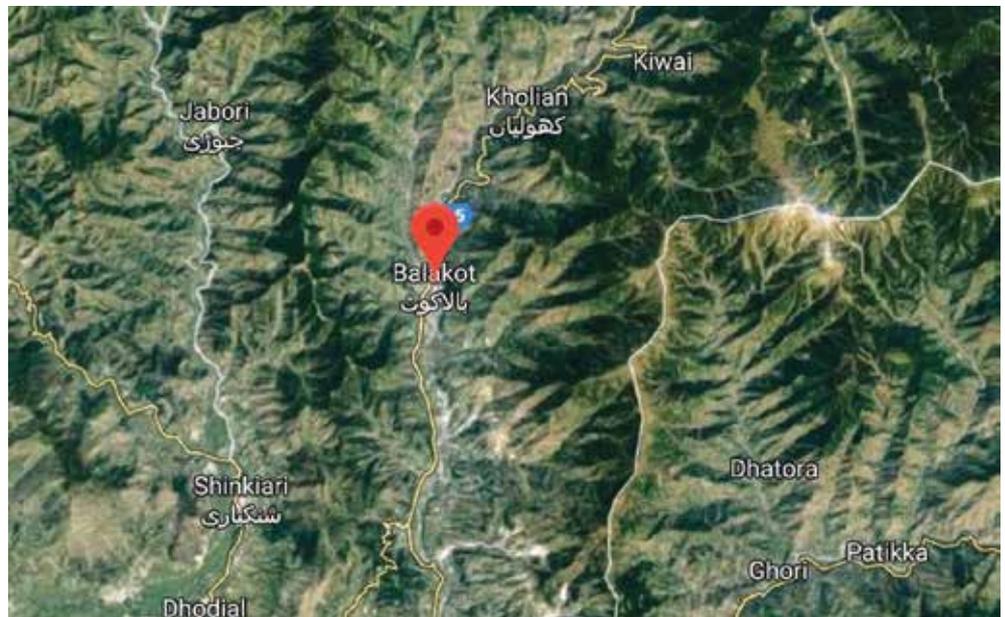
LEFT WING EXTREMISM (LWE)				
Year	Number of incidents relating to LWE	No. of civilian killed	No. of Security Force personnel killed	No. of Left Wing extremists killed
2014	1091	222	88	63
2015	1089	171	59	89
2016	1048	213	65	222
2017	908	188	75	136
2018	833	173	67	225

Source: PIB, February 5, 2019

of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I), National Democratic Front of Bodoland - Saoraigwra (NDFB-S). During the period from December 2014 to December 2017, around 1015 cadre/linkmen of NDFB-S have been arrested. Recovery of a large quantity of arms and ammunition was also made and 60 cadres were neutralised in counter-insurgency operations.

year have created a flutter in media and civil society alike which is best left to the third estate of democracy to adjudicate. Much remains to be done in bringing development in the worst affected districts of left-wing extremism. Mobile, road connectivity and provision of basic amenities in such districts pose a challenge and opportunity alike for the district administration and security agencies. In this regard, a scheme for special central assistance (SCA) for 35 districts worst hit by LWE has been introduced with an outlay of Rs 3,000 crore to tackle the issue of underdevelopment.

In Arunachal Pradesh, there was no active insurgent group and is affected by the spill-over activities of the insurgent groups based in Nagaland and Assam. There is a need to improve the security situation in the border areas of Arunachal



Pradesh that is located along the India-Myanmar border.

In Assam, the issue of the Citizenship Bill and its subsequent withdrawal caused internal tensions temporarily. The major militant outfits that are presently active are United Liberation Front

However, Assam witnessed the highest rate of violent crimes, and kidnappings and abductions, among all the states of India. The reason may be attributed to poor rehabilitation and settlement of former insurgents who may be indulging in such crimes for ransom.

In Nagaland, a significant development took place when the Government of India entered into a framework agreement with NSCN-IM in August, 2015. The improvement in the security situation can be related to the negotiations on the framework agreement. In 2016, the State witnessed a 43 per cent decline in violent incidents compared to 2015 and the situation further improved as the number of

NORTH EASTERN REGION				
Year	Number of incidents relating to insurgency in the North East	No. of civilian killed	No. of Security Force personnel killed	No. of extremist killed
2014	824	212	20	181
2015	574	46	46	149
2016	484	48	17	87
2017	308	37	12	57
2018	252	23	14	34

Source: PIB, February 5, 2019



Security officials on the spot post the Pulwama attack

incidents further declined by 67 per cent in 2017 as compared to 2016. There were no casualties in the security forces or civilians in 2016. However, there were 4 casualties suffered in 2017 (till 31st October 2017). In 2017, the number of persons kidnapped by insurgents decreased significantly by 76 per cent as compared to 2016. There is however an urgent need to finalise the Naga Peace Accord.

In Mizoram, only 1622 Bru families out of around 5000 families have been repatriated.

The security forces have been able to neutralise the Garo National Liberation Army and most of the cadres of GNLA have surrendered or have been arrested in Meghalaya. Similar is the case of Tripura which has shown marked improvement in the security scenario with a steady decline in violence since 2013 that has resulted in AFSPA withdrawal in May 2015. The activities of main underground outfits National Liberation Front of Twipra-Biswamohan [NLFT (B)] and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) have been contained.

RADICALIZATION

Apart from the three conflict theatres described above, there is a sinister, silent threat of radicalisation looming at large. A pluralistic, secular Indian society has withstood the onslaught of global jihad, which is evident by the fact that only 100+ people left India to join the war in Iraq/Syria. The National Investigative Agency has been effective in busting various modules of the ISIS, the recent being the crackdown on an ISIS-inspired module in December 2018.

Another cause of concern



is the radicalisation of the vulnerable youth in Punjab and the rise of Sikh separatism in Punjab and abroad. A grenade blast at a religious congregation in Amritsar on November 18, 2018 possibly indicates the revival of Khalistan movement. Further, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs in its 28th report of Committee on Estimates titled "Central Armed Police Forces and Internal Security Challenges-Evaluation and Response Mechanism," which was tabled in Parliament on March 21, 2018, observed, "The Sikh youth are being



Police officers of Scotland Yard on the vigil

trained in the ISI facilities in Pakistan. Interdiction and interrogations have revealed the use of jailed cadres, unemployed youth, criminals and smugglers by the Pakistan-based Sikh terror groups for facilitating terror attacks." The government has taken adequate measures to curb its revival and is pressuring foreign governments to ban and extradite the supporters of Sikh separatism.

CONCLUSION

The issues and challenges for internal security are multiple-fold and complex. The government approved Rs 25,000-crore mega internal security scheme to strengthen the country's law and order mechanism, modernise police forces and effectively fight against terrorism over a three-year period. Special provisions under the scheme for internal

security includes women security, availability of modern weapons, mobility of police forces, logistical support, hiring of helicopters, upgradation of police wireless, national satellite network, crime and criminal tracking network and systems, e-prison, etc. Political will for resolution of disputes coupled with sound administration of development in conflict prone districts, ground based strategic communications to counter extremist narratives and efficient counter insurgency operations are the ways to address the varied dimensions and contours of internal security problems. ■

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Views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IDSA or the Government of India.