

**Round Table
On
What should be India's Strategic Response
to
Insurgency and Terrorism**

October 06, 2010

Concept Note & Programme

The Indian state has been grappling with insurgency and terrorism since its inception. Growing sense of ethnic and religious identities, forcible merger of princely states with the Indian Union, perceived sense of neglect and alienation, and pervasive underdevelopment are variously cited as reasons that have led to the clamours for independence and rise of insurgency. Thus, insurgent and terrorist movements espousing various causes —Sikh separatism in Punjab, the assertion of tribal/ethnic identities in the North East, national liberation/Islamism in Kashmir, jihadism in the hinterland and communism in the case of Naxals are raging in the country. It is often argued that while the leadership of these insurgent and terrorist groups may be more ideologically inclined, the rank and file tends to consider bread and butter issues first and foremost. And it is only when discourses of the leadership are perceived to be in consonance with their goals of addressing immediate grievances that the common people join insurgent movements. There can also be other reasons, mostly personnel, for individuals to join insurgent and terrorist movements.

India has been successful in largely containing insurgencies and terrorism, though a final resolution has evaded it in many cases. India's counter insurgency approach has a few key elements, viz. establishment of the writ of the State through the deployment of security forces, accommodation of at least some of the political demands of the insurgents, socio-economic development in the affected areas, and restoration of the democratic process. This template has been successful with minor spatial variations in the case of Punjab and Mizoram, whereas in other cases it has not yielded the desired results. For instance, a peace accord was signed with the Naga National Council in 1975, but 35 years hence, the Naga insurgency still continues. Similarly, despite the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985, peace still eludes Assam.

To move forward, it is therefore necessary to analyze why this template succeeded only in two cases? What was done differently in Punjab and Mizoram? And more importantly why has India's counter insurgency strategy failed to achieve the desired results in other cases? Most analysts argue that systemic failures such as poor training and low motivation levels of the security forces, absence of 'actionable intelligence,' bad governance, lack of coordination between the central and state governments, lack of clearly laid out counter insurgency strategy, etc. are responsible for

failure. But these are at best means to challenge and defeat insurgents and terrorists at a military level, which has largely been achieved in almost every case. To completely root out insurgencies and terrorism from the country, it is necessary to counter the ideologies through which these movements gain legitimacy and following among the populace.

The Internal Security Cluster is proposing to organize a Round Table. The following issues will be discussed:

- ideologies of various insurgent and terrorist groups
- reasons for individuals/common man to join the insurgent and terrorist movements
- ways to counter the ideological narratives of these separatists movements and wean away/win over the individuals/common man from such movements
- systemic reforms required to tackle these movements

The proceedings of the round table will be published as a Report.

Programme October 6, 2010

Paper I: Countering ideological narratives: Strategic Response to LWE -
Speaker: Srinivas Reddy (10minutes)

Paper II: Countering ethnic narratives: Strategic Response to insurgencies in
the Northeast - Speaker: Pradeep Phajoubam (10 minutes)

Paper III: Religion, Secessionism & Cross border linkages: Responding to
insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir – Speaker: Iftikhar Gilani
(10 minutes)

Paper V Systemic reforms- police, intelligence, governance – Speaker:
Prakash Singh (10 minutes)