

## Internal Security and Economic Cost of Violence: An Analysis

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# Internal Security and Economic Cost of Violence: An Analysis

V. K. Ahluwalia

## Abstract

*South Asia is one of the most unstable and volatile regions of the world, and stands second least peaceful region out of nine regions that were evaluated by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). The ranking of peacefulness of most of the South Asian countries is also rather low. In a developing country like India, the economic cost of violence at 5 per cent of its GDP is too high. The causes of internal conflicts can be attributed to factors like ineffectiveness of the governance systems, sub-nationalism, deprivations, discrimination, social injustice, ethnic, sectarian, and religious polarisation, socio-economic exclusion, identity crisis, and competition for fast depleting crucial resources. These conflicts manifest in the form of insurgencies, terrorism, low-intensity armed conflicts, civil wars, and related political violence. There is a definite relationship between terrorism and internal armed conflicts, as both generally follows near similar contours. The terrorists have tried to destroy the very idea of India – democratic, secular, growth-oriented economy, excellence in IT and industry.*

*Almost all elements of national power have a role - direct or indirect - on matters of national security, to suppress internal armed conflicts, and finally to resolve them. The legitimate aspirations and grievances of the people must be identified region wise and addressed with a sense of urgency. The Government needs to formulate a*

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*Comprehensive National Security Strategy (CNSS), to give a definite direction to the role of each element of national power in short and long term, and minimise its economic cost of violence.*

## **Introduction**

IEP's Global Peace Index 2021 report highlights peacefulness of nine regions and 163 independent countries of the world. Based on IEP's in-depth evaluation, it ranked India 135<sup>th</sup> least peaceful nation, which had incidentally improved its ranking by two positions from 137<sup>th</sup> in 2020.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation is carried out based on 23 qualitative and quantitative parameters. However, what is worrisome is that while India's Defence Budget generally ranges between 1.5 per cent to 1.6 per cent of its GDP, the economic cost of violence was calculated as 5 per cent of its GDP.<sup>2</sup> According to the same report, the ranking of peacefulness of the other South Asian countries is also rather low: Afghanistan 163<sup>rd</sup>, Pakistan 150<sup>th</sup>, Sri Lanka 95<sup>th</sup>, Bangladesh 91<sup>st</sup>, Nepal 85<sup>th</sup> and Bhutan 22<sup>nd</sup>. Therefore, South Asia too stands to be the second least peaceful region out of nine regions that were evaluated- second only to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Globally, irregular warfare, terrorism, and civil unrest have been the biggest contributors to violence, killings, and instability.

In a developing country like India, the economic cost of violence at 5 per cent of its GDP is too high. The economic impact of violence would be even much higher than the economic cost of violence. The primary reason, as given by the IEP, is that the former includes the direct and indirect costs of violence as well as an economic multiplier applied to the direct costs. Whereas the economic cost of violence includes only the direct and indirect costs. The IEP Report suggest that the percentage of GDP results are calculated using the economic cost of violence. The economic impact in India amounted to \$991.2 billion in 2019, of which more than 75 per cent was military and internal security expenditure. India accounts for 77.9 per cent of South Asian region's

total economic impact of violence, reflecting its size and role as a major power in the region.<sup>3</sup>

A significant reduction in the economic cost of violence will facilitate armed forces and the armed police forces to modernise themselves. It would be most prudent to take a note of the costs involved, and take suitable actions to improve the security environment on an urgent basis. While taking an overview of the global security landscape and trends, it is important to examine the challenges to India's internal security. Furthermore, the quest is to understand and assess what can be done to improve peace and stability to maintain focus on sustained economic growth and socio-economic well-being of its population.

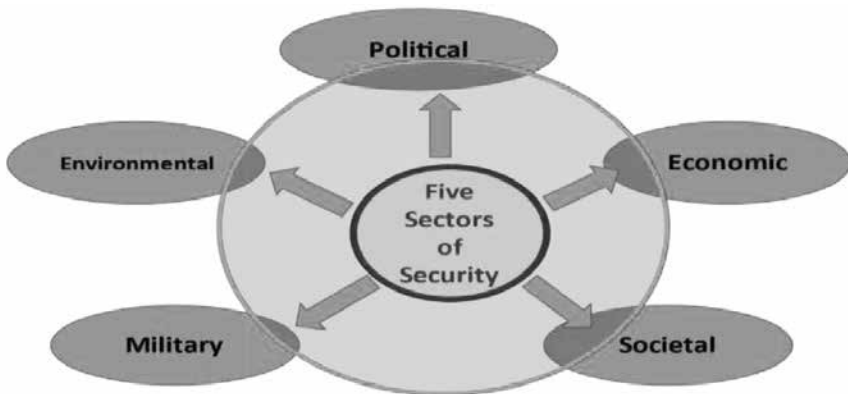
### **Traditional Concept**

It has been accepted that the traditional concept of national security was always associated with protecting the territorial integrity of a nation-state against external aggression. It was confined primarily to the role of militaries! The concept continued to evolve and be shaped by historical events, interpretations of international relations, need to bring instability and the security of the society at large from varied forms of threats. The landmark events in evolution of the concept of national security were the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 that recognised absolute sovereignty of the states, and provided equal legal rights to all sovereign states. It continued to evolve. Consequent to the end of the Cold War, the Human Development Report (HDR) 1994 focused on addressing all threats and challenges that impact human security. As it was human-centric, the latter was titled *New Dimensions of Human Security* by the UNDP.<sup>4</sup> While the primary aim of national security is to promote and safeguard the core values and interests of the nation-state and its people, four important dimensions are security of state, security of society, preservation of national and cultural identity, and to take appropriate actions when human security is likely to be adversely affected. Internal

security is one of the most significant subsets of national security, as it gets impacted by both traditional and non-traditional threats and challenges.

It is interesting to note that perceptions about global or national security vary based on the threats and challenges to security being experienced in different regions of the world. As Barry Buzan considers political, economic, societal, military, and environmental issues as the most essential elements of security.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1: Five Sectors of Security**



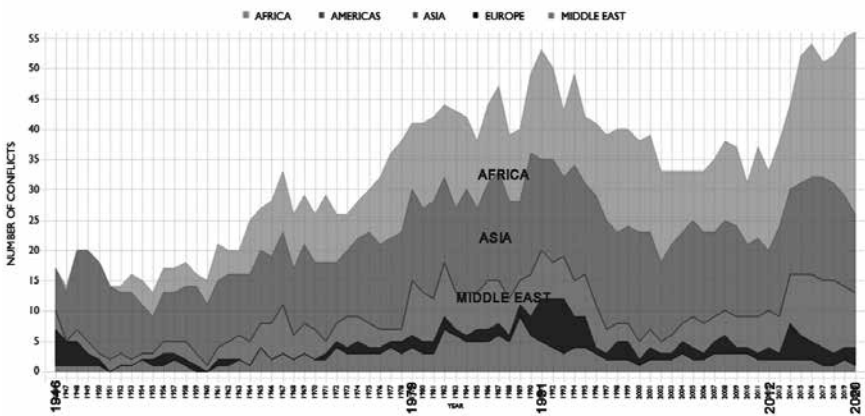
Source: Adapted from Buzan (1991).

### **Global Internal Security Landscape and Trends**

Post-World War II, there has been a steady increase in intra-state conflicts the world over. In fact, these increased exponentially from the mid-1950s, when decolonisation gained momentum. Consequently, there was a void in the governance systems in most of the cases. It resulted in a spike in intrastate conflicts. The increase is attributed to several factors like ineffectiveness of the governance systems, sub-nationalism, deprivations, discrimination, social injustice, ethnic, sectarian, and

religious polarization, socio-economic exclusion, identity crisis, and competition for fast depleting crucial resources. These conflicts manifest in the form of insurgencies, terrorism, low-intensity armed conflicts, civil wars, and related political violence. Over the past few decades, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have remained afflicted by armed conflicts. According to the IEP, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa have seen a note worthy decline in the security environment due to prolonged intra-state conflicts, along with terrorism and extremists' violence.<sup>6</sup> The statistics in Figure 2 suggest that there has been a sharp rise in armed conflicts since 2012. It is also the period when ISIS was on the rise in Iraq and Syria, Taliban was becoming stronger in Afghanistan, and Boko Haram was active in Nigeria from 2009 onwards, and Al Shabab in Somalia. In 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and took the name Islamic State (or State's) West African Province (ISWAP; also known as Islamic State in West Africa, or ISWA).<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2: Armed Conflict by Region (1946-2020)**



Source: UNDP (2021), Annotated by the Author.

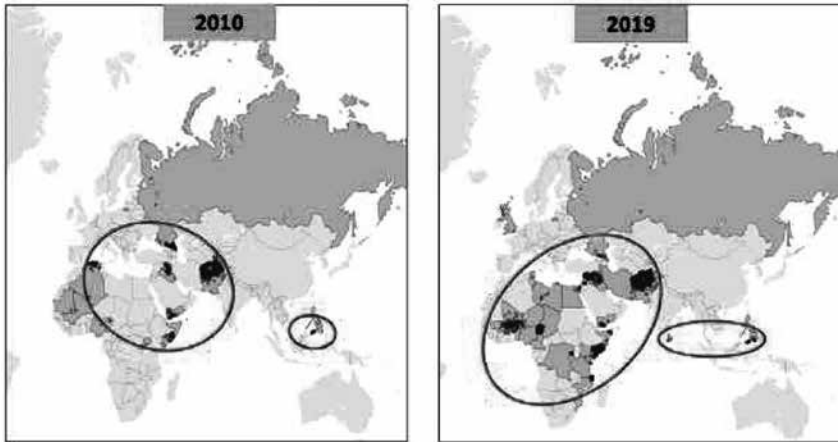
There are several irregular, asymmetric, and revolutionary wars active in the world. Irregular warfare, often described as the weapon of the weak, employs indirect and asymmetric methods, which may include regulars, irregulars, non-state actors, private military companies, deception, information warfare and drones, etc. Globalisation and the revolution in communications have added a new dimension in the internal armed conflicts, as the extremists are connected worldwide and share information and transfer money on real-time basis.

### **First Two Decades of the 21st Century**

The first two decades of the 21st century saw the proliferation of several extremist ideologies and terrorist organisations, predominantly based on religious, sectarian, ethnic and identity-driven alienation or motivations. Terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda and subsequently its off-shoot ISIS, came into prominence with its global ambition of establishing an Islamic Caliphate, by occupying territory and establishing bases worldwide. The world has been a witness to several high profile terrorist attacks such as 9/11 in the US, 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, Bali Bombing in 2002, Beslan School Hostage Crisis in Russia in 2004, 26/11 Mumbai attack in 2008, and many more. Despite the persistent threat of terrorism and declaration of global war on terrorism (GWOT), the United Nations and other global bodies have failed to adopt a universally acceptable definition of terrorism.

Although ISIS was defeated in Iraq and Syria in 2017, it continued to take action to spread the ideology of ISIS. It remained virulent, to achieve its global ambition. The geographical spread of ISIS, Al Qaeda and their affiliates between 2010 and 2019 is given in Figure 3. ISIS has further spread its wings into Africa, and a few parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia.

**Figure 3: Geographical Spread of ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Their Affiliates (2010-2019)**



Source: Adapted from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).

### **Internal Armed Conflicts and Terrorism**

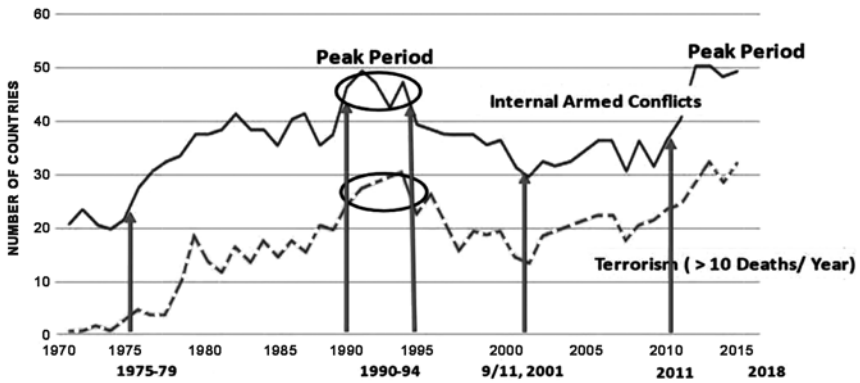
According to UCDP, the South Asian region experienced 298 conflicts between 1946 and 2002, of which 277 have been intrastate. Analysing the graphical depiction of casualties due to terrorism and internal armed conflicts, it has been observed that South Asia has had far more intrastate conflict-related casualties than due to war between states. Except for Maldives, every state in South Asia has faced one or more sustained insurgencies since decolonisation.<sup>8</sup>

A moot question that arises is whether there is any relationship between the ongoing armed conflicts and terrorism? An analysis of the graph given in Figure 4 is important to draw deductions.

A classical insurgency challenges the existing political, economic, religious, and social order, to force a change of government or its policies by the protracted people's movement, including the use of subversion. It aims to fulfil the aspirations of the population or the region, based on their grievances. Hence, it takes the form of people's armed movement with any one or more aims such as politico-economic-religious-ethnic and



**Figure 4: Global Spread of Internal Armed Conflicts & Terrorism (1970-2018)**



Source: START, GTD, UCDP, IEP Calculations, Annotated by the Author.

ideological. Thus, based on the goals and objectives, insurgencies could be classified as Separatist, Secessionist, Revolutionary, Reformist, etc.

A study of the two graphs – Internal Armed Conflicts and Terrorism – suggests a definite trend and relationship between them at the global level. It has been observed that the terrorism graph generally follows near similar contours as the internal armed conflicts. The reasons for the same are that most of the insurgencies have four stages: one, Ideology, organisation’s foundation, leadership to mobilise people, and subversion; two, guerrilla warfare (hit and run tactics, ambushes, raids, targeting the security forces by IEDs, and a hybrid combination of these); three, terrorism; and four, mobile warfare.<sup>9</sup> The common thread that runs through most insurgencies is that their objective is to gain control of population (based on their grievances/aspirations) and/or control select portions of territory. This very objective of an insurgency pulls them apart from purely terrorist organisations. However, when the insurgents do not get support from the population at large, they indulge in terrorising people, SF, and the government officials by carrying out brutal killings. They follow the maxim, ‘Kill one, terrorise ten thousand.’

According to the IEP, it is documented that ‘more than 93 per cent casualties from acts of terror have occurred in countries with ongoing conflicts, with maximum deaths attributed to countries with ongoing civil wars during that period’.<sup>10</sup> In addition, in most cases, there is a linkage between terrorism, crime syndicates and narco-trafficking. A brief description of the periods highlighted in Figure 4 are as follows:

- There was a spike in terror attacks in the late 1970s in South Asia, prior to and during the Soviet Russia’s invasion of Afghanistan. India was also experiencing multiple insurgencies in the Northeast, the Naxalite Movement (Maoists) in Central India since 1967, and the Punjab militancy during the 1980s. Worldwide, there were a large number of conflicts in Africa, Asia, and Middle East.
- After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990-91, there was an increase in the number of civil conflicts amongst the former Soviet Union member states.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the period 1990-94 was one of the most unstable and violent one, as it saw a sharp rise in the armed conflicts and terrorism the world over. The genocide of Rwanda in 1994 resulted in millions of people being killed.
- Although it was also the period when Pakistan’s proxy war cum state-sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) had reached unimaginable proportions, the Indian Security Forces gave a befitting reply and controlled the situation, with prohibitive losses to the terrorists. Pakistan sponsored proxy war commenced in J&K in 1989, which continues till date.
- There has been an increase in standalone attacks since the 1990s. In more recent times, the New Zealand attacker targeted Muslims in two mosques on 15 March 2019, and the Sri Lanka bombers attacked Christians on 21 April 2019.<sup>12</sup> It raised several questions if there was any link between the two terror attacks, as these attacks targeted minority communities. It is extremely difficult to predict such forms of standalone terror attacks and extremist violence, due to multiple

reasons. Such terror attacks must be studied in detail to ascertain the probable causes, mindset of individuals and groups, and thus evolve counter-terrorist strategies and tactics. Besides, politico-socio-economic discriminations, broad distinctions among the terrorist groups and their ideologies are driven by their political, nationalists, religious, ethnic and identity aspirations and motivations. Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the political and religious motivated terrorist attacks.<sup>13</sup>

### **Threats and Challenges to India's Internal Security**

India faces a host of major threats and challenges to its Internal Security: multiple insurgencies, terrorism (with 42 banned terrorist groups),<sup>14</sup> threats from cyber, information, economic, political domains, and drones and UAVs which can perform multiple types of tasks. India has long porous land and coastal borders over 15,000 km and 7,500 km respectively, with 16 States and 2 Union Territories bordering international boundaries. India is confronted with infiltration by terrorists, and other anti-national elements (ANEs), illegal migration, drugs and arms trafficking, human trafficking, Fake Indian Currency Note (FICN), and safe havens for ANEs across the borders. Hence, four aspects are important which merit attention to improve IS apparatus: first, a robust and effective intelligence gathering system; second, effective management of borders is key to improving its internal security environment; third, pay attention to the information warfare that aims to target the cognitive domains, to subvert and change the perception of the population at large; fourth, remember "State Police forces are the foundation on which the entire internal security apparatus for the nation must rest."<sup>15</sup> The police forces must build their capacity and capabilities, with added focus on leadership.

Over the past seven decades, India has resolved the classical insurgency in Mizoram (1966-86), militancy in Punjab (1981-94); and

the insurgencies in Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam have shown a definite declining trend, but have not been resolved so far. The fundamental question that deserves an answer is ‘Does India have a formally declared National Security Strategy and Internal Security Doctrine?’ The short answer is No. Henry Kissinger said, “The purpose of a doctrine is to translate power to policy.” Rather than reacting to situations that develop in insurgency cum terrorism affected regions or border areas, there is a need to have a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges posed by IS threats. The state governments should not abdicate their constitutional responsibilities. They should also analyse and address them in a comprehensive manner.

### **Insurgencies in India**

India is a melting pot of diverse ethnic stocks, religions, languages, dialects, cultures, customs, and traditions. George Tanhamis emphatic to suggest, ‘extraordinarily complex and diverse country (India).’<sup>16</sup> Describing the heterogeneity of India’s population, N. N. Vohra states that, “[...] comprise over 4600 communities which practice all the world’s religions, speak 122 languages, nearly 2000 dialects [...] ... lifestyles of different communities reflect myriad social, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities [...].”<sup>17</sup>

Since India’s Independence, it has been indeed unique to witness a new insurgency mushrooming in almost every new decade. Why did it happen as it did? Given its huge diversity, and socio-economic exclusion, identity crisis, deprivation, social injustice, the newly formed governance system could not address the grievances or fulfil the aspirations of the people. A few of these insurgencies have their genesis in the troubled history of India during the pre-Independence era and the Partition in 1947. These have got further aggravated due to correlation of external and internal threats and challenges. While the main causes of insurgencies in India are sub-nationalism, religious, ethnic, identity-driven alienation,

socio-economic exclusion and discrimination, their aim has predominantly been secessionist in nature, a few seeking separatism, greater autonomy, and statehood.<sup>18</sup>

### **India's Northeast Region**

The separatist insurgencies in India's Northeast region (NER) began with the rise of the Naga insurgency, later called the 'Mother of all insurgencies. With the Naga nationalist leader, AZ Phizo, forming the Naga Central Government on 22 March 1956, the Indian Army was deployed for the first time for counter insurgency/counter terrorism (CI/CT) roles in Independent India's history thereafter, insurgencies continued to mushroom in Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya. When compared to India's overall statistics, the NER, with eight states, accounts for about 7.9 per cent of geographical area, 3.77 per cent of population, and about 2.5 per cent of GDP, which needs to improve to higher statistics. NER has a 6,387 km land border with five countries. Besides its geostrategic significance as a bridge to connect with more than one billion population in South East Asia and East Asia, NER is extremely rich in natural oil and gas, limestone, coal, uranium, water resources, tea, forest cover, biodiversity, etc.

NER has a complex landscape due to its demographic profile (several tribes, languages, dialects, culture, customs), fragile security due to both internal and external threats, illegal migrations, lack of economic development, connectivity, and high rate of unemployment. Due to illegal migration, in some cases, it has led to an identity crisis and inter-ethnic rivalry. Therefore, it faces different types of conflicts: tribal versus tribal, tribal versus non-tribal, and tribal versus the state.<sup>19</sup> Mahongnao concludes that 'instead of 'planning for the Northeast,' the emphasis should be 'planning with the Northeast' for the benefit of its people through industrial prospects of this region ... to facilitate effective growth strategies'.<sup>20</sup>

## **Left-Wing Extremism**

In the late 1960s, the heartland of India was affected by the Naxalite movement [called Left Wing Extremism (LWE) based on left-wing ideology], engulfing several states. It aims to overthrow the government in power to establish a communist rule within the country. During the peak period of violence in 2007-2011, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, undivided Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Eastern Maharashtra (Gadchiroli and Gondia) and Eastern Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat) were among the worst affected states/areas. The tribal population as a percentage of the total population of the respective state in Maoist affected areas, as given in census 2011 are Chhattisgarh (31.6), Jharkhand (26.3), Odisha (22.2) and Madhya Pradesh (20.3); and the Scheduled Caste population in Bihar was about 16 per cent of its population. According to the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 (released in 2015), the share of the deprived and landless rural household was 70 per cent in Chhattisgarh, 66 per cent in Odisha, 60.6 per cent in Bihar, 53.3 per cent in Jharkhand, etc.<sup>21</sup> Some of these statistics also suggest that these were also among the most critically affected states of the country.

Though exceptionally rich in land, forest, water, minerals, these areas generally rank much lower than the national average in socio-economic indices like education, health care, potable water, sanitation, housing, electricity, connectivity, unemployment, and the HDI.<sup>22</sup> It is an indigenous insurgency, which has arisen due to neglect, deprivation, discrimination, social injustice, and more importantly, lack of effective governance over the years. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) or (CPI Maoist), Maoists in short, ranked third among the five perpetrator groups with the most attacks worldwide in 2017.<sup>23</sup> 2009-10 were the bloodiest years of LWE, in which the Security Forces also suffered a huge setback. However, with added focus on development, security and intelligence system by the central and state governments, and improved CI/CT techniques being adopted by the SF, creation of commando trained special anti – Naxal

forces like the Greyhounds in Andhra Pradesh, and C-60 in Maharashtra, the level of violence and tempo of insurgency has declined, especially after 2012. The Maoists' movement has been experiencing difficulties due to reasons such as leadership crisis due to old age and neutralisation of the prominent leaders (Politburo has just five members, and central committee 21);<sup>24</sup> traditional strongholds and safe havens of the rebels have shrunk; splintering of Maoists' Party in smaller groups due to differences largely over 'power and money sharing'; progressive decline in ideology of the LWE and propaganda; and inadequate support from the front organisations in the urban areas. During the spread of COVID-19, and due to disruption in grassroots level supply chain, the level of violence had generally declined in 2020 and 2021. However, given the support from a few political parties, increased network facilities available, and high rate of unemployment among the youth, the Maoists are still a force to reckon with and have the capability to strike against the SF. They are still potent in a few strongholds in Bastar region, Andhra-Odisha border areas, western Maharashtra (Gadchiroli) and some parts of Jharkhand.

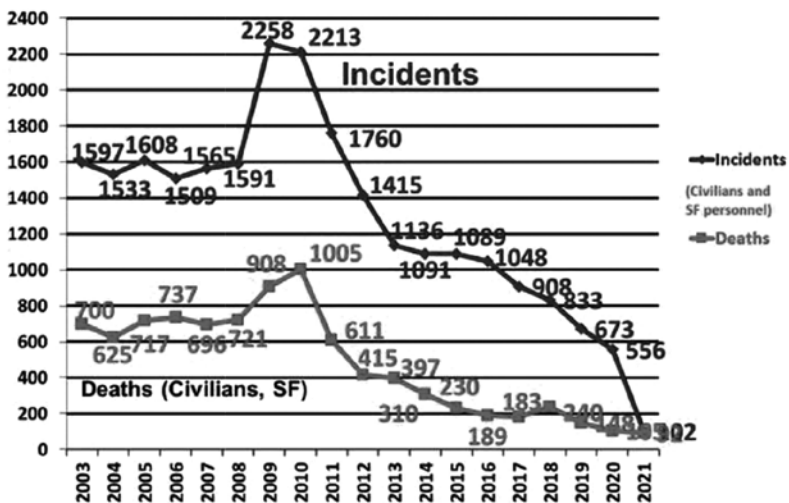
It must be understood that the grievances/aspirations and the centre of gravity of each region are different. The governance system must identify them and make sincere efforts to address them with a sense of urgency. Some of these include provision of basic amenities like food security, health care, community forest rights to traditional forest dwellers, job opportunities, connectivity, minimum support price for their local produce including tendu leaves, forest produce, etc. Recently, Chhattisgarh state government announced its strategy that 'problems are identified based on the local conditions and circumstances [...] the district administration are empowered and sensitised to work as per the sentiments, expectations, and demands of the localities.'<sup>25</sup> It is likely to address the aspirations of the people, if it is implemented on the ground.

The biggest tribal group – the Gonds – in central India number about 7.4 million, followed by the Santhals about 4.2 million.<sup>26</sup> Their language

and dialect must be promoted to establish communication and promote awareness. Guruswamy suggests that all tribal majority areas must be consolidated into administrative divisions whose authority must be vested with democratically elected leadership. This suggestion may help to address the aspirations of the tribals, as 45.86 per cent of Adivasis live below the poverty line.<sup>27</sup> The governance system must insist on timely implementation of people-centric schemes on the ground, accountability, and act against corrupt officials. The statistics in Figure 4 clearly indicate a sharp decline in number of incidents, killings, in the LWE areas, with periodic attacks to show their potent presence. However, it gives a window of opportunity to resolve this indigenous conflict by engaging all stakeholders.

The Security Forces need to focus on effective leadership at both strategic, and operational levels, actionable intelligence-based operations, and carry out the pending reforms to improve the capacity and capability of the police forces.

Figure 5: Naxal Violence in India, 2003-2021



Source: SATP (Data till 3 November 2021).



## **Punjab**

In the 1980s, Punjab witnessed a politico-religious secessionist movement, primarily abetted, and supported by Pakistan. It was more of militancy than an insurgency, which was controlled with police playing a major role. It was a joint and integrated counter militancy structure, with Police as the lead force. With intelligence-based operations, support of the people at large, and good perception management, the militancy was controlled in a rather quick time frame. While Punjab has remained peaceful, India has to remain vigilant to the call for Khalistan Referendum 2020, by the US-based Sikh separatist body Sikh for Justice (SFJ), which was postponed (to 2022) due to the ongoing pandemic.<sup>28</sup>

## **Jammu and Kashmir**

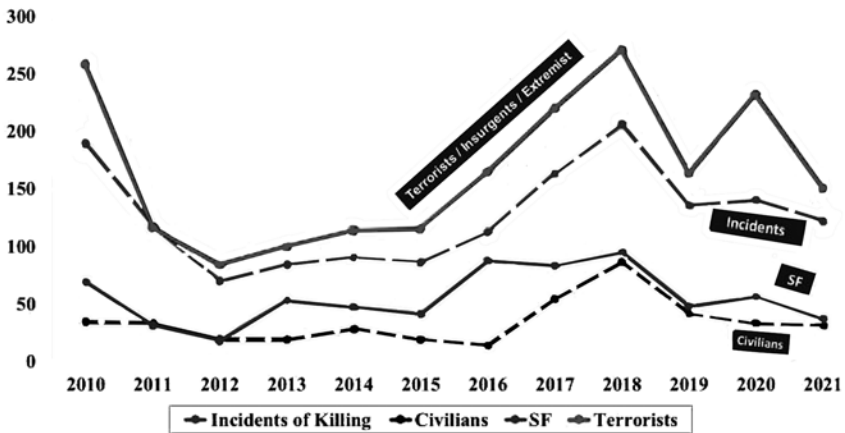
In the late 1980s, Pakistan resorted to proxy war cum cross border terrorism to destabilise India, with its focus on the state of Jammu and Kashmir (now Union Territory). It was in consonance with Pakistan's policy and announcement of 'bleeding India with a thousand cuts'.<sup>29</sup> Having not succeeded, Pakistan made persistent efforts to indigenise the insurgency by supporting the youth of J&K. Post the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Burhan Wani in 2016, Pakistan has renewed its efforts towards radicalisation of the youth. While social-political analysts highlight the internal factors such as misgovernance, youth bulge and employment opportunities, resentment and lack of trust in the government due to abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019, presence of the SF, and human rights violations; and external factors like religious radicalisation due to Wahabi sect and literature, infiltration across the LoC, Pakistan's support and instigation, cease fire violations and terrorist acts, and in more recent times, Pakistan – China nexus against India. There was an increase in ceasefire violations on the LoC in 2020, the highest since 2003. After the reinforcement of ceasefire between the two armies in February 2021, there has been a

spike in the CF violations and infiltration attempts on the LoC from September 2021 onwards.

Due to the improved security environment in the hinterland since 2010, there has been a decline in stone-pelting incidents (highest were in 2016 when Burhan Wani was killed), number of incidents of violence, attacks against the Security Forces, and killings of civilians. There was an increase in incidents in 2018 and violence, followed by a decline thereafter. However, the targeted killings of people in the Kashmir Valley in October 2021 has been a cause of concern, which must be controlled urgently by adopting appropriate measures.

While the conduct of Panchayat elections in J&K has been a good step, simultaneously governing system must communicate and interact with the people, prevent infiltration across the LoC and through road communication arteries. There is a need to instal full-body scanners for trucks and containers at bottlenecks like Madhopur to prevent inflow of weapons systems, choke the supply of terror funding, improve education system by bringing in transparency in syllabi, take counter measures

**Figure 6: Kashmir, 2010-2021**



Source: SATP (Data till 3 November 2021).

to expose the false narratives and ideas by local and Pakistan agencies, empower the youth to usher in an era of hope, and implement schemes on the ground to reach the people in the rural areas also.

### **Terrorism: Attacks against the ‘Very Idea of India’**

India has large porous land, maritime and airspace borders with its neighbours, due to which terrorists exploit multiple routes from the neighbouring countries to reach J&K and other parts to carry out attacks. These areas also provide conduits for drugs, arms, and other contraband through the porous borders. According to the US Congressional Report of September 2021, Pakistan is home to at least 12 groups designated as ‘foreign terrorist organisations’ by the US including five of them being India-centric like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).<sup>30</sup> Pakistan has had a major role in organising terror attacks in India.

Given India’s location at the crossroads of the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle, as also its distinctive location close to the ‘epicentre of global terrorism’, India has experienced almost all forms of terrorist attacks. These have been as part of organic to an insurgency, suicide attacks, sabotaging railway tracks, kidnapping hostages for meeting political demands or release of terrorists, hijacking of aircrafts, the assassination of prominent political leadership, systematic planned attacks on religious places of worship, financial hubs, transportation systems, security forces, communal riots followed by extreme violence and attacks both by religious and non-religious terrorist groups, cyber-attacks and public information cum propaganda campaign.

Having not reconciled with the Partition of India on its terms, Pakistan has remained obsessed with annexation of J&K, anti-India activities, and use of religion to rally global and terrorist groups in India to destabilise India, much to the detriment of its own economy, internal security situation within Pakistan. The terrorists have tried to

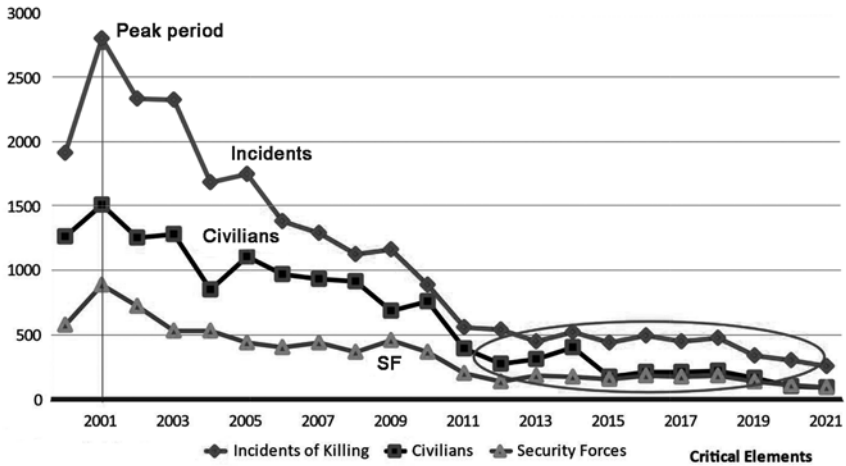
destroy the very idea of India by organising terrorist attacks against the Parliament (13 December 2001), financial and IT hubs, and Hindu temples in Ahmedabad, Varanasi and Jammu to incite communal disharmony. Speaking at the UN Security Council on Kashmir on 22 September 1965, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan declared a thousand-year war against India.<sup>31</sup> Later, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Ziaul Haque (1977-88) had gone a step further to formulate a doctrine called, 'bleeding India through a thousand cuts', to be achieved using covert and low-intensity warfare with militancy and infiltration.<sup>32</sup>

Religious, ethnic sub-nationalism and identity-based terrorism are perhaps the most potent threats to our national security. It would therefore be correct to conclude that terrorism, coupled with insurgencies, are the biggest threats to India and its 'very idea' – the idea to empower a democratic, secular, and secure India with a technology-enabled environment to ensure sustained economic growth and build comprehensive national power. Moreover, terrorists have also been carrying out cyber espionage, cyber-attacks, and hacking. These along with cyber-terrorism pose a serious threat to the security of the country.

### **Incidents and Killings at India Level**

Figure 7 suggests that an excellent window of opportunity (WOO) was missed from 2010 onwards when the level of violence, incidents had declined to lowest levels. It required political acumen and the governance system to put their ears to the ground to resolve the conflict to the advantage or mutual acceptance of the proposals by all stakeholders within India. While there has been an overall sharp decline in the graph, it does not really measure the sentiments and perceptions of the population at large. However, post the killing of Burhan Wani, terrorist, in the Kashmir Valley, there was a spike in the incidents of violence.

**Figure 7: Incidents and Killings at India Level, 2000-2021**



Source: SATP, Annotated by the Author.

The geographical influence of the Maoists has been reduced to 41 districts in 2021.<sup>33</sup> In 2019: CPI (Maoist) & JeM were responsible for two-thirds of the total deaths in India. JeM has been far more active. In 2020 in J&K alone, a total of 203 terrorists, including 37 terrorists from Pakistan were killed, and nine surrendered. A study of the statistics<sup>34</sup> of incidents and killings of the past one decade suggests that the violence levels have progressively declined in the NER and the LWE affected regions in India.

### Periodic Protests

Periodic protests by different castes, ethnic compositions and regions demanding reservations for Jats, Gujjars, Marathas and Patidars affect India’s economic well-being. IS is also negatively affected by the conflicts occurring due to the Pathalgarhi movement, agrarian movement, river water sharing and boundary disputes between the states. When such protests or conflicts turn violent, they create an adverse internal security situation and disrupt economic growth, resulting in avoidable

expenditures to the national exchequer. Political warfare is another area which dilutes the institutions of governance, and due to irresponsible statements and actions, it may result in communal disharmony, societal tensions, spike in religious radicalisation and violence between different communities or conflict with the state law enforcing machinery. The differences or disputes notwithstanding, national security should not be compromised at any stage.

### Way Forward

*“The insurgencies do not conclude with a clear cut victory by any one side.”*

– Thomas R. Mockaitis<sup>35</sup>

With certain initiatives and strategies put in place at political, diplomatic, governance, legal, and military levels, India has been fairly successful in managing (not resolving) the menace of insurgencies, and terrorism. However, India needs to work with a sense of urgency and commitment to address myriad internal security issues, resolve long drawn insurgencies, and minimise the economic cost of violence. While a few recommendations have been given earlier along with each specific region, a few aspects that merit consideration are:

- Almost all elements of national power have a role – direct or indirect – on matters of national security, to suppress internal armed conflicts, and finally to resolve them. Given India’s diversity and nature of myriad threats, the Government needs to formulate a CNSS. It may be in two parts: classified and unclassified. Although the armed forces have formulated Military Doctrines including for joint operation, and sub-conventional operations, a CNSS would give a definite direction to the role of each element of national power in the short and long term. This would thus help to integrate all elements of national power and resolve the conflicts in an acceptable time frame. CNSS

should also lay down guidelines to prevent political warfare that is detrimental to national security.

- To formulate a CNSS, there is a need to analyse the existing and emerging threats, and how these threats overlap with conventional threats. These threats must also include the threats from cyber, information, non-contact form of weapon systems, economic, environment etc.
- Given India's young demography and high unemployment rate, there is a need to focus on education, skill development and empowerment of the youth to provide employment opportunities and engage them in a constructive manner.
- A robust intelligence system, with technology-enabled tools and HUMINT, is not only essential for the SF to monitor the activities of the insurgents and conduct operations against hardcore insurgents and terrorists, but also understand the pulse and grievances of the people. Intelligence sharing and coordination between the IB, Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) and Subsidiary Multi-Agency Centre (SMAC) must be further strengthened. These actions will help to identify the CoG of each region, and create a road map to address the legitimate aspirations in a systematic manner.
- It is difficult to implement development initiatives without providing a secure environment. Depending upon the phase of insurgency and the trend of violence, the SF must also review its strategy periodically.
- The first responders to IS situation are the police force. Therefore, in the spirit of the landmark judgement of the Supreme Court of India on September 22, 2006, the central and state governments should implement the pending police reforms. There is a great difference between normal policing duties and combating insurgents and terrorists. It requires a cultural shift from conventional policing roles to fighting against guerrillas in unfamiliar and difficult terrain. There is, therefore, a need to further enhance its capacity and capabilities

with technology-enabled systems, along with added focus on training and the training establishments.

- The terrorists and insurgents remain ahead of the SF in acquiring and using the latest technology, weapon systems and social media tools for their functioning, including transferring money on dark nets. Violent non-state actors, insurgents, terrorists, criminals remain abreast at internet speed, unlike the SF and government agencies. The system of monitoring threats, maintaining situational awareness and acquiring the latest technology by the SF, in an early time, requires a comprehensive review.
- Challenges posed by an insurgency, terrorism, cyber-crime, and information warfare to change the perception of the population at large, require a coordinated response with specialists (cyber and information related) and other elements of national power. In J&K and the NER, the Army, CAPF, police, intelligence agencies, civil departments must synergise their activities. In India, to combat insurgency and terrorism, there is an urgent need to establish good coordination between the national and state-level security apparatus.
- During the Malayan Insurgency (1948-60), General Templar, newly appointed British High Commissioner, created a central command authority with four main components to synergise their effort against the Communist insurgents: SF, police, civil administration, and intelligence. Due to synergised effort, the insurgency was managed and resolved, in that order, in less than ten years. All agencies involved in CI operations must keep this principle to synergise their effort.
- While election manifestos of political parties generally include ‘to improve the IS situation’, but not much is done to resolve the insurgencies/conflicts. In such conflicts, there are no clear winners or losers. According to statistics, only 7 per cent of insurgencies were resolved by military’s intervention, while majority of them were resolved by a political solution, supported by a strong military muscle.



It requires a 'political strategy' and a mission-oriented approach to resolve them in larger national interest, by involving specialists', the affected local population, and the leaders of insurgencies. The five pillars of governance in insurgency affected areas depend upon development (extra focus on connectivity), empowerment and employment, creating a secure environment, perception management, and negotiation and dialogue.

- Given India has long porous land and coastal borders, effective management is vital to prevent anti-national activities from across the border, including LoC. The buzz word is smart management of borders, with better ISR capabilities, employment of technology-enabled systems, and simultaneously improving the infrastructure by providing better surface and cellular connectivity, socio-economic activity, and better facilities for education, health, employment opportunities to prevent migration of villagers from the border areas. Due to multiple forces on the borders, there is a need to have an Apex body to coordinate and ensure better Border Management.
- Depending upon the phase of insurgency, balanced civil, police, military and perception management techniques should be applied. The aim should be to defeat the ideology or the false narratives of terrorists and insurgents, and not the people. A 'strategy of reassurance to the people' that their aspirations and interests would always be protected. Therefore, tribal people, NGOs, civil society activists and media should be involved to not support the ANEs, and shun violence. A case in point is Naga Mothers' Association which has contributed significantly to dissuading the rebels from the path of violence. To prevent violence and loss of lives, it had propagated, 'Shed No Blood' as one of its primary mission.
- To ensure time-bound implementation of people-centric schemes on the ground, performance audit, and accountability of the functionaries must be ensured.

All elements of national power have some role to address the grievances of the population. These must be identified, region wise and addressed with a sense of urgency. Due to rapid increase in population, industrialisation, and employment opportunities in the cities, which are the hub of political, economic, social, and cultural activities, India would be confronted with the challenge of hyper urbanisation. The governance system must understand the challenge, and plan to provide essential facilities and infrastructure to people moving into ghettos and slums. Otherwise, it may result in ANEs initiating a mass movement against the government, which would be difficult to monitor in such densely populated areas. It would be prudent to pay attention to urban terrorism, cyber-crimes, information warfare and related threats in the future. On balance, it requires a whole of the government approach to address multiple threats to internal security.

*“...Tangible support – the ability of insurgents to replenish and obtain personal, material financing, intelligence and sanctuary – was found to be even more important than popular support.”<sup>36</sup>*

## Notes

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