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Internal Security Needs a Relook To Deal With Emerging Challenges



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Introduction

The predominant vision of India as a state was based on a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and secular democracy. The partition of India, at that time, overpowered the logic of non-violence and the concept of a harmonious society based on secularism. The order in the disorder in the newly independent nation could not be established in the absence of a strong internal security force which could create safe enclaves or corridors for the mass migration of the population on ethnic lines.

Prime Minister Nehru was of the opinion that India faced no threat and rejected the very idea proposed by the then Army Chief Gen Lockhart, of a "strategic plan for government directive on defence policy". This belief of Nehru was shattered in 1947, when Pakistan sent regular and irregular cadres into Kashmir, and India had to employ the military to defeat the irregulars in the Valley. India had championed non-violence as a tool for global harmony and peace but was forced to fight four conventional wars in a span of 25 years after attaining independence. Nagaland, Mizoram

Key Points

1. India's internal security apparatus has been created due to the security crisis and not out of a perspective plan or strategy.
2. India has the largest number of CAPFs, yet it remains vulnerable to mass illegal migration, intrusion by adversaries, terror attacks and rapid increase in the footprint of LWE in central India.
3. India needs a broad, pragmatic, flexible and realistic approach to institutionalise the internal security structure.
4. India does not need numbers; it needs capable and professional forces that are able to perform their task efficiently.
5. A fragmented approach in dealing with internal security is counter-productive. The amalgamation of the internal security forces and border guarding forces under an apex body at the national level is required.
6. Highly skilled internal security forces empowered by technology are essential to deal with asymmetric and ambiguous threats to national security.

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Internal Security Needs a Relook ...

and Manipur witnessed secessionist movements, and internal rebellions posed a serious security risk to the integrity of the country and overall security environment, certainly warranting a structured security apparatus for a holistic and comprehensive response.

Evolution of National Security

The 1962 War with China and the 1965 War with Pakistan gave India the realisation that there was a need for a specialised border guarding force that could act as the second line of defence during a war. Similarly, the eruption of the Naga insurgency, the Telangana rebellion and the Naxalite movement in Bengal, as also the terrorism in Punjab and proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) necessitated India to have a dedicated force for internal security since the local police was unable to handle the serious threat posed by separatist and secessionist elements within the country, and the employment of the Army as an ad hoc measure was not a good idea to pursue.

India's internal security has emerged out of crises and not out of a perspective plan or strategy. The reasons for such ad hoc/situation-specific reactions are the outcome of the absence of a national security strategy and strategic culture. The Indian Parliament has debated issues of security only when there is a crisis and not as part of the regular curriculum such as the budget, whereas a security audit should be one of the prime concerns of the law-makers, so that the security gaps can be plugged. Chanakya had established the correlation between threats and the capabilities required to deal with them. He had said, "Constant preoccupation of the king consisted not only of the physical defence of the kingdom, but also the prevention of treachery, revolts, and rebellion. The physical defensive measures should prevent the entry of undesirable aliens, and forts are required to protect the subjects." These few lines lay down the complete roadmap of the national security structure, from the physical to the moral domain, and from border guarding to internal security. In

fact, the force structure and the doctrine of internal security can flow out of what Chanakya stated. Apart from external threats, there are three areas of concern that are critical to national security: internal security, border management, and law and order.

It is evident from the above facts that even as new organisations were created, the old continued to function, without an evaluation of the roles and duties of the existing organisations. As a result, India has the largest Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and paramilitary forces in the world. In spite of such large specialised forces (for border guarding, internal security, anti-terror special forces, riot control, industrial security, narcotics control, disaster relief and multi-layered intelligence agencies), India continues to be vulnerable to mass illegal migration from neighbouring countries, intrusion by adversaries, espionage, terror attacks, drugs and weapons trafficking and a rapid increase in the footprint of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in central India. The big question is that in spite of a specialised force for each task, the security situation remains challenging, and deployment of the Army to restore public order, for disaster relief and dealing with intrusion and internal security has become routine. It is indicative of the fact that something is not right in our thinking and practice. Some of the reasons that have led to a fragmented approach towards national security are as under:

- Forces were raised without an overall restructuring of the internal security apparatus. Old structures were retained and new ones inserted without any perspective plans or national security doctrine.
- Overlapping of responsibilities between ministries and directorates without seamless coordination. A case in point is border guarding, which is with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) but defending the border is the responsibility of the armed forces. Command and control of border guarding forces is transferred to the Ministry of Defence (MOD)

during a war. The irony is that neither is there compatibility of equipment nor training for conventional war. The CAPF Headquarters (HQ) are not accountable or responsible for ensuring that fully equipped and trained forces are placed under the Army during a war, and the HQ will not have responsibility for either logistics or operations. It sounds absurd that during a war, the CAPF leadership will have no role/responsibility, whereas their troops will be fighting the war.

- All the agencies operate in an isolated environment, without central functional operational directives. Even among the CAPFs, interoperability is questionable.
- The CAPF chiefs do not grow within the organisation and are often para-dropped by the political leadership from other departments/states, which does not help to address the needs of the forces.¹ The irony is that policy and operations are controlled by those who have not grown within the force and have little or no experience of leading the men in operations. A case in point is of the Director General, National Security Guard (DG, NSG) who has no experience of handling Special Forces from the Army and has never ever led any special mission as part of Special Forces, and yet he is entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and preparing a force for the future. Thus, there is not only a disconnect but the entire concept of the leadership is dysfunctional.
- A force engaged in counter-insurgency or counter-terrorist operations is required to have a concept of operations and doctrine that acts as a guiding principle for the smooth conduct of operations. However, most of the CAPFs operate on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are rigid, defensive in nature, and the focus is to prevent casualties and reversal, rather than taking a proactive approach. SOPs are not a replacement for the concept of operations or doctrine. In fact, SOPs comprise the basic guidelines for tactical

manoeuvres. That leaves little scope for the troops to innovate and use ingenuity while operating in a hostile environment. At times, SOPs become a hindrance and curb the initiative of the commanders on the ground.

- If there are multiple agencies having overlapping jurisdiction, accountability and responsibility are difficult to fix. Border management is the responsibility of the border guarding force, but when an intrusion is carried out by the border guarding regiments of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), the Army is pressed into action, whereas any peace-time transgression is the responsibility of the border guarding force, with the Army not involved except for terrain familiarisation.
- In the case of J&K and the northeast, it is a joint responsibility that means that there is no single authority or commander who is responsible for undertaking operations and security measures. In one battle space, there cannot be multiple commanders independent of each other. This is the most inefficient method of conflict management.
- The eruption of unrest in Kashmir during 2016 was indicative of weak intelligence assessment and forecasting. It exposed the lack of synergy among the forces and the inability to read the public sentiments. Intelligence agencies operating independently of the field forces would always leave an operational vacuum, and the prevailing situation is reflective of that.

Do we Really Need so Many CAPFs and Paramilitary Forces?

China shares 22,000 km of land borders with 14 nations. China qualifies to be the nation with the most neighbours and longest border in the world,² and in spite of this, it has only one border guarding force that operates under the PLA. Whereas India has 15,107 km of land borders being looked after by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP - China), Border



Security Force (BSF - Pakistan and Bangladesh), Sashastra Sena Bal (SSB - Nepal and Bhutan) and Assam Rifles (AR - Myanmar). Incidentally, even all the border guarding forces do not have a central control room from where their activities can be coordinated. Similarly, internal security is being handled predominantly by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) but even the BSF, ITBP and India Reserve Battalion (IRB) are operating in the same theatre, with no centralised control. China has the People's Armed Police (PAP) and it is responsible for riots, terrorist attacks, guarding of important government installations, including foreign embassies and consulates, providing personal protection to important government functionaries, counter-terrorism, and handling of public emergencies. The PAP also maintains special units for tactical counter-terrorism operations. In times of war, the PAP is trained to be the second line of defence and act as light infantry, supporting the PLA and garrison forces. Whereas, in India, for the same task, there is a number of different CAPF organisations such as the CRPF, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF), NSG, Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) and Special Protection Group (SPG). All these organisations are under the MHA but in spite of that, there is no centralised operational room or seamless communication network. All CAPF HQ maintain adhoc control rooms that are primarily information offices, unlike functional operational rooms. Though the government had established such a large number of forces to maintain expertise in their respective area of responsibility, it seems this experiment has not achieved the desired results.

The Way Forward'

India needs a broad, pragmatic, flexible and realistic approach to institutionalise the internal security structure. The security structure must take into account the risks and threats which could impact the nation in the immediate and distant future.

Mr Doval, the National Security Adviser of India, while addressing young police trainees said, "Post the World War period, 37 countries have either failed or degraded. Out of these, external aggression resulted in the downfall of only nine countries, while the remaining 28 countries failed because they could not manage internal conflicts".³ A similar opinion was echoed by a former Prime Minister of India when he said, "India's internal security remains a major challenge and the threat from Maoist rebels is the greatest internal security challenge that requires constant attention".⁴ To fight multiple threats, a whole of government approach is required. Mr Chidambaram, as Home Minister, had said, "India needs to fight various security threats in a unified way."⁵ But the ground situation is completely the opposite—the more we want to change, the more we remain the same, and we refuse to cast away the old and outdated organisational structure. The time has come to take a *de novo* look at the overall internal security structure, since the old ones are inefficient and unable to cope up with the changing nature of conflict.

National security must revolve around doctrines, concept of operations, a deep understanding of current and future security challenges, and well-trained and equipped forces. The fundamentals of internal security are:

- The capability and capacity to deal with current and emerging security threats are imperative. Capability should be credible to enforce peace through strength, if required.
- The changing character of conflict requires a dynamic response. That response can only come if the force is intellectually empowered and has a pragmatic doctrine and concept of operations. An organisation that does not have its doctrine and concept of operations, is unlikely to develop into a professional outfit.
- Security forces and intelligence agencies should operate in a synergised manner. It is the responsibility of the intelligence

agencies to create an environment wherein the security forces can operate efficiently. Lack of information can lead to collateral damage and, at times, human rights violations.

- Napoleon had famously said, “Give me allies to fight”, because collective leadership and responsibility is a recipe for disaster. There has to be one commander under whom a war or conflict should be fought.
- Crisis management is an indication of lack of organisational capabilities to assess and identify the current and emerging challenges. Therefore, it calls for taking a relook at the current command structure in J&K dealing with the proxy war. Ideally, a campaign must be conducted under a single operational plan, and all the forces operating in a theatre should be placed under a single command structure. This will increase synergy, and fix accountability.

The increase in the number of CAPF organisations and their strength is indicative of two factors: either the state institutions are crumbling and, thus, require multiple security organisations to maintain public order or the security forces are inadequately trained and ill-equipped to undertake the task assigned to them. India does not need numbers; it needs capable and professional forces that are able to perform their task efficiently. Therefore, the options are:

- Create an apex body at the national level for internal security.
- Reduce the number of forces, and create special and area specialisation units to perform mandated and special tasks. All internal security forces such as the CRPF, CISF, IRB, NDRF and SPG should be amalgamated. This force should be trained to acquire expertise in counter-insurgency, public order and security of installations, VIP security and disaster relief as a mandate. Even the counter-insurgency force should further have area specialisation such as the northeast,

J&K and LWE. The internal security forces should operate under the MHA.

- Instead of having three separate border guarding forces, the government should look at merging these into one, with theatre specialisation.
- There is a need to have a core cadre, especially those who are responsible for operations, training and policy matters growing within the Service rather than those who come to these CAPFs on deputation. This will assist in the development of ethos and regimentation within the CAPFs.
- Each of these CAPFs is maintaining 10 to 15 training establishments, of which, close to 100, and barring a few, are imparting similar training. Whereas the requirement is to create national institutes of excellence, where all the CAPFs can train their personnel.
- There is a need to bring interoperability among the CAPFs since most of them, at some point in time, will be operating with each other. It will assist the forces to understand the operational ethos and leverage each other's capabilities for achieving better results.
- The accountability and responsibility of each force should be well defined.

An internal security operational room is a necessity where the operations of all the CAPFs can be coordinated. This will assist the government to coordinate and disseminate orders and instructions to all the CAPFs. It will bring in more transparency and accountability among the CAPFs while conducting operations on the ground.

China, Pakistan and most other countries have border guarding forces under the Ministry of Defence. The Rangers of Pakistan and the border guarding regiments of China operate under their respective militaries, whereas in India, border defence and border management is under two different ministries. The Army is not responsible for peace-time border management, yet it is deployed to deal with trans-border ingress by adversaries. Border management

and border defence should be under the MoD and, thus, the armed forces should exercise overall command and control during both peace and war.

The threats and challenges are becoming complex and the response has to be precise and rapid. There is a need to create a “**National War Research Centre**” for internal security that acts as a pioneer institute to carry out research and study on lessons learnt to improve the operational readiness and efficiency of the forces. It should act as a guide and a one-point advisory institution for suggesting course correction and reorientation of forces to prepare for emerging threats.

No nation has ever benefited by defeating its own citizens, thus, a sense of victory should be seen through as the victory of the people, and not the victory of the forces. In such scenarios, **perception management** and shaping the opinion of the public becomes vital. There is an old saying that the best weapons in counter-insurgency are the weapons that do not fire, because the targets are the minds of the people. Separatists and secessionist movements are a war of ideas and this is an area that the CAPFs need to acquire expertise in. It would need training of junior leaders, soldiers and all those who are involved in the planning and conduct of operations.

The CAPFs will have to **modernise and exploit technology** to enhance professional efficiency. Future conflicts are going to become more complex, and collateral damage is unacceptable in an environment wherein all the operations are being conducted under the glare of the media. Body protection gear, night fighting capabilities, light weight weapons, all-weather surveillance systems (especially for border guarding forces), navigational systems, secure communications, sensors to intercept intruders, and high mobility all-terrain vehicles are some of the urgent and important requirements for the troops.

The current structure of the forces has no role of

social scientists, specialists and academicians in the forces. But the time has come to bring in expertise by recruiting unarmed soldiers either on contract or in permanent bases to bring in new ideas and expertise in functioning. Experts are required in the fields of cyber and information warfare, as also social scientists, psychologists, forensic experts and academicians.

Restructuring of NSG: The problem of the NSG is that two different forces with a different ethos and structure have been merged to make it a single entity. The CAPF leadership is neither trained nor developed in the mould of the regimented ethos of the armed forces. Thus, there is a wide gap in understanding and operations. The NSG has absorbed close to 200 officers and 5,000 highly trained men from the Army. There is a need to restructure the NSG into two separate organisations since counter-terrorist operations are specialised operations and have no linkages to VIP security. The Special Forces units have an ethos and character that is developed over a period of time, but is lacking in the current set-up because the elites are not segregated from the rest and there is no permanency in the units, unlike the Special Forces of the Army. To make the NSG more effective and competitive, this force should be divided into two separate organisations with independent command and control set-ups:

- **Offensive Force/Counter-Terrorist Force:** An offensive force consisting of both the Special Action Group (SAG) units and Army component of the four hubs should deal with counter-terrorist and anti-highjacking operations. The current Army component, including communication and engineers should also form part of this force. The advantage is that apart from their counter-terrorism and counter-hijacking tasks, these units will also be available to the Army for special missions during a war. The NSG is facing lack of experience – this resource has been lying idle, without adequate combat or operational experience. Whereas the Special Forces of the Army have a

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team each deployed for special operations in the northeast and J&K, to maintain troops with operational experience. In addition, these units are engaged in training activities with the Special Forces of foreign Armies. The result is that whenever they are called upon to perform a task, they are able to deliver in spite of the limitations of the resources at their disposal.

- **Defensive Force/ VIP Security:** VIP security is a completely different task and the CAPFs are better suited for such tasks. In addition, there is no pressure for these forces to be available to the parent organisation during a war. This force should be maintained and led by the CAPFs/ IPS (Indian Police Service). Many argue that VIP security is not a primary task of the NSG—in that case, it must be handled purely by a CAPF.

In addition to the above, the Army must also offer an alternative to the government by maintaining two Special Forces units that are available for any contingency, beyond the police-led NSG.

Conclusion

A stable internal security environment is an enabler for a nation to become a comprehensive national power. The CAPFs and state police organisations are important organs of the state to ensure the economic, political and social security of a nation. Therefore, it is important to enable and empower the CAPFs for future security challenges by harnessing the technology, human resource and expertise from various fields.

To make these forces accountable, responsible and efficient, there is a need to amalgamate all the internal security forces, and similarly amalgamate border management forces. The focus should be to develop ethos, character and benchmark expertise to achieve core competence. This would require the development of leadership, doctrines, concept of operations and adaptation to technology. Internal security and border management forces should create their own perspective plans and vision documents so that these forces can develop for the future.

Notes

1. Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray, "India and The Perpetual Disconnect- Analysis", *Eurasia Review*, September 07, 2013.
2. "The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces", Information Office of the State Council, People's Republic of China, Beijing, April 2013.
3. "Internal Security Challenges More Grave Than External Threats: Doval", *The Times of India*, November 01, 2015.
4. "India PM Singh says Internal Security a Major Challenge", BBC News, April 16, 2012.
5. Ibid.

The contents of this Issue Brief are based on the analysis of material accessed from open sources and are the personal views of the author. It may not be quoted as representing the views or policy of the Government of India or Integrated Headquarters of MoD (Army).



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