



ISSUE BRIEF

No. 163

January 2019

Internal Security Challenges to India: 2019



Brig Narender Kumar, SM, VSM (Retd) is a Former Senior Fellow at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) and presently a Distinguished Fellow at USI of India.

The peacetime soldier's principal task is to prepare effectively for the next war. In order to do so, he must anticipate what the next war will be like. This is a difficult task that gets continuously more difficult.

– Lt Gen Franz Uhle-Wettler

Abstract

Year 2019 is critical for India especially with regard to the internal security. General Elections are scheduled next year and inimical forces will be more than eager to disrupt the democratic process in India. Instability in Jammu and Kashmir is also assuming significance due to deteriorating security situation and political uncertainty. Issue of resolution of Naga conflict in spite of having signed Framework Agreement between Central Government and NSCN (IM) is inconclusive and relapse of conflict can take place. Though total number of districts severely affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) has come down but the threat from Maoists is spilling over to urban areas and it is certainly a cause of concern. Issue of Gorkhaland is still simmering and Siliguri Corridor remains vulnerable

Key Points

1. Internal security is emerging as key for economic and political stability of a nation to ensure uninterrupted development and growth.
2. It is vital to ensure that democratic process and institutions of governance remain functional and resilient.
3. Conflict resolution in J&K and North East require a timeline for resolution because both conflicts have the potential to spill over to other regions.
4. LWE is one of the most potent threats that India is facing in the 21st Century. Urban Naxalism is a reality and cannot be brushed aside.
5. Indian Muslim youth is a target for Jihadi ideologues to give impetus to instability in the heartland India.
6. Cyber frontiers are required to be secured to prevent cyber-terrorism.
7. Youth bulge if not managed can become a cause of instability. Thus economic empowerment and engagement of youth is imperative.

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an independent think-tank dealing with national security and conceptual aspects of land warfare, including conventional and sub-conventional conflict and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is futuristic in outlook and policy-oriented in approach.

Internal Security Challenges to India ...

from conventional and sub-conventional threats. There have been cases where radicalised Muslim youths have joined ISIS and Jihadi organisations in the past and if anti- and counter-radicalisation measures are not taken on priority, it may give impetus to the efforts of Jihadi ideologues to radicalise the vulnerable Muslim youths. Social media and cyber frontiers require monitoring and securing. Youth is a national asset and needs engagement and economic empowerment. State and Central governments should come together to put up integrated and synergised efforts to maintain internal security to create conducive environment to ensure uninterrupted economic growth, functioning of institutions of governance, security of people and national wealth.

Introduction

The emerging security environment is fundamentally different from what it was a couple of decades ago. There are national and transnational players who are on the lookout to exploit the faultlines in the internal and external security structure of a nation. Asymmetric means and hybrid threats can destabilise a nation not in years, but in months and weeks. India is facing multidimensional security challenges from separatist and secessionist movements that have taken root due to socio-political discrimination and religion-based radicalisation. The social media and cyber war has made the situation more complex and challenging, by providing the means for the integration of state and non-state actors for common objectives. The active support to some of these movements by inimical forces is further complicating the overall security environment. These threats are ultimately resulting in physical, cultural and structural violence that allows no space for dialogue and reconciliation. The struggle primarily is for control over resources, spread of ideologies and creation of ethno-religious transnational states.

George Santayana famously pointed out that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” India as a nation should take a lesson from history and put in place a system that is perspective in nature and capable of dealing with predictable

and unpredictable security challenges. The security mechanism should not wait for the next move by the terror groups or insurgents to perpetuate violence, rather there should be a system to forecast, pre-empt and pre-position resources to prevent and deter acts of direct and indirect violence. The success of a nation in maintaining security lies in ensuring that there are no exposed flanks and preventing acts of violence by terrorist and insurgent groups that can cause collateral damage. The Asia Economic Institute study which calculated that the overall loss to Indian economy in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks was about \$100 billion arising from the closure of crucial institutions, such as the stock exchanges, commodities sector, money markets, trade and business and commercial establishments. Further, FDI was hit by an estimated \$20 billion.¹ Such acts of terror and violence have great economic, social, political and international repercussions. They also fracture society on communal and religious lines.

Robert Greene in his book, *The 36 Strategies of War* has written: “The best way to fight off aggression is to keep them from attacking you. To accomplish this you must create the impression of being more powerful and prepared.”² Preparation for internal and external security threats that could manifest, in the near and distant future, is an investment that a nation must make. A nation that is at the cusp of economic and regional power status cannot afford to be defensive and reactive in its response to internal and external threats. Thus there is a need to forecast/anticipate, prepare, pre-empt and build capabilities to deal with threats that are both predictable and unpredictable. What is of immense significance at this stage is that insurgencies, separatists and forces inimical to India will endeavour to erode institutions of governance with an objective to disrupt and subsequently alter the established order. Therefore, it is important to look at some of the internal security challenges that are likely to have a profound impact on the prevailing security environment of the country, in the near future. The tools that government should look at dealing with the internal security challenges are military and non-military.

Internal Security Threats that India Should Guard Against in 2019

The year 2019 will test India's structural and systemic capabilities for handling internal security challenges. Some of these are: disturbances during the general elections; the inexorable Kashmir conflict; the unresolved Naga Peace Accord; stress in financial institutions; bulging unemployed population; threat from cyber war; communal friction due to religious radicalisation; narco-terror nexus; attempt by inimical forces to revive militancy and insurgency in Punjab and the Northeast; cross-border terrorism; and subversion of demography and democratic institutions. The states are also dealing with the rising aspirations of the people of various ethnicities and regions of India. The problem is further compounded by the rapidly widening gap between the expectations and satisfaction levels of the people.³

The threat is less in the physical domain and more in the cognitive domain. Today the targets are the minds and perceptions of the people in order to subvert society and institutions of governance. Thus physical violence may be for optics but the focus will be on altering the perceptions of the people and sowing the seeds of disaffection. Islamic radicalisation, left wing extremism, pseudo liberals and proxies of foreign powers operating as amorphous organisations are seeking to disrupt the established order. But the larger objective is to alter the established order and weaken democratic institutions in India. All negative forces are likely to join hands and the challenge to India will be huge. If the state is not ready to deal with the synergised threat from multi-domain arenas, the impact will be felt equally in the physical and cognitive domains.

Separatist Movement in Kashmir: Pakistan's ISI has surprised India many times by changing the strategy and narrative of the conflict in Kashmir, as and when the situation appeared to be stabilising. Pakistan has used terrorism, Intifada, and the strategy of disengaging the public from the government. The focus in 2019 will be on cross-border terrorism and rising levels of political violence. Pakistan and the separatists will project it as an indigenous movement against Indian occupation. They will be going the extra mile to ensure

that the democratic process in Kashmir is disrupted, so that they can project it as a referendum against India and the accession. If governance remains sloppy and disoriented, the disaffection of the people with the state will increase. Continued social and political stress will create space for separatists and terror organisations to attract recruits for the terror organisations. Pakistan would be looking for triggers to create instability in Kashmir. Though the security forces have been immensely successful in eliminating terrorists but the impact of tactical successes gets marginalised if the efforts of security forces are not backed by political, social and economic efforts for creating the framework of conflict management. Municipal elections have indicated "winds of change" in the Valley and the youths are coming out to challenge the mainstream political parties. These young crusaders for peace have defied the terror diktat and they do not endorse the brand of politics that has been the hallmark of the three mainstream political parties in J&K. The following trends are likely to emerge in the conflict in Kashmir in the near future:

- Pakistan would continue to internationalise the Kashmir issue vigorously.
- Radicalisation will increase and the local recruitment of youths will continue if social and political engagement with the youth remains ambiguous.
- Terror organisations are likely to attract young boys to undertake fidayeen attacks because it is easier to indoctrinate a young boy or girl than an adult to become a fidayeen. There are huge logistic issues involved in infiltrating fidayeens from across the LOC, as a result if they could get easy cannon fodder they would exploit it to the hilt. The popular slogan young terrorists are given in Kashmir is: "you love life and we love death more than life."
- Terrorists are likely to intensify attacks on political activists and informers, because they consider them to be the biggest impediment to achieve the objectives of Jihad. Mainstream political parties likely to be under increasing pressure to boycott the

democratic process. Even independent candidates may be deterred from participating in elections.

- If the security forces tighten the noose around terrorists and losses continue to mount as was seen in 2017-18, they would attempt to spread violence and acts of terror to other parts of India. Al-Qaeda's second-in-command has said in a video that attack on Indian cities is necessary to loosen Indian grip on Kashmir. He further said, "If an attack could be carried out in cities such as Kolkata, Bangalore and New Delhi, Indian establishment will loosen its grip on Kashmir."⁴ The attack on Airforce Station Pathankot, police station Gurdaspur and recent attack in Amritsar certainly cannot be called isolated. These attacks are highly coordinated and with the purpose to expand the area of conflict beyond Kashmir.
- The Al-Qaeda and ISIS see Kashmir as a springboard for establishing their foothold in mainland India. It is likely that disaffected youths may rally around the organisation that supports the ideology of AQIS and Zakir Musa, who has created a terror organisation "Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind," an AQIS branch. He says, "I see that many people in Kashmir are engaged in a war of nationalism, which is forbidden in Islam," Zakir had said. The fight in the region should "not be for the sake of Kashmir, It should be exclusively for Islam so that Sharia law is established here."⁵ He is trying to make this war a religious war and not a war for liberation of Kashmir. Though there are no takers for this in the Valley as yet, but the likelihood of them attracting some disaffected youths cannot be ruled out. Thus the AQIS hiring a few terrorists to perpetrate sensational acts of terror in the name of Al-Qaeda cannot be ruled out. The attempt by the AQIS to make inroads into the Indian terror discourse, which has not been very successful, should not give reasons for complacency, rather the state should guard against such rhetoric because it has the potential to gain momentum. ISIS may not be able to make a big impact in Kashmir due to its ideological differences with the Kashmiri terrorist groups and with the Jamaat-

e-Islami and Deoband. Deoband and the Jamaat have denounced terrorism as being un-Islamic, however, most of the terror groups operating in Kashmir are ideologically aligned with Jamaat-e-Islami. Harakatul Mujahidin, Harakatul Ansar and Harakatul Jihad al-Islami are the main groups who follow Deobandi ideology.⁶

- Relentless operations by security forces against terrorists may see Kashmiri terrorists expanding the area of conflict within J&K and even outside J&K.
- There nexus between Kashmiri terrorists and remnants of Khalistani terrorist organisations cannot be ruled out for sensational terror strikes in other parts of the country. The CM of Punjab, after the terror attack in Amritsar on Nirankari Bhawan, said, "The possibility of involvement of ISI-backed Khalistani or Kashmiri terror groups could not be ruled out." He further said, "This may have been orchestrated under the supervision of ISI."⁷

Left Wing Extremism: When nothing is happening in an insurgency environment that means something big is happening. Maoists were lying dormant for some time now. But the impending state and Parliamentary elections will heat up the ground situation. The run-up to the period of General Elections should be considered a tactical pause and a period of consolidation. Another reason for the low intensity operations by Maoists is the cash crunch that has hampered procurement of weapons, ammunition and payment of cadres due the efforts of the government to control the flow of funds to the Maoists and their sympathisers. It will be a miscalculation to suggest that Maoists are down and out and not in a position to undertake operations, because attrition in the Maoist cadres has been negligible. The Maoists are using this phase of inaction to consolidate the organisational support base and the supply of warlike stores. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in May 2010 had said, "Naxalism remains the biggest internal security challenge and it is imperative to control left-wing extremism for the country's growth."⁸ In its recent review, the Home Ministry noted that 44 of the 126 districts reported

negligible violence, and they were removed from the list. Eight new districts which witnessed Maoist movements were added to the SRE list.⁹ Though the geographical area of LWE affected region has reduced, however, there are still 36 out of the total LWE affected districts that are categorised as “Worst Affected Districts.” The challenges in the war against LWE are:

- Maoists are short of arms and ammunition and their only access to arms is through weapons smugglers and snatching from security forces. Maoists are looking to a more robust and dedicated supply of weapons and warlike stores through Bangladesh and Nepal (Nepalese Maoists and Chinese Intelligence agencies). Thus Maoists may try and establish links with the insurgents of Northeast for supply of arms and ammunition in the years ahead.
- With the left government in power in Nepal the state could become a land bridge between the Maoists and the Chinese arms smugglers (intelligence agencies). This will create major vulnerabilities and is likely to give impetus to the LWE movement in the heartland of India. Support from the Chinese intelligence agencies and illegal arm dealers through this corridor cannot be ruled out. There is a possibility that China and Nepal could use it as a leverage against India.
- To maintain mass appeal an organisation has to continue to attract new recruits. This is the main principle for spreading an ideology and legitimising the movement in the public eye. Thus subversion of youths and recruitment of new cadres will be a focus area for the Maoist leadership. Lack of jobs and economic empowerment will force tribal youths to join Maoists.
- There is a possibility of Jihadi elements combining with the LWE on the principle of “enemy’s enemy is my friend.” The LWE need weapons and the Jihadis need support and a platform to encircle the government through coordinated terror attacks.
- The urban Maoists are likely to expand the area of conflict to make this movement pan-India. The infiltration of Maoists into academic institutions

has been an old practice but urban Naxals are activists, journalists, researchers, advocates and even social workers.

Northeast an Unstable Plateau: Northeast India is mired in conflict between tribal and non-tribal, resident and non-resident citizens, secessionist movement and ethnic rivalries. To add further confusion there are demands for ethnoreligious states and states within state. Threat to internal security is not only from the armed rebellions but also from the colonisation of Brahmaputra Valley and the demographic inversion. The mother of all insurgencies in the Northeast India is the Naga insurgency but the “Framework Agreement” has opened a window of opportunity to resolve the longest running insurgency in India. Insurgency in Northeast India has been brought within manageable limits to ensure that development activities can take place without disruption. Though there are attempts to derail the peace process by sporadic sensational terror attacks, but security forces have been able to manage the overall situation. However, insurgent groups have realised that inter group rivalry for the control of illegal cross-border trade and trafficking of drugs, weapons and precious wood is causing friction among the insurgent groups to control cross-border illegal trade. With the assistance of external intelligence agencies, Manipur insurgent groups have been brought under one operational umbrella of a Coordination Committee (CorCom). Members of CorCom include, Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), People’s Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), PREPAK (Progressive), Revolutionary People’s Front and United National Liberation Front (UNLF).¹⁰ One of the main reasons for forming this umbrella organisation was to coordinate operations, resolve territorial and financial conflicts and give impetus to the insurgency in the border state of Manipur. Similarly, there is a new umbrella organisation that has been created to bring all major insurgent groups of Northeast India under one organisation, that includes insurgents from Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and may even include future insurgents from Tripura and Meghalaya. This organisation is the United National Liberation Front of

West South East Asia (UNLFW). Besides the NSCN-Khaplang (Myanmar Group) and ULFA-Independent, other groups that participated in the meeting held at Taga in the Sagaing division of Myanmar in early 2015 were the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), the Kanglei Yawol Kunna Lup (KYKL), the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB Songbijit faction).¹¹ The purpose of bringing all these insurgent groups together is also to prevent inter-group rivalry and to intensify their activities in all seven states. Geographically this region is most significant since all the seven states have borders with foreign countries. The Muslim terror and insurgent groups have been excluded from both the umbrella organisations, because of the sensitivities of Myanmar and China. The security challenges that may arise out of the current situation are as under:

- The unresolved Greater Nagalim issue will continue to simmer. The Naga population spread across four states is now getting disillusioned by delay in finalisation of the peace accord. The entire exercise of the Naga Framework Accord is being viewed with scepticism.
- There is a likelihood of a spike in insurgent related incidents that could be coordinated by CorCom and UNLFW. The CorCom would attempt to keep Manipur on the boil and UNLFW would attempt to create instability in North Assam, East Arunachal and North Nagaland.
- The UNLFW will endeavour to occupy the space that may be vacated by NSCN (IM) and its allies, if the Naga peace accord comes through.
- Drug trafficking and weapons smuggling will continue to be one of the biggest challenges for intelligence agencies and security forces.
- China would attempt to expand the footprint of insurgency in Arunachal Pradesh in view of its claim over the territory. The Naga insurgency in Arunachal Pradesh has already taken root and there is a possibility that China may attempt to

create friction between ethnolinguistic tribes and settlers from Bengal and Nepal.

- Though Jihadi terrorism has not yet surfaced and become active in the Northeast, but the ISI and AQIS would attempt to initiate a fresh wave of violence in Assam. There are hectic activities taking place because of the exclusion of a large section of illegal migrants from the National Citizen Register which has created panic among the illegal migrant settlers. This may be seen by Jihadi elements in Bangladesh as a deliberate action against Muslims and it could manifest in acts of violence.
- The biggest threat would be if Chinese intelligence agencies get actively involved with the insurgent groups to coordinate their actions and provide material support to them.
- The turf war between Bodos and Bengali settlers and Karbi and Kuki will continue to simmer and could create turbulence.
- The forced displacement of the population within Northeast and from Bangladesh is very much a possibility. South Assam is major transit route for illegal immigrants and the insurgents as well. Clashes between the tribes and communal flare ups could be triggered by non-state actors and state sponsored non-state actors, or even by political activists of the Northeast.

Siliguri Corridor and Gorkhaland: India's North East is geographically isolated from the rest of India and is connected to the mainland by a narrow strip of land called the Siliguri Corridor, which is about 200 km long and 60 km wide. At its narrowest, it is just 17 km wide. The corridor extends from the Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Terai areas of West Bengal towards the North East.¹² This corridor is vital for the security of Tawang against conventional threat from China. Unsettled and simmering Gorkhaland issue in the backyard of Siliguri corridor is a cause of concern. Gorkhaland issue can find impetus from Nepal as well as from China to cause disruption in strategic lines of communication. Gorkhaland issue is not only restricted to Darjeeling but Gorkha population is also

spread across the North East and Uttarakhand. Thus, allowing it to simmer is not a good idea for the stability of North East and it also exposes the vulnerability of India to maintain military balance in the Sikkim and Arunachal border. CM of Sikkim had said, "Sikkim's geographical location having international boundaries with three countries—China in the North, Bhutan in the East and Nepal in the West, and the potential threat to the national security is a matter of supreme importance."¹³ However, the biggest impact of this movement is on Siliguri corridor and even during the previous agitation Sikkim was cut off from the mainland. Similar is the case with regard to the strategic linkages with the North east.

Pan-India Jihadi Terrorism: Let us not take the issue of the radicalisation of Muslim youth lightly. Till now, around a dozen states have witnessed incidents of radicalisation, including Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Around two dozen youths, who were known to each other, left Kerala in early July 2016 for Syria.¹⁴ Even the return of such indoctrinated and battle hardened radicalised youths could create long-term instability. Though the Dar-ul-Uloom has not thus far been charged with direct involvement in violence or militant training,¹⁵ but the Deoband has been the ideological fountainhead of some of the Kashmiri terror groups. The Jamaat-e-Islami founder, Maulana Mawdudi's vision was for Islamic revivalism to "enable Islam to become a predominant cultural force in the world and capture the moral, intellectual and political leadership of mankind."¹⁶ The Jamaat-e-Islami wields considerable influence in Kashmir and Bangladesh and thus both are considered pivotal for encircling India from the north to the east. Covert links between SIMI and Jamaat are alleged to have continued, even after their public discord.¹⁷ Kerala and South India, due to the Saudi expatriates, is more influenced by Wahhabi-Salafi Islam and that could be one of the reasons for more youths from the region joining the ISIS. Traction for ISIS and AQIS may not grow geometrically but radicalisation

and disaffection cannot be prevented. One must clarify here that more than radicalisation the threat is from disaffection of the people from the state. The disaffection could be primarily due to political, economic and social reasons. It is extremely difficult to conclude that Jihadists are only Wahhabi Salafi and not Sufi or Barelvi. Kashmiri terrorists have come from Sufi and Wahhabi background. Often psychological factors such as personal grievances or the desire for personal empowerment, heroic status, or simple boredom are as, or more, important than political factors or the absence of economic opportunity.¹⁸ Simply creating low status jobs does not address these psychological factors. Multiple factors motivate so many young boys to join terror groups. It gains traction due to personal failure, sense of guilt for having done nothing to preserve Islamic values and practices and collective victimisation of Muslim population in India and globally. In spite of the call given by AQIS to support and fight for the cause of Muslims in Kashmir, no Muslim from any other Indian state (except four youths in early 2000 from Kerala) went to Kashmir to fight, whereas youths have gone to Syria and Afghanistan. Of late ISIS found resonance in Kashmir because of the influence of Wahhabi-Salafi Islam. Zakir Musa went against his own ideologues and is preaching a more volatile form of Jihadi ideology to convert Kashmir into an Islamic State of Kashmir. The question is, should we anticipate and keep our eyes and ears open, or wait for triggers to respond? Jihadi threat does not manifest only from home-grown terrorists but the bigger danger is infiltration of Jihadi/fitayees from International Boundary sector from Pakistan through J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and from Bangladesh through North East and Bengal. The coastal region is another area that has now thrown a new challenge and 26/11 is a case in point. Even the causal linkage between economic growth and insurgency oversimplifies the causes for someone creating or joining an insurgency. Notwithstanding the above, challenges to India in 2019 from the Jihadi terror threat may become more pronounced and their manifestation may be as follows:

The ISI could attempt to involve IM, SIMI and other Islamic radicals to project conflict in Kashmir as a war against Muslims by India. The ISI could incentivise such attacks if carried out in other parts of India.

- The international isolation of Pakistan and deteriorating US-Pak relations could see a spike in acts of terrorism in Kashmir with radicals slowly gaining autonomy of actions. Hafiz Saeed is already attributing the actions of the US to India's tirade against Pakistan. This could lead to sensational attacks on India by LeT and Jaish-e-Muhammad. In response Pakistan could always attribute such acts of violence by LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawa.
- The ISIS after having lost the territory in West Asia would be looking for new territory and footholds and thus would endeavour to make inroads into Afghanistan and India. At the moment they may be exploring the ideological aspects, but violence could manifest in the form of lone wolf or organised terror attacks on cities or the symbols of India and Hinduism, per se.
- Assam may see some turbulence due to the exclusion of a large chunk of the Muslim population from the National Citizen Register. The AQIS and its subsidiary JNB, may be looking for an opportunity to establish a foothold in Bengal, if they have not already done so.
- Threat from Rohingya Refugees cannot be dismissed. LeT, JNB and AQIS may incentivise them to undertake some sporadic actions against India for refusing to grant shelter.

Cyber and Information War: Cyber and information war is one of the most potent tools of hybrid and multi-domain war. China and Pakistan would attempt to use this potent tool of unrestricted war to create instability within India. The ISI made effective use of cyber to create instability in Jammu and Kashmir and will now attempt to fuel friction and communal tension during the run up to the general Elections. China could attempt to use it selectively to interfere in the infrastructure sector, railways, electrical grids and financial institutions. Focus more

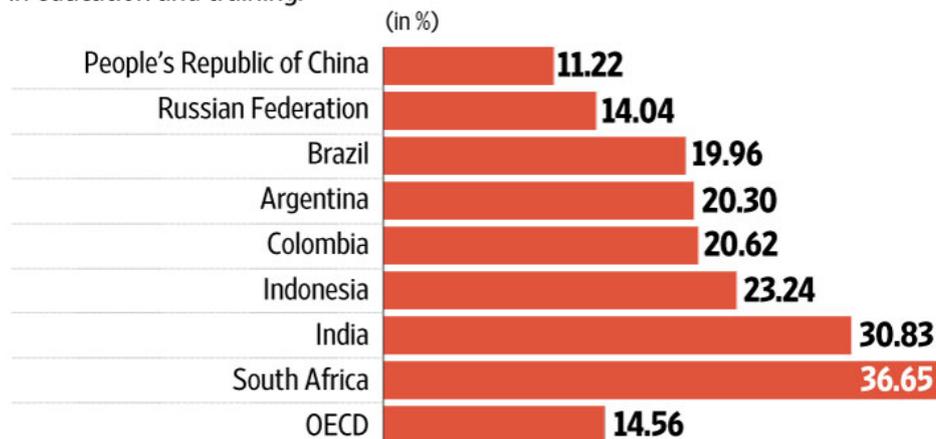
on the physical threat, but the threat from cyber and information war may require equal focus, because it has the potential to destabilise almost every sector. Cyber and information war by inimical forces can be employed to shape opinion, spread fake news and rumours to create public disorder and ethno-religious friction especially in an election year.

Forced Displacement of Population: Displacement of population could be due to natural and man-made disasters. Europe saw the sudden influx of people from West Asia and Africa because of the conflict in West Asia and North Africa. The management and control of this influx is a big issue and most European countries are finding it extremely difficult to handle it. The uncontrolled influx of displaced people impacts life-support systems and puts pressure on public health, the food supply chain and law and order. The large Hindu population in Bangladesh is under severe pressure from the Jamaat and the radicals. Dr. Abul Barkat, the eminent economist and researcher says that there will be no Hindus left in the country three decades from now.¹⁹ Hindus are finding it extremely difficult to live peacefully in the rural areas and are forced to migrate to cities or towns. As per a report published in the *Dhaka Tribune*, every day 774 Hindus left the country between 2001 and 2012.²⁰ In addition, the unrestricted inflow of Bangladeshis into India may continue. The possibility of Rohingya Muslims being pushed into India covertly cannot be ruled out.

Unemployed Youth a Potential Time Bomb if not Managed in Constructive Manner: Rise in number of unemployed youths can become a potential flashpoint if this resource is not handled carefully. People, particularly youth, had hope from the current dispensation, however, the aspirations of finding employment have met with a negative outcome. Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the March 2017 had come out with the report that 30.83% youth are neither employed nor in education institutions. A graph showing the overall percentage of the unemployment youth from various countries is given below.

Where are the jobs?

More than 30% of Indians aged 15-29 years are neither in employment nor in education and training.



Percentage of youth aged 15-29 who are neither employed nor in education and training, 2015 or the latest year available.

Source: OECD Economic Survey: India 2017

- Half the population in the world is under 30 years of age—the highest in the recorded history of mankind.
- Four out of 10 youths are unemployed or working in the unorganised sector with no job guarantee. Three out of 10 are uneducated and without any skills and so cannot be employed in the organised sector. Nine out of 10 youths are employed in the informal sector and their rights are not protected by the labour law.
- The unaddressed “youth bulge” across the developing world threatens the political stability of fragile and strategically important countries, thus endangering global security and economic growth.
- Some of the best avenues for decent work for young people in developing countries are in several high-growth sectors such as: transportation; infrastructure and construction; agricultural processing; and services such as hospitality and tourism. But employers find it hard to find skilled manpower for these positions.²¹
- Youth unemployment in the rural sector is a cause of stress but has not crossed the threshold where it can break into a movement. Family bonds,

parental control and cultural values are holding back youth from adopting extreme measures. In spite of the disappointment on unfulfilled promises of employment generation by current political dispensation, youth is unlikely to trigger a movement similar to JP movement of 1974 in Bihar. Arab Spring kind of youth mobilisation is unlikely unless there is a trigger that government hands over to youth.

Internal Security Challenges in the Run-Up to the Parliamentary Elections: This period is critical and crucial for ensuring free and violence-free elections. The 2019 general elections are not only important for India, but also for the regional and extra-regional players. Pakistan and China could possibly interfere in the elections to create insecurity and also manipulate people’s perceptions by negative campaigning. There are likely to be communal and religious cards being played by political parties and even forces inimical to India will be fishing in the troubled waters. There could be a danger of communal flare-up, acts of terrorism, artificially created scarcity of essential items, fake news and rumours to cause instability. During the 2014 General Elections VHP and Bajrang Dal had extended support to the BJP on three issues. First, construction of Ram Temple, removal of Article 370 and Cow Protection.

The fringe element feels that the BJP-led government has not fulfilled its promise. Thus there is likelihood of raising of pitch for construction of Ram Temple. This is likely to create a major law-and-order problem that can spiral into a communal flare-up. The Jihadi elements, both Pak-sponsored and Indian Mujahidin, can take advantage of this situation to undertake acts of terror. A fractured mandate would be the overall objective of the adversaries and smaller regional neighbours. Thus internal and external divisive forces can unite to create instability in the run-up to the elections. This threat can manifest in the following manner:

- Rise in communal and political violence.
- Disruption of services, the banking system, air, rail and road travel, electric grids, etc.
- Fake news to spread communal hatred and panic among the masses and minority communities.
- Artificial scarcity of food items and essential items triggering hoarding.
- Shortage of cash in the banks and ATMs leading to panic withdrawal of cash from the banks.

Suggestions and Security Imperatives

The most challenging task for the government in 2019 is to ensure peaceful and smooth conduct of elections. Timing of conduct of General Election is vital and it is advisable to conduct elections prior to opening of passes and melting of snow. This is essential so that maximum CAPF are available for election duty and the possibility of disruption due to border stand-off and cross-border terrorism is minimal.

There is no silver bullet to provide absolute security but focus should be to ensure adequate security. Technology, vibrant intelligence grid and proactive actions by police and security forces are imperative.

The cardinal principle for conflict resolution is, that the state must invest in people to maintain peace and stability. Investment should primarily be in the area of economic, social, political and infrastructure development. The state must focus on the cognitive and physical domains to protect values and fulfil material aspirations. The policies of the states should not be seen as endeavours to defeat the people, instead the state

should reassure the people by being trustworthy and giving them confidence and a sense of belonging. All investments should empower people psychologically, politically and economically. Investment in a nutshell should be for the redressal of grievances.

Ambiguous policies and divided responsibility for managing the security of the state are detrimental to the restoration of peace, especially in long-standing insurgencies and conflicts. The state and centre cannot be speaking in different voices. There has to be homogeneity of narrative, irrespective of the political and ideological differences. The central government agencies need to take ownership and resolve conflicts. Thus the security forces and the lead agency dealing with conflict management should be accountable and responsible for policy direction and the execution of these policies on the ground. The need of the hour is to collaborate and cooperate for a common cause.

It goes without saying that security forces should always be one step ahead of the insurgents and terrorists. This cannot be done in isolation. It would require effective intelligence (accountable to security forces on the ground and not to their masters elsewhere) and technologically empowered security forces. There must be matching capabilities for operational compatibility to ensure interoperability among state and central agencies.

Faulty internal security architecture impacts external security. Unstable frontiers and a fractured hinterland creates vulnerabilities and the state may be forced to fight on multiple fronts simultaneously. Thus it is imperative to forecast and prepare for internal security challenges, so that the government is not taken by surprise and is prepared to deal with predictable and unpredictable threats.

Conclusion

There is no silver bullet to deal with the wide-ranging challenges. It is most important to be aware of the likely threats and take pre-emptive steps to deal with them. The state should be ready to handle such threats by adopting a suitable systemic approach. Capabilities, capacities and a timely response are the key to neutralise threats and defeat the strategy of the adversaries.

Notes

1. Dilip Bobb, "The Fast Lane: Economic Cost of Terror," *Financial Express*, January 25, 2015.
2. Robert Greene, *The 36 Strategies of War* (Viva Books, 2006), p. 123.
3. Jasjit Singh, "Vision of Peace in 2020," http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/bkcap2020/22_bg2020.pdf on November 4, 2018.
4. Ankit Kumar, "In new video, Al-Qaeda says attacking Indian cities must to weaken security forces' grip on Kashmir," *India Today*, December 27, 2017.
5. Al-Qaida-linked cell Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind announces Zakir Musa as its Chief in Kashmir, *Times of India*, July 27, 2018.
6. Husain Haqqani, "India's Islamist Groups," Hudson Institute, February 16, 2006.
7. Press Trust of India, "Amritsar blast: Punjab CM Amarinder Singh suspects ISI hand in attack that killed 3," *Hindustan Times*, November 18, 2018.
8. PTI, "Naxalism biggest threat to internal security: Manmohan," *The Hindu*, May 24, 2010.
9. Rahul Tripathi, "The contours of the new Red map," *The Indian Express*, April 17, 2018.
10. "Here's a guide to newly-formed insurgent group UNLFW that killed 20 Jawans in Manipur," *Firstpost*, June 5, 2015.
11. Rezaul H. Laskar, "Nine militant groups of NE form united front with Chinese blessings," *Hindustan Times*, April 24, 2015.
12. Shaurya Karanbir Gurung, "Behind China's Sikkim aggression, a plan to isolate Northeast from rest of India," *The Economic Times*, July 12, 2018.
13. PTI, "Gorkhaland Issue Not Just Restricted to West Bengal: Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling," <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/gorkhaland-issue-not-just-restricted-to-west-bengal-sikkim-chief-minister-pawan-chamling-1722359>
14. Tufail Ahmad, "The Radicalisation Series: Analysing the threat to Muslim youths in India," *Firstpost*, August, 25, 2016.
15. Husain Haqqani, "India's Islamist Groups," Hudson Institute, February 16, 2006.
16. S. Abul Ala Maududi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam* (translated from Urdu) (Lahore: Islamic Publications Limited, 1963), p. 39.
17. Haqqani, n. 10.
18. Steven Metz, "Psychology of Participation in Insurgency," *Small Wars Journal*, January 27, 2012, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/psychology-of-participation-in-insurgency>, p. 21.
19. Kamrul Hasan, "No Hindus will be left after 30 years," *Dhaka Tribune*, November 21, 2016.
20. Ibid.
21. Ritu Sharma, "The Global Youth Bulge: Challenge and Opportunity," *Progressive Economy*, November 29, 2016. Accessed from <http://www.progressive-economy.org/2016/11/29/global-youth-bulge-challenge-opportunity/>

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).



CENTRE FOR LAND WARFARE STUDIES (CLAWS)

RPSO Complex, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi 110010
 Tel.: +91-11-25691308, Fax: +91-11-25692347, Email: landwarfare@gmail.com
 Website: www.claws.in
 CLAWS Army No. 33098