

People's Liberation Guerrilla Army of CPI (Maoist)

Rishi Chhikara



Centre for Land Warfare Studies
New Delhi



KNOWLEDGE WORLD
KW Publishers Pvt Ltd
New Delhi

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief : Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch (Retd)
Copy Editor : Ms Ruchi Bothra

**Centre for Land Warfare Studies**

RPSO Complex, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi 110010

Phone: +91.11.25691308 Fax: +91.11.25692347

email: landwarfare@gmail.com website: www.claws.in

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

© 2012, Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not have any official endorsement. They do not represent the views of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies.



Published in India by

Kalpna Shukla

KW Publishers Pvt Ltd

4676/21, First Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002

Phone: +91 11 23263498 / 43528107 email: knowledgeworld@vsnl.net • www.kwpub.com

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Force Structure	1
3. Military Strength of PLGA	3
4. Operational Strategy	4
5. Propaganda	7
6. Raids	8
7. Ambush	9
8. Kidnapping	11
9. Annihilation/Assassination	12
10. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)	13
11. Levy System	13
12. Defence of Strongholds	14
13. Training	14
14. Impact of PLGA	16
15. The Maoist Influence on Indian Army Personnel	16
16. Moving Towards Forming a People's Liberation Army	18
17. A Formula for Peace?	18
18. Conclusion	21
Annexure 1: State Committees of CPI (Maoist)	23
Annexure 2: Estimated Armed Force Level	24
Annexure 3: State-wise Left Wing Extremist Violence from 2004 to 2011	25

People's Liberation Guerrilla Army of CPI (Maoist)

Introduction

The Naxalite movement encompasses various groups, prominent amongst which is the Communist Party of India (Maoist), hereinafter called CPI (Maoist). The ideologues within the party believe in armed struggle to achieve political power. During the Telengana struggle of 1946-51, the Communists did not create a people's army and were strongly criticised for this lapse. This shortcoming was rectified in the Naxalbari uprising of the Sixties, where armed guerrilla squads were raised to lead the revolution. Since then, the military might of the CPI (Maoist), as it stands today, has grown to a sizeable force of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) which is challenging the might of the state. In the last two decades, they have established guerrilla zones in some of the underdeveloped and jungle regions of the country. From the earlier squads, they are now formed into well trained platoon and company units. They are now in the process of establishing battalions and further hope to form brigades and perhaps even divisions with artillery and support arms. The PLGA has periodically targeted state and central police forces and in the process has exerted its influence in many districts of India. However, their operations have, by and large, been confined to small scale actions and maintained below a threshold level which the Maoists believe will not invite retaliation from the state in the form of the armed forces being deployed against them.

Some splinter groups are also active in the areas dominated by the CPI (Maoist). Though the strength, areas of influence and indoctrination level of these groups are well within the capability of the state machinery to address, the presence of the CPI (Maoist) in the same area makes it difficult to operate against them. The elimination of the CPI (Maoist), however, will automatically lead to the extinction of these groups.

Force Structure

Over the past three to four decades, various Naxal groups have used guerrilla forces to establish their base areas. Their structure and style of command not only permitted consolidation in the areas of interest but also encouraged their expansion in new areas to increase their influence and writ. After the merger in 2004 of the MCCI (Maoist Communist Centre of India) and PW (People's War) to form the CPI (Maoist), the military strength of both organisations resulted in the formation of the PLGA. Like any professional military organisation, the PLGA has a well laid out organisational structure. Keeping the nature of their struggle in view, the forces are under centralised command and decentralised control. This ensures the security and secrecy of the organisation and the safety of the higher leadership and enables lower commanders to exploit opportunities in the field. The Central Military Commission (CMC) provides the politico-military leadership to the PLGA on behalf of the Central Committee. To ensure the grip of the party over the PLGA, the Central Committee/State Committee/ Special Zonal Committee decides the general plan and policies. In addition, the leadership of military units comprises both a political commissioner and a military commander. While the former deals with political matters, all operational details are left to the latter. The PLGA is also involved in propaganda war, organising recruitment, arming of the masses and providing assistance to people in establishing and smooth running of 'janta sarkars' established by the Maoists in their areas of domination like in the areas of Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC). With its growing influence, the PLGA is focussing on development of artillery, communication and medical units. Efforts are also on to have Research and Development (R&D) facilities for development of weapons like rocket launchers, remote controlled mines, etc. In the month of December 2010, various posters cropped up in Malkangiri district of Orissa for fresh recruitment and claims of turning the PLGA into a People's Liberation Army (PLA).¹

A study of documents and interaction with commanders in the field reveal that the PLGA comprises three types of forces as under.

Main Force: This is the decisive force, built, trained and modelled more or less on the lines of any professional Army. It comprises military companies, platoons, and special action teams which have the ability to

participate in operations anywhere, based on the needs of the movement, on the instructions of the military commissions/commands. It is the best equipped and trained force of the CPI (Maoist). This force will have to be further expanded and equipped if the PLGA is to turn into the PLA.

Secondary Force: It mainly comprises local/special guerrilla squads and district/ division level action teams. Selected personnel from these forces are taken into the main force and, thus, it acts as a feeder for the latter. A squad of 10 to 12 guerrillas may have one or two assault weapons. The remaining personnel are equipped with assorted weapons or even a .303 rifle. The squad leader need not be a local; however, the rest of the squad consists of locals from the area of its operational responsibility.

Base Force: This consists of the People's Militia or 'Jan Militia' equipped with assorted weapons. The self-defence squads, GRDs and ARDs at the RPC level, form part of the base force.²

Military Strength of PLGA

The Maoists have a flexible military set-up. The various state and zonal committees command the military strength/armed cadres in their areas of responsibility. However, the cadres can move to different areas to assist in operations being conducted there. The lower cadre is recruited from the area where the group operates. The commanders, however, can be from any area, local squad upward. This explains the high percentage of the urban class, highly indoctrinated leadership.

As per estimates compiled from various sources, the military strength consists of 9,000 to 12,000 hardcore cadres, grouped into military companies, platoons, and special squads. The strength of the above groups is not sacrosanct and a company could have 60 to 100 or more personnel. The strength of platoons and squads is also variable. Military companies, platoons, and even special guerrilla squads are equipped with AK 47/56 rifles, INSAS rifles, Light Machine Guns (LMGs), and mortars.

Shortfalls in holdings are made up from 7.62 mm Self-Loading Rifles (SLRs) and other weapons looted from the police. In rare cases, these units could also have other assorted weapons like double barrel/ single barrel guns. It is appreciated that a military company presently is equipped with about 25 to 30 AK-47/INSAS/SLR rifles.³ The dress code specifies black uniform for the

main force and green uniform for the secondary force. The 'jan militia' has no dress code. The details of the state committees of CPI (Maoist) are given in Annexure 1. Their estimated armed cadre strength has been determined based on data collected from multiple sources as well as from information obtained by the author while interacting with various agencies in the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected states. This is given in Annexure 2.

Operational Strategy

The CPI (Maoist) believes it is in the phase of 'strategic self-defence'. To combat the armed might of the state, it advocates 'tactical counter offensive' as the main feature of the military campaign. Mobilisation of the masses of the area is an important constituent of its strategy. To preserve both the forces and the leadership, it deliberately avoids direct engagement with the security forces and will continue to do so till a qualitative shift occurs in the balance of forces. Offensive operations against police personnel are only launched when the possibility of victory is very high.

These operations are carefully planned and executed with overwhelming superiority at the time and place of the Maoists' choosing. Reflecting on the harsh ground realities in combating the Maoists, a senior state official⁴ quipped that "the Maoists have to be lucky only once, whereas the police forces and state machinery has to be lucky each and every time." The reference obviously is to the fact that repulsing a number of militant strikes does not garner the same level of publicity as occasioned by one successful terrorist action.

The weaknesses of the Central Police Organisations (CPOs) in terms of training, exposure and wherewithal have been fully exploited by the PLGA elements to inflict casualties on them and to loot their weapons, ammunition and equipment in order to refurbish their own holdings. As an example, in the terrorist raid at Nayagarh in Orissa in 2008, over 1,000 weapons of all types were taken away by the Maoists. These included LMGs, AK-47 rifles, SLRs and pistols and also included a huge quantity of ammunition.⁵ In the Chintalnar ambush in Dantewada in 2010, where 75 men of a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) company were killed, the Maoists took away 12 AK-47 rifles, 42 INSAS rifles, 7 SLRs, 6 LMGs and a radio set. A large number of PLGA units have been equipped with these captured weapons

as also weapons taken away from the police forces in other actions. The tactical counter-offensive campaign of the Maoists is in line with the policy spelt out in their documents. This entails attacks on police outposts and communication networks to harass both the state and central police forces and to achieve psychological and military dominance. This approach has been successful as is evident from the aftermath of the high profile ambush executed at Chintalnar which, besides causing heavy casualties, also resulted in the CRPF being instructed to cease night operations and to restrict day operations to within five kilometres of their post.⁶

In February 2011, Home Secretary Mr. GM Pillai⁷ denied that restrictions had been imposed for conducting operations. He, however, added that there were limitations in the reach of the CRPF due to the nature of their deployment, thus, giving credence to the earlier observation. Other strikes by the Maoists such as the one carried out on the road opening party of the CRPF in Narayangarh district in June 2010 have achieved similar results. The reluctance on the part of the police forces to move out for operations has not gone down well with the Home Ministry, as evidenced by the Home Secretary conveying his displeasure to the police at Gadchiroli in Maharashtra for such a lapse.⁸ Even when the Maoists suffer a debacle, as they have done at the hands of the Grey Hounds in Telengana, it is viewed as a temporary retreat of forces to a strategically favourable place to preserve them with the aim of fighting the war (the Maoists call it war) for a longer duration. As a part of the strategy, the Maoists will avoid a pitched battle from a position of disadvantage.

The Maoists have mastered the art of coordination between the 'jan militia' and their military companies and platoons, using the former to support the latter, thereby succeeding in attacking in large numbers. Their operations are facilitated by the support of the masses in their area of operations due to either conviction or fear and also due to their excellent knowledge of the terrain, being locals of the area. Defections and surrenders within the cadre are few which indicates a strong leadership. Their strategy to expand their bases and convert them into liberated areas has been slow but steady. Pockets of liberated areas have been created in the DKCZ region, AOB region, Saranda Forest Area, forested areas of Lohardagga and some areas in West Bengal and Bihar. In these areas, the central and state governments

have ceased to exercise any form of control. Practically, these areas comprise a state within a state and are more or less administered by the Maoists.

Although the CPI (Maoist) believes in the people's movement, it does not have a true pan-India mass base which is a must for any revolution to succeed. Its writ runs mostly in inaccessible areas, where the PLGA has been effective in carrying out operations against the security forces of the state. The Maoists advocate three stages of warfare, i.e. guerrilla warfare, mobile warfare and positional warfare. They are still at the first stage though some experts believe that the Maoist actions against CPOs/state police in Chhattisgarh are indicators that they have moved into the second stage of mobile warfare. While the PLGA had been very active in 2010, they have also suffered heavy reverses with a large number of top leaders being either liquidated or arrested by the state/central police forces.

Perhaps the Maoist leadership miscalculated its military strategy of executing audacious operations where the police suffered heavy casualties, for it invited a strong government response which the leadership may not have anticipated. Despite the so-called 'Red Corridor' or liberated zones, the PLGA is in no position to take on the forces head-on in all the areas of its influence simultaneously. Scaling down of operations now will perhaps be detrimental to the Maoists interests as it will erode the aura of invincibility which they have created over the years. Any increase in tempo, however, may force the government to deploy the Army which is certain to cause heavy losses to their cadres. It appears that the PLGA strategy of mass scale operations, though tactically successful, has had a negative strategic fallout which may force the CPI (Maoist) leadership to rethink its options.

The CPI (Maoist) considers the masses as the centre of gravity and fulcrum of its operations. Its document states:

We must mobilise the people to support our armed forces enthusiastically and to fight the enemy together with them. The people are the eyes and ears of the army; they feed and keep our soldiers. It is they who help the army in sabotage and in battle. The people are the water and our army the fish.⁹

The broad strategy of the PLGA to prolong the war (struggle) is, thus, likely to continue to enable it to gain time for mass mobilisation and strengthening

of its military might. The focus on the concept of piecemeal annihilation of state forces in the hope to change the balance of forces in its favour will continue. The statement of late Mr. Azad, spokesperson of the CPI (Maoist), summarises its operational strategy. As per Azad,

There is nothing like defensive and offensive actions once the war has commenced. However, our revolutionary counter-violence is overall defensive in nature for a considerable period of time. This does not mean we will retaliate only when we are fired at and keep silent the rest of the time when the police, paramilitary and the vigilante gangs unleash terror and engage in all-round preparations for carrying out genocide. To make this clear, let us suppose the men sent by Chidambaram are combing an area. When we come to know of it, we will carry out an offensive, annihilate as many forces as possible in the given circumstances, and seize arms and ammunition. We will also take prisoners of war where that is possible. This will be part of our overall defensive strategy although it is a tactical counter-offensive.¹⁰

The CPI (Maoist) has also been working for over a decade now on a strategy to increase its influence in urban areas. The 'Ninth Congress' which was held in secrecy in 2007, somewhere in the jungles of Lalgarh/Jharkhand, emphasised the need to spread the struggle to urban areas. While the movement towards this end has not had any appreciable impact, attempts are being made to dominate small towns which are close to the guerrilla zones or so-called 'liberated zones'. Media reports have highlighted their presence in metros and other urban centres from time to time, but this has more to do with recruiting intellectuals and academicians/scholars through their front organisations to further their propaganda aims. They are also trying to penetrate the unions and other organisations to lure/ recruit workers and labourers of the industrial set-up into their fold. This could have serious ramifications for urban warfare in the future. While such a probability is low, the situation needs to be monitored, especially in small towns close to the 'Red Corridor'.

Propaganda

Propaganda forms an integral part of the Maoists' strategy. They believe that they can win over the masses by continuously attacking and exposing the weak spots of the democratic set-up through a prolonged and continuous propaganda war. On being asked about the senseless violence and killings of innocents being committed by the Maoists, their late spokesperson, Mr. Azad had stated:

Our violence is revolutionary counter-violence. It is neither indiscriminate nor mindless as alleged by the reactionary ruling class representatives who cite some instances without context in their desperation to prove that Maoists are blood-thirsty monsters.¹¹

This shows orchestration of a well thought out propaganda strategy whereby the innocent victims of Maoist atrocities and violence are branded as police informers. They also never accept the atrocities committed by them on the tribal and poor people who refuse to accede to them. Propaganda is also used to strengthen resolve as shown in the press release of Usandi, the spokesperson of the DKSCZ of December 2010. This stated:

The suppressive and rapist police and paramilitary forces that were deployed to ensure the exploitation of people and plunder of resources were wiped out in big numbers. Over 575 modern weapons were seized from them by the people and people's forces to arm themselves. Murkinar, Urpalmetta, Ranibodili, Korkotti, Laheri, Kongera, and particularly the historic Tadimetla ambush, all these attacks show the development process of the guerilla war. Many brave daughters and sons of the people attained an important place in the history with their martyrdom.

Propaganda is also carried out by the likes of Kobad Ghandy and Azad who are operating under pseudonyms to poison the minds of our youth, quite a few of whom have been swayed by their ideology. This aspect, therefore, requires to be addressed urgently.

Raids

The conduct of raids forms the core of CPI (Maoist) military strategy. This is mainly due to the success achieved earlier by the erstwhile PW and MCCI in such operations. A study of various raids carried out over the last decade is revealing. To a large extent, the equipping of PLGA cadre with state-of-the-art weapons and ammunition has been done with weapons captured in raids on police posts and armouries. It perhaps may not be wrong to say that this has been their main source of acquiring arms and ammunition to progress their struggle and strengthen their military force.

Detailed planning, reconnaissance, rehearsals and coordination for a raid operation generally take three to six months before its execution. The planning for such operations is done at the CMC/CRC levels and is executed only if success is assured. Depending on the importance of the target, a core group is formed, which is composed of members from Special Zonal Committees, Central Committees and Division Level Committees. Most attacks are carried out by a large number of personnel, though figures sometimes projected by the media, of raiding parties in the region of about one thousand personnel are exaggerated. As an example, the raid on NALCO at Panchapatali mines, Damanjodi, in Korapat district of Orissa, was planned over a period of six months and had elements of all the three forces. A month prior to the operation, it had 177 members. Only in the last month were the Maoists able to bolster this strength to 467 personnel.¹² Despite the large strength and detailed planning, the operation was only a partial success. This indicates that the PLGA is still far from executing missions with military precision. What needs to be noted, however, is that after each incident, a detailed after action report is prepared. This is an important facet of Maoist training to derive lessons from mistakes committed so as to avoid their recurrence.

The belief that the Maoists use locals as a smokescreen prior to an attack is not completely true. The locals are generally not employed for the simple reason that the Maoist strategy views the people as the centre of gravity which is essential for their survival and success. Their use for attacks would negate the support they receive from the local population.¹³

Ambush

Ambush is another important component of PLGA operations. Ambushes are extensively used either in a stand-alone mode or in conjunction with raids on important targets. The purpose is to blunt the offensive campaign of the security forces. Examples are the ambush of a CRPF company at Chintalnar in Dantewada district on 06 April 2010 and on a CRPF road opening party near Dhurai base camp in Narayanpur district three months later on 29 June. These attacks, besides demoralising the police, gave a psychological edge to the Maoists in Chhattisgarh. They also reflect the capability, confidence and skill levels of the PLGA in executing such operations. The Secretary of the 'South Bastar Regional Committee' of the Maoists has claimed that he executed the ambush on 06 April at Chintalnar in Dantewada district in which 75 CRPF personnel and a state policeman were killed. He trashed media reports which claimed that the ambush had been set up using 1,000 fighters and three light machine guns and that all the trees had been booby-trapped, stating that these were highly exaggerated.¹⁴

In the ambush near Dhurai village, the bulk of the force comprised 250 members of the jan militia. The regular cadre of the PLGA mobilised the jan militia barely six hours before the actual attack, as stated by a senior intelligence officer to a newspaper.¹⁵ It appears that the PLGA caught the CRPF personnel by surprise while they were resting and sprung the ambush from three sides: 27 personnel, including their Assistant Commandant, were killed and eight AK 47 rifles, eight INSAS rifles, three SLRs, two INSAS LMGs, two light mortars and a radio set were taken by the Maoists in this ambush. The surgical manner in which this operation was executed in just six hours indicates that the Maoists must have observed the pattern of operations of this force for quite some time. As the police personnel had a set routine, the ambush location would have been pre-selected to inflict maximum casualties.

The said operation reconfirms the Maoist strategy of attacking when one hundred percent sure of success and after observing the target over a protracted period. It also highlights the inherent folly of following a fixed routine by police personnel. In another incident on 03 May 2011, the Maoists induced a police force into a trap in the Dhard Dhariya jungles near Senha of Lohardagga district. Here, 11 men were killed and over 50 were injured,

with the only saving grace being that this time they could not loot the arms and ammunition carried by the force. It is believed that the police force was led into the trap on the insistence of their informer at whose behest the operation was carried out. In this ambush, the Maoists had done extensive planning and had laid 500 IEDs at two-metre intervals, connected in series to cause maximum casualties.¹⁶ By these means, the Maoists have been able to create terror and assert their will on the local population.

It is apparent that the Maoists are exploiting the inexperience, lack of training and weak leadership of the police forces. Such attacks have been finely honed by the Maoists and are, hence, likely to continue. According to Brig K S Dalal (Retd), to exploit the weaknesses in the police forces, the Maoists have devised their own innovative techniques/tactics like mobile ambush or one point ambush. They are successfully using the ambush to augment their holdings of weapons and equipment as also to cause fear and consternation amongst police personnel operating in the area.

Kidnapping

The Maoists have used kidnappings effectively to further their objectives. In 1987, the erstwhile PW kidnapped three IAS officers who were on an inspection visit to a tribal school hostel at Guthedu in East Godavari district. To secure their release, the government was forced to release three PW hardcore cadres in their custody. In another incident, to secure the release of industrialist Marthand Rao, brother of former National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Minister Vidhya Sagar Rao, besides a hefty ransom, three Maoist guerrillas were also released from prison by the Naidu government.¹⁷

In an incident in West Bengal, the Maoists kidnapped the officer in-charge of the police station of Sankrail in West Midnapore forcing the government on 22 October 2009, to release on bail fourteen tribal women and nine others. By this action, the Maoists successfully projected themselves as the true saviours of the tribals, oppressed and poor people, and the government as the tormentor. The latest in the series has been the kidnapping of four police personnel in September 2010 in Bihar, one of whom was brutally executed. In Orissa, the District Collector of Malkangiri was kidnapped in February 2011 and the government caved in to all the demands of the Naxals to secure his release. The abduction of Jhina Hikaka, a MLA from Koratpur

district of Orissa, Mr. Menon, the collector of Sukma District of Chhattisgarh as well as two Italian nationals in March and April 2012, reflects the success of Maoists in blackmailing the state government to succumb to their demands.

While the Naxals have been using kidnapping as a potent weapon in their armoury, the government has yet to come out with a concrete policy on kidnapping and blackmailing to prevent their recurrence. Besides high profile targets, the Maoists of late have even started abducting the poor villagers, to coerce them into accepting decisions given by the 'janata sarkar' established by the Maoists. Justice delivered through such means is now being opposed by the locals as it is perceived to be biased. The Maoists, hence, resort to strong-arm tactics to implement their decisions. In one incident, the Maoists even kidnapped three children from Pararia village in Rohtas district in Bihar to enforce their dictate. It is an irony that many in civil society who champion their cause turn a blind eye to the human rights abuses being perpetrated by the Maoists.¹⁸ The high profile kidnapping in 2012 once again turned the media spotlight towards the need to enact a law against kidnappings. Will this lead to the enactment of a strong mechanism to deal with the kidnapping tactics of CPI (Maoists) or will the internal quagmire of political parties clubbed with political interests and compulsions lead it into a coffin, to be resurrected only by a sensational kidnapping incident in the near future? Only time will tell. A comprehensive approach to tackle kidnappings is essential otherwise the Maoists will continue to use this tool in furtherance of their aims.

Annihilation/Assassination

The CPI (Maoist) continues to resort to indiscriminate killings in the name of annihilation of class enemies. This form of warfare was first introduced by Charu Mazumdar in the Seventies during the Srikakulam uprising. The erstwhile MCCI and PW also resorted to such tactics from time to time. Informers and suspects are routinely killed, to generate fear and to coerce support. Most of those killed are poor innocent villagers and tribals who are unwilling to toe the Maoist line. Police personnel, government officials and their families, especially at the lower levels, are especially vulnerable to such forms of terror. Living under constant fear of death induces a symptomatic condition of self-survival, thereby preventing them from operating or functioning effectively. Through such killings, the Maoists aim to limit the

effectiveness of police forces' operations while, at the same time, gaining ascendancy in the eyes of the local population. This strategy assumes greater effectiveness when combined with other actions such as attacks on police stations/security outposts.

The Maoists also attempted to kill the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. C M Naidu and the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Budhadeb Bhattacharjee. Though neither of these attempts succeeded, they did serve to demonstrate the power and reach of the Naxals. The high-handed manner in which the West Bengal government reacted led to alienation of most of the tribal belt of the Jungal Mahal area, which drifted towards the pro-Maoist stance. The need to exercise restraint while dealing with sensitive issues is, hence, essential to negate support to the Maoists.

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

Use of IEDs is perhaps the most critical and vital aspect of the Maoist strategy. The extensive use of IEDs in almost all areas affected by the Maoist presence has resulted in the security forces suffering very heavy casualties. Due to mining activities, a large number of people in the Maoist ranks are familiar with the handling and use of commercial explosives. With minimal training, these people are effectively employed to make and use IEDs. An analysis of all IED related incidents shows the overarching importance given to IEDs in Maoist strategy. The need to tackle the use by Maoists of IEDs with different actuation means will remain a prime challenge which the state and central police forces will have to address.

Levy System

Over the years, the Maoists have fine-tuned their financial funding or extortion racket. They are no longer cash-starved and are known to pay their foot soldiers a regular salary of about Rs 4,000 per month with the more qualified personnel like computer operators being paid about Rs 12,000 per month. Funding is generated through levies imposed on corporate/industrial houses, contractors and even from public sector companies in lieu of unhindered operations. They even resort to extortion from the government officials, including Army personnel, who pay money to buy peace for their families staying in Naxal affected villages. Where levy payment is resisted, the Naxals

take recourse to terror tactics. As an example, the Naxals ransacked the office of GR Infrastructure Company, at Hazaribagh's industrial hub of Morangi and torched 47 of their vehicles on 14 May 2011. The firm was engaged in four laning of National Highway Number 33 and the levy was disputed.¹⁹ As levies are the main source of Naxal funding, coercive tactics to ensure compliance will continue.

Defence of Strongholds

The Maoists embed themselves firmly into an area before they expose themselves. In their strongholds, they rely extensively on the population to complement their fighting capability. To protect their strongholds or liberated areas, they have three to four tier defensive networks. In areas like Abujmad which are vital to their overall plan, the first tier of defence is held mainly by the 'jan militia' with its assorted weapons. Heavy reliance is laid on IEDs and mines to inflict casualties. The second/third tier is held by special militia/local squads with assorted weapons and a limited number of small arms. The fourth tier is held by their local guerrilla squads, who are well trained and are proficient in the use of all kinds of small arms. The core is defended by their main force – the military company. Barring the 'jan militia', all other personnel remain mobile and are constantly on the move, though they have their beat or area of operational responsibility. To penetrate deep in Maoist held territory, the security forces would have to tackle the well defended areas occupied by the Maoists for over three decades. They would have to be suitably trained and equipped, but more importantly, would require leadership of a very high order.

Training

The PLGA is very focussed on training and gives this aspect great importance. Their training manuals are very well written and give a chilling insight into their thinking process. The manuals appear to be written by experts in the field; unconfirmed reports indicate that ex-servicemen have been involved in their writing. This cannot be ruled out, especially in view of the fact that the training is more or less modelled on the lines of the Indian Army's training manuals. They have the advantage of training on the terrain in which they have to fight. They have suitably modified the techniques and tactics of

execution of various operations based on the response of the state or central police forces employed to rein them in. Basic training involves handling of weapons, map reading, field craft and battle craft. Strict control is exercised over firing practice due to shortage of ammunition. Weapon training is conducted initially with wooden or dummy weapons and thereafter with actual weapons. Only the best graduate to handling the sophisticated and specialist weapons. A cadre is initially given just three rounds for firing. The better lot is then segregated for further firing practice. A cadre is recruited normally as a 'jan militia' or into the local squad. Only those who prove their worth can become part of the guerrilla squads. The best move on to become regular cadre of a dalam/platoon/military company constituting the main force. At times, it takes eight to ten years for a cadre to become part of a regular force. Thus, the regular cadre occupies a position of privilege and commands respects. This acts as an incentive to the Naxal cadre to excel in training to become part of the regular force. The women cadre train alongside their male counterparts and are treated at par. They are not even permitted to use fragrant soaps, to avoid detection and use only Lifebuoy soap like their counterparts.²⁰

The training lays special emphasis on collection of intelligence, map reading, living off the land, reading of terrain to own advantage, knowledge about adversary tactics, patrolling, laying an ambush and execution of a raid with focus on looting of weapons besides causing casualties. The finer points of operations too are taught in detail like use of coded communications, selection of rendezvous points, method of regrouping after a raid or ambush, use of field signals, operating in the fog of battle, and quick appreciation of the situation to act promptly even in adverse conditions. Based on aptitude, the selected cadre is imparted specialist training in handling and preparation of IEDs, kidnappings and levy collection which once again emphasises the importance the Maoist give to such activities.

The hideouts periodically busted by the police forces clearly indicate the emphasis which the PLGA lays on training. This stands in stark contrast to the state and central police forces which continue to be plagued by administrative duties taking precedence over training. The PLGA rigorously factors lessons learnt during previous operations into their training schedule. An aspect of concern is the large number of Army personnel who hail from Naxal affected

areas. As the families of such personnel reside in the villages, they are particularly vulnerable to Maoist pressures. The possibility that some Army personnel, while on leave, are forced to train PLGA cadres or even take part in some of their operations cannot be ruled out. Naxal documents do speak of infiltrating into the armed forces. This aspect needs to be addressed by the Indian Army.

Impact of PLGA

The CPI (Maoist) has proved itself to be a force to reckon with, since its coming into existence post merger of the two most powerful groups. In the so-called liberated areas, its diktat runs supreme. In these areas, the government has no presence or say. The Maoists are expanding exponentially and are posing a serious challenge to the state. In Bihar, the panchayat level elections (held in 2011) in three districts could not be held due to security concerns. An analysis of violence levels over the last seven years in Naxal affected states is given in Annexure 3. This is a grim reminder of the threat posed by such forces.

The level of intimidation and violence perpetrated by the CPI (Maoist) has created a fear psychosis amongst the people in its area of influence. A whole generation has grown up in this atmosphere and lives under the shadow of fear generated and promoted by the PLGA. Maoist violence is, thus, not a mere question of casualties and violent incidents. It is more about psychological intimidation of the public. For example, a *bandh* call given by the CPI (Maoist) is meekly complied with and rarely contested. Such calls are becoming more frequent. A government functionary in Bihar was candid enough to admit that they do not contest these *bandhs* for fear of casualties to the common people.

Through fear, propaganda and indoctrination, the 'Red Corridor' has had a serious impact in Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand. This has been compounded by the strategic advantages that the terrain bestows for armed insurrection in these regions. Strongholds have been created near inter-state junctions or tri-junctions in order to exploit the lack of coordination, weakness and diverse approach of different states in tackling terrorism. As of now, the tri-junction of Andhra, Chhattisgarh and Orissa remains the most formidable stronghold of the CPI (Maoist).

The Maoist Influence on Indian Army Personnel

The study team of CLAWS, during its field trip to Jharkhand and Bihar, observed the tensions and concern among the ex-servicemen and the serving soldiers with respect to Naxal violence and atrocities. There have been instances where the Maoists forced these people residing in remote villages to act as guides to take them to their desired destination and also to meet their administrative requirements like provision of food and shelter. The interaction revealed that the soldiers had even paid money to buy peace and safety for themselves and their families residing in the villages. One of the serving soldiers of Jharkhand with whom the team interacted had paid rupees Rs. 7,000 and Rs 11,000 on different occasions while he was on leave. In certain cases, the serving/ex-servicemen, including officers of the affected areas are not being allowed to sell their land of which they are the rightful owners. One retired officer wanted to sell his land in Patna district; however, no one was willing to buy due to fear of the Naxals' wrath. Most remote villages in Naxal affected areas do not have a police presence. The police infrequently visit the villages, but only during the day. By night, the Naxals roam. The serving and retired service personnel of these villages are also subjected to the same kind of pressures and fears. In the case of serving personnel, the fear is more as their families are staying alone.

Caste dynamics play a major role in the Maoist violence and influence in Bihar. The active involvement of serving or retired Army personnel in the internecine conflict between Naxal groups and organisations like the Ranvir Sena which were formed as a defence shield against Maoist terror, cannot be ruled out. However, the study group was not presented with the details of any of the personal who took active part in such activity and, hence, it must be treated as hearsay.

The documents of the Maoists advocate penetration into the armed forces. They are making efforts to attract personnel of the Army, and central and state police forces towards their cause to create disunity among the armed forces. The Maoist documents state that "...party members working in the armed forces (enemies) have to maintain the utmost secrecy." This suggests some presence of Maoist elements in the forces. However, the possibility of the hard core getting into the officer cadre is unlikely due to the well laid out selection procedures. As the Army draws a large cadre of its

troops from these Naxal affected areas, the possibility of Naxal sympathisers getting into the Army cannot be ruled out. It is not possible to determine how many sympathisers have already been enrolled, but it would be prudent to assume that some at least who have a leaning towards the Naxals have been enrolled in the military forces. However, the induction of sympathisers into the Army is unlikely to have much of an impact. On the contrary, the Naxals are more likely to lose their sympathisers once they are groomed into the Army ethos.

Moving Towards Forming a People's Liberation Army

Maoist strategy focusses on building guerrilla forces along with people's militia, with utmost importance being given to secret armed activities. As the people's army is required to be subservient to the party, its military strategy follows the political line. The attempt now is to convert the PLGA to a PLA. With this in view, efforts are on to establish battalions, brigades and divisions, along with artillery support. To develop into a PLA, they have to recruit and train their cadre into a well knit disciplined force, impart politico-military training, acquire better and sophisticated weapons and ensure uninterrupted ammunition supply. Attempts are being made to acquire weapons and ammunition through their links with the northeast insurgent groups and from Nepal. Evidently, weapons looted from the police are not enough to cater to their requirements of expanding their presence in newer areas. In West Bengal, they have expanded their presence. Besides the three districts of Jungal Mahal, they now have a prominent presence in Birbhum, East Midnapur, Nadia and Murshidabad and have struck roots in North and South 24-Parganas.²¹ Media reports also indicate their increasing presence in the rural suburbs of urban centres, industrial hubs, and parts of northeast India and even in Punjab. This is a matter of great concern. In these areas, they talk of organising mini squads and special action teams with weapons, and working in absolute secrecy. It would, hence, be naive to assume that the Maoists would remain confined to the rural areas. Expansion would require an increase in military capability which explains why the Maoists are trying to upgrade from the PLGA to a PLA. They are conscious of the difficult road ahead, especially in view of the emphasis the government is laying on development, improving governance mechanisms, use of force as also other

actions aimed at conflict resolution. But much more would be required to be done by the government to bring the situation totally under control.

A Formula for Peace?

What should the government be doing? Some thoughts on the subject which could lead to conflict resolution are given below.

Information War

The government needs to launch a well orchestrated information campaign cutting across party lines. In view of the perceived interests of various political parties, this seems a tall order. That notwithstanding, it would be beneficial to project at least some semblance of coordinated effort on the part of various governments in the fight against Maoist terror. The issue of Binayak Sen has severely dented the resolve to fight the Maoists. The Centre could perhaps have avoided naming a person convicted by the high court for life imprisonment as an advisory member in the Planning Commission with respect to health issues. This action indicates a rift between the Centre and the state government which belong to rival political parties.

It would be essential to get both the media and the intelligentsia to support the fight against the CPI (Maoist). That would remain a challenge for the government. The key issue would be to deny space to the Maoists which they have expropriated for themselves in the garb of supporting social issues. A massive drive to educate the youth on the agenda and hidden designs of the Maoists would have to be carried out with skill and finesse. The atrocities committed by them must be highlighted, especially the brutality of their actions against innocent civilians. At the same time, the police forces and other government agencies need to be sensitive to public sentiments. Their conduct must never be such that it drives the local people into the arms of the Maoists. If the government and its police forces can get the support of the people and the media, it would greatly enhance their capability. Their actions must promote the creation of an environment which would enable such support coming voluntarily. The coercive tactics of the Maoists and the forcible recruitment by them of tribal children must be highlighted. Here, the statements of surrendered Maoists could prove useful.

Judicial System

The Maoists are effectively exploiting the loopholes in the law to their advantage. Offences committed by them rarely lead to conviction, which further emboldens them. There is a need to reform the justice delivery system to ensure a better rate of convictions in the courts of law. This would act as a deterrent as the certainty of punishment is a great demotivator to wrongdoing. The technology available today has to be incorporated as admissible evidence in our judicial system as an enabler to law enforcement. Things like voice/video recordings and various lie detection techniques need to be accepted as evidence with reasonable safety mechanisms in all cases relating to anti-national activities. There is also a need to establish fast track courts/mobile courts in inaccessible areas to address the grievances of the local people on priority and to prevent them from seeking redress from courts run by the Maoists. Such actions will demonstrate the government's intent and will to tackle the Maoist brand of terrorism.

Accountability of NGOs

A strong check on the activities of various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and social organisations must be established. While it would be inappropriate to interfere in their functioning, there is certainly a requirement to ensure transparency in their functioning, especially with respect to the flow of funds and types of activities undertaken.

Security Apparatus

There is a leadership deficit in our police forces engaged in fighting the Maoists. Our ability to address this challenge will determine the effectiveness of the police forces in dealing with them. While issues pertaining to training and administration are being addressed, there is a wider issue involved with respect to the basic structure of policing in the country and the manner in which it is officered. Perhaps the time has come to look into structural changes in the Indian Police Service to make it more responsive to present-day challenges.

There is also a need to redefine the role of the CRPF which has been designated as the counter-insurgency force of the country. This appears not to have been a wise decision as the CRPF lacks the training, skill and ethos

of the military to win in conflict levels which they are currently engaged in against the Maoists. It may, hence, be more prudent to raise additional infantry units of the Army to combat insurgency. This force could then be used as an effective counter to the build-up by China on the Tibet border once the Naxal threat has been neutralised.

There is an urgent need to immediately regain areas which are under Naxal control. Local administration officials in the states talk of time lines of ten to fifteen years for problem resolution – and even then they are not sure if the conflict will be resolved. This is certainly a very disconcerting state of affairs as the nation cannot afford to wait for such a long time. There is, thus, a need to think of employing the armed forces in specific areas which are the strongholds of the Maoists. Once these are neutralised, the police forces should be able to take on the remaining areas. For the military to be employed in the Red Corridor, the respective state governments would have to declare specific areas as disturbed areas to enable employment of the Army. The administrative set-up for governance also needs to be strengthened which would act in consonance with military operations. Simultaneously, the committed ideologues in the CPI (Maoist) also need to be targeted to cause disarray amongst their ranks. The nation can ill afford to have areas in its heartland in which the Maoists have total sway. The government has to reestablish its control over all such areas with utmost urgency.

The general public in the Red Corridor is for the most part a spectator to the conflict between the state and the Maoists. For the state, it is important to convince the people that it has the will and the power to defeat Maoist designs. If this is not done, the mass of the public will gravitate towards the Maoists. It is, hence, imperative that the PLGA is either defeated or defanged. The presence of security forces in areas dominated by the PLGA would, hence, be necessary to give the local population a sense of security. This deployment would have to be for the long term to produce the necessary effect.

Conclusion

The level of violence and intimidation as perpetrated over the years has created a fear psychosis amongst the people. An entire generation has by now grown up under Maoist terror; it can, thus, be presumed that removing

fear from the minds of the public will take considerable time. In their bid to gain power, the CPI (Maoist) has been focussed on the end state it wishes to realise. The Maoists are masters at exploiting existing faultlines in society and are not averse to using force and coercion to achieve their aims. The reason for the spread of Maoist terror is ideological, but other factors such as poverty, underdevelopment, exploitation of forest and mineral wealth, etc feed grievances which are ably exploited by the Maoists. These causative factors have provided an opportunity to Naxal ideologues to use the poor people, including the tribals of the affected areas, as pawns for their political objectives. An understanding of the causative factors is, hence, essential to win the ideological battle. The state needs to take steps to defeat the Naxal ideology with an alternate one based on democratic principles. But for the alternate ideology to succeed, the state has to deliver on issues which matter to the local population. This would include having an effective justice delivery mechanism, holistic development, social equity and economic prospects. Militarily, while the PLGA has to be addressed, it must be ensured that the population is not estranged. Otherwise, military action will not succeed. It must be remembered that the best practices are more often than not, the avoidance of the worst practices.

The dangerous and systematic efforts of the Maoists for converting the PLGA into a PLA has to be noticed by the government before the situation goes totally out of hand. The focussed military action at specific strong points of the PLGA would yield high dividends and would severely debilitate the organisation besides cracking its aura of invincibility in the eyes of the local population. The government has to be prepared for prolonged deployment of its police /security forces in order to address the PLGA. Finally, the government has to initiate actions on priority to seize back the initiative from the Maoists in the worst affected areas. This must take place concurrently with an effective information campaign.

State Committees of CPI (Maoist)

Ser No	Party Committee	Approximate Cadre strength
1	Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC)	4500- 5,000
2	Andhra Orissa Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC)	175- 200
3	North Telangana Special Zonal Committee (NTSZC)	100
4	Bihar Jharkhand North Chhattisgarh – Special Area Committee (BJNCSAC)	2500- 3,000
5	West Bengal State Committee (WBSC)	450-500
6	Punjab State Committee (PJSC)	200
7	Maharashtra State Committee (MRSC)	100
	TOTAL	About 9,100.

Note: The CPI (Maoist) has also created state committees in Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Kerala and Assam with strength of about 30 to 50 personnel. It has also formed leading teams in states like Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi having strength of about 15-30, thereby projecting its presence and future ambitions in these areas.

Estimated Armed Force Level

SC/SAC/ SOC/SZC	Military Battalio	Military Company	Platoons	Militia Platoons	Remarks
DKSZC	-	10	23	40	
AOBSZC	-	1	3	1	
MRSC		-	2	-	
WBSC		--	3	3	
BJNCSAC		3-4	8	30	
NTSZC		-	1	-	
CRC	1	1			Reflects ability to operate in battalion strength
ERC	1 (under progress)	1			Ability to operate at battalion level under progress
Total		18-19	40	74	

State	2004 Incidents/ Deaths	2005 Incidents/ Deaths	2006 Incidents/ Deaths	2007 Incidents/ Deaths	2008 Incidents/ Deaths	2009 Incidents/ Deaths	2010 Incidents/ Deaths	2011 Incidents/ Deaths
Andhra Pradesh	310/ 74	535/ 208	183/ 47	138/ 45	92/ 46	66/ 18	100/ 24	54/09
Bihar	323/ 171	186/ 96	107/ 45	135/ 67	164/ 73	232/ 72	307/ 97	314/6
Chhatisgarh	352/ 83	385/ 168	715/ 388	582/ 369	620/ 242	529/ 290	625/ 343	465/20
Jharkhand	379/ 169	312/ 119	310/ 124	482/ 157	484/ 207	742/ 208	501/ 157	517/182
Madhya Pradesh	13/ 04	20/ 03	06/ 01	09/ 02	35/ 26	01/ 00	07/ 01	
Maharashtra	84/ 15	94/ 53	98/ 42	94/ 25	68/ 22	154/ 93	94/ 45	109/54
Odisha	35/ 08	42/ 14	44/ 09	67/ 17	103/ 101	266/ 67	218/ 79	192/53
Uttar Pradesh	15/ 26	10/ 01	11/ 05	09/ 03	04/ 00	08/ 02	06/ 01	01/ 00
West Bengal	11/ 15	14/ 07	23/ 17	32/ 06	35/ 26	255/ 158	350/ 256	90/41
Other States	11/ 01	10/ 08	12/ 00	17/ 05	14/ 04	05/ 00	04/ 00	05/ 01
All India	1533/ 566	1608/ 677	1509/ 678	1565/ 696	1591/ 721	2258/ 908	2212/ 1003	1755/60

State-wise Left Wing Extremist Violence from 2004 to 2011²²

Notes

1. <http://www.merineews.com/article/maoists-celebrate-a-decade-of-peoples-liberation-guerrilla-army/15836948.shtml>
2. CPI (Maoist) document: Strategy and Tactics of the Indian Revolution: Chapter 10. <http://www.merineews.com/article/maoists-celebrate-a-decade-of-peoples-liberation-guerrilla-army/15836948.shtml>
3. Impression gained during interactions with officials on author's visit to Chhattisgarh in September 2010 and to Jharkhand/ Bihar in April 2011.
4. As told to the author during a field trip to Jharkhand and Bihar in April 2011.
5. <http://warantiwar.blogspot.com/2008/02/orissa-maoists-swarming-ahead.html>
6. Gleaned by the author, during a field trip to Chhattisgarh in October 2010.
7. Impression gained by the author in interaction with Home Secretary Mr G M Pillai during the LWE seminar at CLAWS, where he delivered a lecture, in February 2011.
8. "MHA Raps State Police for Lull in Anti-Naxal Operations," 02 December 2010, www.mumbaimirror.com/index.aspx?page=article§id=2
9. Maoist document
10. Azad, in a interview to *The Hindu*, www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI.../Azad-Hindu-Interview-100414.doc.
11. <http://southasiarev.wordpress.com/2010/01/12/interview-with-azad-on-cpi-maoist-preparations-for-operation-green-hunt>
12. The author had an opportunity to glean through the captured document of the CPI (Maoist).
13. As per Brig KS Dalal (Retd). He is presently with the CRPF as an adviser on training matters.
14. Timelines, SATP.ORG
15. Time lines satp.org
16. http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-05-05/ranchi/29516779_1_maoist-stronghold-jhumra-west-singhbhum
17. AP. Hub of Maoist kidnap/killings till 2007, <http://gatturadha.wordpress.com>
18. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/Maoists-kidnap-minors-in-Rohtas/articleshow/8322458.cms>
19. http://www.telegraphindia.com/1110517/jsp/frontpage/story_13991140.jsp
20. "Many of the Maoist Rank Would Flee, Given a Half Chance, *The Times of India*, 24 August 2010
21. Naxalites in Assam: Intelligence Report, 03 July 2010, <http://www.northeastblog.in>
22. Source: Annual Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011-2012.