

## Internal insecurity



### **Summary:**

The internal security situation of the country has not shown any marked improvement in the last few years. In the recent past, a growing number of incidents have led to increased visibility of the deteriorating internal security situation as well as signal, what could well be seminal changes in India's approach to its security mechanism.

### **Need for reforms:**

- Successive governments have not cared to **codify the country's internal security doctrine**. There is no long-term policy, nor is there any strategic vision to tackle the Maoist insurgency.
- The **absence of an institutional response** with whatever mechanisms are or were in place. The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) was liquidated.
- The **police** continues to be in a shambles. The Supreme Court gave historic directions in 2006 for police reforms, but the states have been dragging their feet and now the apex court is also taking it slow. The prime minister's concept of a SMART police could never take off because of the indifference of the states.
- A **new formula of SAMADHAN** has been evolved to tackle the Naxalites problem with S standing for smart leadership, A for aggressive strategy, M for motivation and training, A for actionable intelligence, D for dashboard-based key performance indicators and key result areas, H for harnessing technology, A for action plan for each theatre and N for no access to

financing. However, it is unlikely that this approach would lead to a resolution of the problem. The Naxal problem is much too complex and requires a very comprehensive strategy which cannot be capsuled in an acronym.

### **What can be done to improve the situation?**

**Clear statement of intent:** All successful human and organizational initiatives stem from an explicit, visible, widely accepted statement of intent and direction. In this case it would mean a national security policy with adjuncts from the states. While the specific roles of agencies are clear, the policy would need to lay stress on the collaborative process between agencies. Annual and multiyear tactical plans could ebb and flow, to suit current tactical needs, but always under the long term policy direction – thereby ensuring aligned efforts and accumulation of investments and benefits.

**Invest in people:** The internal security market currently has an estimated spend in the region of \$12-15 billion and its growing in double digits. Large investments have been earmarked and deployed in initiatives like the Police.

**Force Modernization plan, Mega City policing and several other security initiatives:** Besides investments in equipment and infrastructure there is a need to further invest in human capital and processes. Trained and motivated personnel can provide the winning edge – a fact evidenced in various organizations. Whilst several security units have their own training centres, some of which are truly best in class; for several others there is a need to further invest in training.

**Continuity of policy & direction:** Typical tenures of service in a post are 2-3 years for security officers and while this rotation is desired, from many aspects, it can have a down side too -discontinuity leading to choppiness in initiatives. In equipment procurement it can result in mismatched pieces of equipment and technology that do not form part of a holistic system. A documented longer term policy direction would help maintain coherence and focus over tenure changeover's resulting in more effective outcomes and maximisation of effort and investment.

**Communication and Collaboration:** In a security framework that is diffracted across multiple operational and intelligence agencies; information sharing, rapid and frequent communications and collaborative planning, assume great importance. While the roles, responsibilities and areas of operation for various agencies are clearly demarcated; the challenge lies in operating in a unified coordinated manner. The current working of the Multi Agency centre and State Multi Agency centres need to be widened and accelerated to aid systemic information collation and dissemination. Specifically the sharing of actionable intelligence in real time – upwards and laterally – would make quantum difference to event outcomes.

**Community involvement:** Community outreach and involvement needs to be expanded and accelerated. Whether this is by state police with citizen groups or by

central agencies with focused attention groups – like in the case of the Naga Peace Accord. This element of communication and inclusion can be a great force multiplier and help build strong alignments with the citizenry who are a major stakeholder in the security process. A crucial element of community inclusion is measures taken to improve welfare and economic independence. Especially applicable in the far flung regions which have seen limited economic development and are also hot spots for rebel groups. Whether state funded development, health, and education projects or private industry driven investments – all help in forming an economically self reliant community that is resistant to break away thinking.

**Technology adoption and upgradation:** The two new frontiers – cyber and space, bring new challenges and the old tools will not suffice to cope with them. There is a need to understand, assimilate, modify and adopt technologies, existing and emerging, to combat the new threats. Personnel will need to be trained in these technologies on a war footing –not once but repeatedly. Burgeoning communication and surveillance technologies pose additional challenges for agencies as we move to dealing with non conventional threats. A common technology road map is critically needed.

### **Way ahead:**

The scale of the internal security challenge is truly massive. Given the size and scope of the security arena – 3.2 million square kms of area, 7,500 km of coast line and another 6,000 km of land border, the growing intensity and frequency of security ‘triggers’ and the asymmetrical force aspect – more needs to be done as a multi pronged approach to sustain and accelerate improvements in the security environment. A federal system with multi and regional party system also throws open the challenge of centre and state co-ordination. Given the constraints, successive governments face a formidable task in identifying and containing security threats.

### **Conclusion:**

India now stands at an inflexion point where it can take quantum steps to further improve and strengthen its internal security mechanisms. It’s a task well begun but needs supporting accelerators to build momentum and achieve greater effectiveness. While the frequency and severity of security threats increases; greater inclusion, communication, investment in personnel and technology leveraging -is the way ahead. Time, is clearly of the essence.