4. Indian Response to Internal Conflicts

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The advent of the nuclear age resulted in conventional wars being pushed into the background of the type of conflicts raging around the world. Since 1945, some 75 percent of conflicts that have broken out can be classified as 'low intensity' ones. However, the term 'low intensity' can sometimes be misleading as it does not fully reflect the political impact or the scale of such a conflict. Over one million people died in the Vietnam War, including 58,000 American soldiers. A similar number were killed in the Algerian War, and during the Soviet War in Afghanistan. In each case, there was a political change and the significantly more powerful country was forced to yield power.

Various terms have been used to describe low intensity conflicts: insurgencies, sub-conventional wars, guerrilla warfare, counter-terrorism, 4th Generation Warfare, etc. Each has its own subtle peculiarity, but for the purpose of consistency, I have used the term 'internal conflicts' in the heading because it is intended to study only the Indian examples.

This chapter seeks to study the development of India's politico-military doctrine in dealing with internal conflicts. India has been faced with many challenges but for the purpose of studying the maturing of India's doctrine, I will look at the ~~the~~ first set of insurgencies which broke out in northeast (NE) India and the proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). These two conflicts provide almost a complete picture in studying the trajectory of responses that shaped India's doctrine. The paper will then go on to study the nature of emerging threats to India's internal security and whether any refinement is needed in the thought process and organisational structures to tackle this threat.

Readers may find a notable omission in this paper – an absence of discussion on the Maoist movement. The Maoist challenge is very real but the response it requires is one which ideally does not involve the military. The Indian Army has taken a consistent stand that the Maoist problem has no external threat dimension and is best left to be tackled by the police forces. Keeping in view the specific nature of this paper, the politico-military doctrine for tackling internal conflicts, the Maoist problem has been left out.

Indian Response to Internal Conflicts

The Post-Independence Conflicts

India's independence got off to a rocky start. Apart from the horrors of the partition and the first war with Pakistan, it was soon locked into various conflicts in the NE. The first to revolt was Nagaland where A Z Phizo declared independence in 1947. The Naga Federal Army, formed in 1952, commenced an armed struggle which completely overwhelmed the Assam Police and Assam Rifles. When the situation deteriorated, the Army was called in, in 1956, to suppress the rebellion.

Mizoram was another state that was beset by violence. Mishandling of the rat famine of 1959 led to the formation of the Mizo National Front (MNF) under Laldenga, which launched an armed movement against India in 1960. In February 1966, the MNF launched Operation Jericho to take control over the major towns in Mizoram, and Laldenga declared independence on March 01, 1966. The next day, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) was declared and the Army commenced operations to clear Mizoram. This operation was the only instance where the Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out air strikes on the insurgents in Aizawl.

Violence in Manipur came later than in Nagaland and Mizoram but the seeds were sown soon after independence. Mismanagement of the political situation in Manipur and non-grant of statehood brought about deep discontentment among the majority Meitei community. In November 1964, the first rebel group, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) was formed. Over the next fifteen years, a number of other Meitei groups like the People's Liberation Army (PLA), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) were formed. A series of militant attacks in 1980 led to the imposition of AFSPA in September 1980.

Characteristics of NE Insurgencies

The post-independence conflicts in the NE had some common characteristics. After World War II, the world was in the grip of anti-colonial revolutionary wars. The success of the Southeast Asian countries in gaining independence, and particularly the Malay and Vietnam examples, where armed struggles had led to independence, was a motivating factor in the initiation of insurgencies in Nagaland and Mizoram.

Ethnic identity played a key role in sustaining the movements. The Nagas and Mizos had always considered themselves as distinct groups, which had never been fully under the administrative control of British India. Manipur comprised three different communities – the Meiteis, Nagas and Kukis – but here again, identity was the cause of conflict. The majority Meitei community felt threatened by what it saw as the appeasement of the minority groups. This was exacerbated by the impact of the Naga insurgency on Manipur and the attempts to integrate areas of Manipur into "Greater Nagalim".

The region was isolated and the governance was poor. This allowed armed groups to flourish. Border management was weak and the insurgents established sanctuaries in the bordering countries of East Pakistan and Burma. Pakistan and China exploited the situation and provided arms and training to the insurgents. However, these two countries did not openly come out in support of the independence movements.

Indian Response

The Indian military had little experience and training in dealing with insurgencies. There was also a very small regular Army presence in the NE states. Despite this, the initial Army operations in both Nagaland and Mizoram met with swift success because the rebels had organised themselves as regular forces and attempted to fight a somewhat conventional battle. Thereafter, the operations transformed into a protracted counter-insurgency campaign.

With nothing to guide them, the Army took lessons from the British Malay campaign and applied them to Nagaland and then to Mizoram. Seeking to cut off the insurgents from the population, the Army adopted the practice of 'Protected and Progressive Villages' which had been used by the British in Malay. Villagers were forcibly relocated and grouped in areas where the security forces could exercise control over the people. Resource control was also put in place and there were restrictions on essential commodities like food. These measures were hugely unpopular and did not take into account the local conditions and sensitivities. Villages in Nagaland and Mizoram had their own land holdings where they carried out *jhoom* cultivation. Depriving them of these was not only an economic but also a social issue. These measures caused massive resentment among the local population against the Army. This move was abandoned in Nagaland within three years but lasted almost fifteen years in Mizoram.

In these isolated areas, and away from any scrutiny, the Army adopted a fairly harsh approach. Large scale cordon and search operations, raids into

Burma and retributive punishments against villages were routine tactics. To be fair, the Army understood that the population had to be weaned away from the insurgents, and civic action programmes were also initiated, but, largely, the approach was more of the stick than the carrot.

Politically, the relative isolation of the area resulted in the government not giving it adequate attention. Some political empowerment was carried out by granting greater autonomy and statehood but it was too little too late to have a major impact on the security situation.

Overall, the government's approach was to wear down the insurgents through a protracted campaign of attrition, while simultaneously attempting to bring back some of the insurgents into the mainstream through ceasefire agreements and surrenders. This concept has had mixed success. While violence has not completely died down, a number of insurgent groups have decided to eschew violence and take the political path. There was a negotiated settlement in Mizoram in 1986, though it came about after more than two decades of insurgency.

Ceasefire agreements have resulted in a reduction in violence, but they were not well conceived. The agreement with the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) permitted them to retain their arms, live in designated camps and virtually run a parallel government. There is a similar situation with the Kuki groups in Manipur, who live in designated camps and carry out extortion activities with impunity. The free rein given to the NSCN-IM is also a justification for the Meitei groups in Manipur to carry on their armed struggle to prevent the Naga group from becoming all-powerful in Manipur.

A sort of stalemate has crept into the ongoing insurgencies in the NE. The Army has the ability to keep the security situation under control but resolution will require a political approach. It is not unknown that political parties have sought the support of some insurgent group or the other in the run up to elections. How this can be reconciled is a big challenge.

Another serious weakness is in border management. In this, the military has no one to blame but itself. Assam Rifles, which is responsible for guarding the Indo-Myanmar border, has to make much greater efforts to strengthen its border management posture. Insurgents live in camps in Myanmar and cross the border almost at will to carry out attacks. The government is aware of the problem but has somehow not been able to comprehensively address this issue.

A New Type of Challenge in Jammu and Kashmir

The 1980s saw the outbreak of internal conflicts in Assam, Tripura and Punjab, but the next big challenge which forced India to look at reviewing its doctrine of fighting low intensity conflicts came in J&K.

The conflict broke out due to poor handling of the political situation, as in the NE, but its characteristics were distinctly different. At this time, the world was seeing a transformation in the nature of wars. As David C. Rapoport described it, the world was in the fourth wave of terrorism: the "religious wave", with Islam at its heart. The fourth wave was the result of the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the same year. While the former gave rise to Shiite terror groups, the latter consolidated the Sunni terror movements. Events in India's neighbourhood after the victory of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, provided the impetus for a bungled J&K election in 1986 becoming the cause of a full-blown conflict.

The religious angle of insurgency in J&K is often downplayed, both by the government as well the leaders of the terrorist groups, the latter portraying it as a freedom movement so as not to attract global condemnation. This is despite the fact that this conflict has led to the largest internal displacement of a community after independence. About 150,000 Kashmiri Pandits fled the Valley in 1990. There were many selective killings of the Hindus in Jammu region and mosques became places for inciting the locals against Indian rule. Today, the religious radicalisation is more evident.

The conflict in J&K saw direct and active support by Pakistan in terms of financing, arms and training. Special training camps were established for youths who had crossed over into Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). Terrorist organisations like the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) came up in Pakistan with the sole aim of *jihad* in Kashmir. These were fully supported by Pakistan's intelligence wing, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). By 2000, foreign terrorists killed in J&K outnumbered the local terrorists.

As opposed to the NE, Kashmir had much greater visibility, both nationally and internationally. One reason for this was the large number of foreign tourists who would visit the Kashmir Valley each year. In 1995, when six Western tourists were kidnapped, the media scrutiny became even more intense. This also had a significant impact on the conduct of operations.

The manifestation of the Kashmir conflict was also not limited to the geographical boundaries of the state. Prior to 1990, there were no terrorist Islamist

groups outside J&K. However, soon after the start of insurgency in Kashmir, there was a spate of attacks in India, starting with the 1993 Mumbai bombings where nearly 1,000 people were killed or injured. Mumbai, Delhi and Pune were regular targets and, in most cases, evidence pointed towards Pakistan-based terror groups like the LeT and JeM. Some Indian groups like the Indian Mujahideen did come up but they also drew support from Pakistan-based organisations. Therefore, the J&K problem, in some ways, acquired a pan-India signature.

Indian Response

The initial military response in J&K was harsh and somewhat severe. Tactics similar to those used in the NE were adopted. Large scale cordon and search, raids, firing on protesters, mass arrests and brutal interrogation techniques spread fear among the population and helped control the situation. However, the media visibility in J&K and allegations of human rights breaches forced the Army to review its approach and doctrine. Army operations also came under severe criticism from the courts of law. In response, the Army established a Human Rights Cell in 1993 and General B C Joshi issued '*The Chief of Army Staff 10 Commandments*', primarily dealing with the conduct of troops while operating in counter-insurgency operations. Subsequently, more detailed Do's and Dont's were formulated which were sanctified in 1997 by the Supreme Court as part of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.

A key difference of Army operations in NE and J&K was the recognition of the need for effective border management. Although the Line of Control (LC) was strongly manned, the deployment was focused towards conventional war-fighting and not to check small groups of infiltrators. Pakistan Army posts on the LC also provided support and covering fire to the infiltrators. Recognising Pakistan's role in keeping the insurgency alive, a major push was given to improving the counter-infiltration posture. The construction of a fence along the LC was undertaken in 2003-04. This was General Nirmal Vij's initiative and was pushed through despite some reservations within the Army. The fence proved invaluable and infiltration levels reduced to less than half in the first year of its completion.

In 2006, the Indian Army released its 'Doctrine for Sub-Conventional Operations'. The doctrine emphasised a humane and people-centric approach, deep respect for human rights and minimum use of kinetic means. It correctly identified that the role of the armed forces is to bring down the level of violence so that a political process can be initiated.

The Indian Army's strategy to deal with internal conflicts had matured by the turn of the century and comprised four main components: an effective counter-infiltration posture on the LC; a comprehensive counter-terrorist grid in the hinterland; an effective information and perception management effort; and the winning of the hearts and minds of the populace. This strategy was immensely successful, and violence in J&K saw a steady decline from 2002 onwards. Of course, it helped that after 9/11, the world had little patience with terrorism, and Pakistan was under tremendous American pressure to stop aiding terror groups.

While the security forces were gaining a grip on the situation, political lethargy prevented this success from turning into a basis for conflict resolution. Victory was still being measured in statistics of violent incidents, terrorists killed, etc, without addressing the root cause of the conflict. The military leadership must also share some of the blame because they failed to convince the political leaders of the need to undertake initiatives which could have helped cement the improving security situation.

There was another basic strategic weakness. India was ill-prepared to deal with major terrorist strikes within the country. Intelligence routinely failed to give any advance warning, and coherent contingency planning to put pressure on Pakistan, from where most attacks were planned, seemed non-existent. The Parliament attack led to an eleven-month-long standoff on the border but little was achieved in concrete terms. Similarly, the 26/11 Mumbai attacks went largely unpunished. Shivshankar Menon, then National Security Advisor (NSA), writes in his book, *Choices – The Making of India's Foreign Policy*, that the "decision not to retaliate militarily and to concentrate on diplomatic, covert and other means was the right one". However, some writings suggest that India did not have the precise intelligence to carry out strikes against terrorist camps or the leadership. Diplomacy has also been unable to achieve the isolation of Pakistan, and the terrorist leadership operates in that country with impunity.

Future Challenges

The aftermath of 9/11, the American invasion of Afganistan and Iraq, and the Arab Spring have had an enormous impact on the character of the Middle East and South Asia. In this milieu have grown radical groups like the Islamic State (IS) which sought to establish a Caliphate across Iraq and Syria. The sectarian divide has grown stronger and spilled over to Africa and East Asia. The contours of future conflict will be shaped by global Islamic terror that transcends national boundaries and whose enemies are not only state Armies

but also the population of peaceful cities like London, Paris, Brussels and Moscow.

As William S. Lind stated in *The Four Generations of Modern War*, "What defines the Fourth Generation (of warfare) is the state's loss of the monopoly over war it established at Westphalia." This perhaps defines the character of future conflict more than anything else. Individual non-state actors command as much following as national leaders – Osama, Baghdadi, and our own home-grown Burhan Wani who sparked off the biggest unrest in Kashmir in 2016. And these are not short wars but long and costly conflicts which impact on all facets of national policy.

In India, ongoing internal conflicts will continue. An early resolution of J&K, the NE insurgency and Naxal violence does not appear feasible. This pessimistic view is largely because these problems require a political solution, but unfortunately, it is politics and one-upmanship that is muddying the waters. In J&K, the issue is further vitiated by the direct involvement of Pakistan in terrorist activities.

There is also a transformation in the nature of the conflict. In J&K, we are seeing the tactics of *intifada* playing out on the streets of Kashmir. Prolonged shutdown of economic activity, educational institutes and internet services have affected all aspects of social life. Angry and alienated youths, with stones in their hands, faceoff against the police. In this milieu, the messaging and narrative is all important. Unfortunately, the government is losing this battle. People look up to the state to provide them security – physical, political and economic. If the government *appears* to be at war with a section of the population, its credibility is lost. Again, it is perceptions that matter, not the reality.

In this battle of ideas, the media is the new weapon. In *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*, Robert D. Kaplan writes, "The media amplify *presentness*, the rage and ecstasy and virtue...of the present moment, for good and for bad. In other words, politics in the mass media age will be more intense than anything we have experienced, because the past and future will have been obliterated."

The prolonged deployment of the Army in the NE states is also raising a number of questions on the effectiveness of the government in dealing with these insurgencies. While hearing a case on allegations of fake encounters in Manipur, in July 2016, the Supreme Court observed that indefinite deployment of the Army under the AFSPA "would mock at our democratic process". The bench said, "In our opinion, it would be indicative of the failure of the civil

administration to take effective aid of the armed forces in restoring normalcy or would be indicative of the failure of the armed forces in effectively aiding the civil administration in restoring normalcy or both,"

Prolonged deployment also leads to human rights excesses, some inadvertent and some not. Either way, there is an impact on the ethos of the military. A high degree of professionalism backed up by strict discipline and high standards of training can help the Army in retaining its values.

While dealing with the challenges of ongoing conflicts, there is also a need to be cognisant of the danger of international Islamist organisations establishing a foothold in India. There are differing views on how real this danger is to our country. The next part of this paper will attempt to analyse this threat.

Islamist Terror Threat in South Asia

The Islamist terror threat has not yet manifested itself in India. In April 2017, Home Minister Rajnath Singh assured the Rajya Sabha, "There is no need to be worried about the Islamic State (IS) in India. If a few youth get radicalised by them, we also have counter-radicalisation programmes." The statement is true in the context of the fact that the number of Muslim youths who have joined the IS in India is very low. However, the danger of the radical Islamist threat is real.

While analysing any threat, it is important to look at both the intent and the capability. Of these, intent is the more crucial component. Even if current capability is limited but the intent is strong, the latter will drive development of the means to achieve the aim. This is more important in a war of ideas where the soldier is often an anonymous young man sitting on his computer and who can turn himself into a weapon only on the basis of his twisted belief.

South and Central Asia hold an enormous historical and religious appeal to Islamic terrorist groups. Prophet Muhammad had prophesied that Khorasan will be the theatre from where the final war with the unbelievers will commence. The initial battles will also include Ghazwa-e-Hind (Battle for India) and after having won this, Muslim Armies with black flags will march from Khorasan and plant their flags in Jerusalem.

Geographically, Khorasan encompasses the areas of Iran, Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The ideological appeal of this area was one of the reasons that drew Al-Qaeda, a largely Arab organisation, to Afghanistan. It was also from here that they launched the 9/11 attacks and effectively drew the Americans into Khorasan, a battle which the Americans now appear to be losing. Despite the heavy initial losses in Afghanistan, Al-

Qaeda has not been beaten. In September 2014, it announced the setting up of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). A month later, AQIS published the first issue of its magazine *Resurgence*, which focussed on the plight of Muslims in South Asia and called for *jihad*. An editorial in the magazine warned that *jihad* will not stop with the victory in Afghanistan but would then move on to India, Bangladesh and Burma.

On January 26, 2015, the Islamic State announced its expansion into Wilayat Khorasan. Its 12-member Shura comprised nine Pakistanis, with Hafeez Saeed Khan, a former Tehrik-i-Taliban member, as its head. The Islamic State is currently focussed on Afghanistan, where it is meeting fierce resistance from the Taliban and Afghan forces. It has not been able to expand its presence beyond four districts of Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan, but it has also not been pushed out. It is regularly carrying out terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, the latest being an attack on the Hindus and Sikhs in the city of Jalalabad, on 1 July 2018 . The threat of this group to Pakistan is also very real. Its membership and linkages with Pakistan-based terrorist groups could see a future increase in its support base in Pakistan.

Bangladesh is another emerging state where Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are looking to gain a foothold. In 2015, there was a spike in the killing of secular bloggers in Bangladesh. In a video message of May 02, 2015, AQIS leader Maulana Asim Umar claimed responsibility for the killing of four bloggers. Attacks on two foreigners, Cesare Tavella, an Italian, and Hoshi Kunio, a Japanese, were claimed by the Islamic State. There is also an Islamic State link to the Holey Artisan Cafe attack in July 2016.

Threat to India

The ideological underpinnings of Ghazwa-e-Hind are very strong. Although some commentators refer to Ghazwa-e-Hind as a recent phenomenon, this spirtual battle has been at the heart of planning by terrorist organisations in Pakistan since the 1980s. This has been described in some detail by Syed Saleem Shahzad in his book *Inside Al-Qaeda and the Taliban*. The same theme has been taken up by the AQIS. In a well researched article, “Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent: A new Frontline in the Global Jihadist Movement?,” Dr Alistair Reed explains, “In its messaging, AQIS makes a special focus against India, which it sees as in alliance with the West against South Asia’s Muslim population. Al Zawahiri called for Muslims to unite in ‘support to confront the alliance of India, the West, secularists and atheists’. In this way, AQIS has

striven to connect the local with the global, seeking to conflate Modi's rule in India with the Islamist global *Jihad* against the West." In a video release in May 2015 called "From France to Bangladesh: The Dust Will Never Settle Down", AQIS pronounces that "[t]hrough the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, drone attacks, Charlie Hebdo's writings... and Narendra Modi's speeches, which call for Muslims to be burnt alive—this is the same war".

The Islamic State has also appealed to the Muslims of India to join the Caliphate. In a video of May 2016, IS fighters talked about avenging "the Babri Masjid, and the killings of Muslims in Kashmir, in Gujarat, and in Muzaffarnagar."

The success of both Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in recruitment or carrying out attacks in India has as yet remained limited. This can be credited to the thinking of the vast majority of the Indian Muslim population that finds little resonance with the harsh ideology of the two groups. However, in my view, there is a clear and present danger.

The battlefield is virtual and the objective is the individual's mind. Perceptions, attitudes and grievances—real or imaginary—are key tools. Social media is a powerful weapon. Graphic images and videos convey messages and propaganda whose impact is greater than the deed itself. The Islamic State, in particular, runs a very sophisticated social media campaign. It might appear repugnant to most of us but it has been very successful in recruiting a section of Muslims from around the world to their cause.

Internet penetration in Kashmir is higher than the national average and it is common for the youth to have radical clips on their cell phones. This large section of dissatisfied youth is vulnerable. In July 2017, Al-Qaeda announced the formation of a new cell in Kashmir, named Ansar Ghawzat-ul-Hind, with Zakir Musa, an ex Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist as its leader. In March 2017, Zakir Musa had said in a video message, "I see that many people in Kashmir are engaged in a war of nationalism, which is forbidden in Islam...It should be for supremacy of Islam so that Sharia is established here."

Other conditions which could fuel extremism are also present. Over 60 percent of the Kashmiri youth are under 30, and 25 percent of them are unemployed, almost double the national average. Radicalisation is on the increase, with violence and conflict a daily staple in the Kashmir Valley, and there is a sense of disillusionment with the Indian state. All this makes for a volatile mix.

Focus Areas for the Indian State

While internal conflicts in India have been controlled, conflict resolution has eluded us in a majority of cases. One weakness has been India's lack of a strategic culture which has prevented any focussed analysis by the government on how we should deal with ongoing or emerging internal fault lines. The nature of civil-military relations in India has also kept the military out of policy discussions and resulted in an insular uniformed community. The Army has concentrated only on kinetic operations and not put pressure on the political class for moving ahead with a political resolution of the conflicts. Our existing structures and practices are also not fully geared up to meet the emerging challenges.

Security is becoming increasingly specialised and a generalist approach will not work. There should be a specialist cadre in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) for security management. IAS officers coming into higher appointments in internal security or defence roles with little or no experience is no longer a luxury we can afford. To deal with internal conflicts, a separate Ministry of Internal Security should be formed. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is too large, and, therefore too lethargic, to keep pace with the changing developments.

The Army is at the forefront of dealing with internal conflicts, but its interface with the political leadership is weak. To overcome this, the National Security Council (NSC) should be restructured. It currently has major flaws. At the apex, the NSC comprises the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Home, Defence, External Affairs and Finance, assisted by the NSA. There are no military members. The NSC is assisted by the Strategic Policy Group which is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary and comprises the three Chiefs and various secretaries in the government. There is no political representation in this group. Thus, there is no formal forum where matters of strategy can be discussed among the political leaders, the military and the relevant government functionaries.

A strong, extremist narrative is flowing from across the borders into India. It has the potential to destabilise Kashmir and create lone-wolf terrorists in the rest of the country. We have not yet seen suicide bombers in India, but radicalisation could drive some youngsters down this path. It is not enough to merely talk about the secular character of the Indian Muslim; we need to do more in words and deed to reinforce this. The government's efforts in countering the *jihadi* narrative are sporadic and weak, as are the counter-radicalisation programmes. In short, we are losing the battle of the narrative.

There is a need to set up an organisation which will focus on countering the extremist narrative. An example is the Centre for Strategic Counter-terrorism Communications (CSCC), an inter-agency unit established in 2010 under the US State Department. The CSCC aims to coordinate, orient, and inform about strategic communications activities directed at audiences abroad, designed to counter the appeal of violent extremism. Other efforts to counter radicalisation will have to focus on *madrassa* education, community involvement, help to Muslim clerics, identification of potential threats, and enhancing resilience against radicalisation. All this requires a comprehensive action plan which, unfortunately, has not been given due attention by the MHA. In fact, the reverse appears to be happening. Driven by hyper-nationalism, there have been cases of vigilantism against the minorities. This will only fuel radicalisation.

Indian security and intelligence agencies are working in stovepipes. Coordination has certainly improved but our structures are not designed to deal with the nature of the emerging threats. Terrorism is often treated as a law and order subject and left to the state governments. Investigation into a terror group involves cooperation with foreign agencies, understanding and choking of financial networks, probing into the darkest spaces of cyber space, and, finally, the ability to neutralise the target. This can only be accomplished by inter-agency task forces designed to deal with specific threats. Such task forces should be formed for Al-Qaeda, the ISIS, LeT and JeM. In addition to government functionaries, the task forces must comprise hired experts as required, for example, in the fields of language and cyber skills. Other initiatives like the National Intelligence Grid also need to reach their full potential.

The police is a key player in countering internal conflicts. Unfortunately, in India, the police is in a poor state as far as equipping is concerned. Police modernisation schemes are caught between the lack of funds and bureaucratic lethargy. Of Rs 6,216 crore allocated by the central and state governments for the modernisation of the police in the financial year 2014-15, only Rs 3,566 crore (57 per cent) was spent. Furthermore, in the 2015 Budget, the National Scheme for Modernisation of Police, a centrally-funded scheme, was delinked from the Centre's financial support, apparently to ease the fiscal deficit. The move was widely criticised. The Directors-General of Police from several states warned Home Minister Rajnath Singh that the government's decision to slash central funding for state police forces could hamper their capability in insurgency and terrorism-hit states. A serious push is required in equipping and training of the police forces.

How is success to be gauged in this complex environment of conflict amidst our own population? This is the key question whose answers will provide us with the strategy to be adopted. Unfortunately, we continue to rely on numbers to define success – number of terrorists killed, number of violent incidents, etc. This lays undue emphasis on the actions of the security forces and has prevented us from adopting a comprehensive approach wherein political, economic and strategic communications issues are not given adequate attention. It is a clear lesson of history that winning military engagements does not always lead to winning the war. During the Vietnam War, Colonel Harry G. Summers had a famous exchange with his North Vietnamese counterpart. When Harry told him, "You know, you never beat us on the battlefield," Colonel Tu responded, "That may be so, but it is also irrelevant."

Victories are not always on the battlefield and the government must understand this and step up to own its responsibility for resolving internal conflicts.

Conclusion

The internal conflicts facing India are decades old but have now acquired a new dimension. The power of information, globalisation and emerging challenges require a change in focus and strategy. The battleground is in the virtual dimension and the prize is the human mind. What is right is no longer as important as what is *perceived* as being right. The legitimacy of the government will be judged not by the number of terrorists killed but in its ability to provide an environment where the population can flourish and grow without violence and fear.

India is at the cusp of history, the fastest growing major economy and set to make its mark in world affairs. However, it is still very inward-looking because it has been unable to politically resolve its internal conflicts. These occupy so much attention of our policy-makers that there is very little strategic debate on the direction in which we need to move in global affairs. A more focused approach on resolving ongoing problems, and to stave off future threats will serve the country well.