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NAXALISM

THE CONTINUING MENACE OF 50 YEARS

IS IT A
FORGOTTEN ISSUE?

EVOLVING PARADIGM;
THE WAY FORWARD



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MISSION

We endeavour to sound **ALERTS** and create **AWARENESS** about the myriad dimensions and manifestations of **DEFENCE** and **SECURITY** in India and around the world.



The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



The country is currently in the midst of marking the 20th anniversary of conflict in Kargil. Many events are to be held and memories rekindled about the brief but very brutal war fought on the heights of Kargil sector and the brave to be always remembered. For that is the duty of those who remain behind. And, also their duty to keep in mind the primacy of national security and all that entails in making it a success. On that account a lot more needs to be done.

This is specially so when it comes to the long and seemingly endless issue of Naxalism. Even as the country remains fixated on the menace posed by Pakistan, a country one-seventh in size, the larger issue of long-term national security threats remains under the radar. On the external front, China is, and will, remain the primary national security threat. And, despite the obsession with Pakistan

and as a result Kashmir, the principal internal national security threat remains the menace of Naxalism; simply for its duration, distribution, and deeply destructive nature.

Naxalism, as an idea, has been around for more than 50 years. And in this period, it has only expanded its footprint, beginning in the small village of Naxalbari to now across more than half a dozen states, scores of districts, affecting and influencing crores of Indians. This is far more than what can be said for the Kashmir issue, which has remained confined to the state, and has, in fact, shrunk in impact and intensity. And, yet the nation behaves as if that issue is paramount and the rest of the country is safe. Indeed, that is not so.

Naxalism is the single biggest national security threat simply because it is the issue that directly impinges the lives of Indians, across a swathe of the country at its core, and is in conflict with development and resources of an unimaginable

scale. Even as some Naxals have found a working mechanism through extortion, a large number of development projects remain affected by threats and coercion from gun-toting cadres in the jungles. The country stands to lose precious lives and time to these threats, pushing its development goals back by decades.

What is needed, firstly, is a change of mindset in Delhi's power corridors. Raising the response bar is resisted on the fictitious grounds that these are 'our citizens'. Well, the simple answer is that even the Kashmiris are Indian nationals, even if some may denounce the country. And the truth is that every Naxal is against the Indian constitution and democracy that governs this country. For them, it isn't simply about opposing, but destroying the fabric of this country. So, how does that make them better citizens than Kashmiris? Once Delhi is able to answer this simple question then steps will begin to curb, contain and eliminate this menace.

Manvendra Singh

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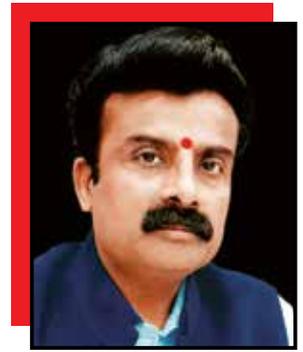
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A LONGSTANDING MENACE: **NAXALISM**



In an era when Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Communist ideology suffered a grievous body blow by the collapse of the Soviet Union in the last decade of the 20th century, in India what has come to be known as Left Wing Extremism, has grown and expanded its influence across a huge swath of territory extending from the north down to the south.

For 50 years since its inception in Naxalbari in West Bengal, its followers known as Naxalites are a crucial component of what is now generically described as Left Wing Extremism has, after a phase of ascendancy, begun to show signs of depletion of influence among the downtrodden they profess to lead and represent. Simultaneously, however, there has been an expansion into new areas of operation in the deep south in Kerala.

This phenomenon of rising and falling influence has prompted observers to point out that a strategy of force is only partly productive but over time Naxal influence shows signs of blooming once again. Of late, the government is trying to inject a socio-economic element by a policy of clear, hold and develop those areas currently under Naxal jurisdiction and thereby, showing the flag of governance over the disputed territory. As expected, the Naxals have targeted road development parties and blown up or shot down those who advocated this policy and whatever little development that the government has managed to execute could not yield results. **The Inaugural Edition of Defence and Security Alert (DSA) was focused on the Red Terror highlighting the increasing Menace of Naxalism in the country in October 2009.**

Left Wing Extremism has been described as the single most dangerous threat to internal security of the nation. There are rural and urban elements involved which together have managed to keep governments in the centre and the states in a state of imbalance.

As has been pointed out by our experts, the overlap of spheres of influence of the Naxalites with likeminded political / subversive elements with bases in countries inimical to India adds a foreign dimension to the threat posed to regional security as well. This conjunction with external elements has consequences for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Indian nation-State.

The fact is that development cannot happen in small timeframes. Trying to protect and expand the gains of development requires manpower that is mindful of the socio-economic travails of the local population; most of whom are tribals and are caught within the pincers of the State machinery and the Left Wing Extremists.

This edition is being published to bring attention of all the policy- and decision-makers handling the Naxal problem in the central and the various state governments to secure the innocent people and control the wastage of our resources of security apparatus. Our subject experts have tried to highlight the genesis and reasons of the Naxal menace and possible solutions to control and counter it at the earliest

I am sure that this edition will be an eye-opener for all the concerned.

Jai Hind!

Pawan Agrawal
 CEO - DSA

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