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Contemporary Naxal Movement in India New Trends, State Responses and Recommendations

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Abstract

This paper makes an attempt to map the Maoist conflict in its present state of affairs and while describing its present manifestations, the past links have always been revisited. The paper also attempts to systematically decode the Maoist strategies of continuity and discontinuity. Broadly speaking, this paper has four segments.

The report draws a broad outline of the contemporary Maoist conflict, identifies contemporary trends in the Naxal Movement, critiques the responses of the state strategies and finally provides policy recommendations.

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Contemporary Naxal Movement in India

New Trends, State Responses and Recommendations



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Continuity and discontinuity, though contradictory, have so far remained as inseparable characters of the Maoist conflict in India. In terms of the Maoist conflict, the past few years have been confusing. While 2010 was the bloodiest when compared to the previous year, recording an upward trend in Maoist violence, the subsequent years witnessed significant decline. (Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI). Many attribute this reversal of Maoist violence to the success of sustained efforts by the security forces, but others believe this to be a strategic move by Maoists for using this period for recruiting, recuperating, striking new alliances and looking for newer ways of raising funds and acquiring weapons.

MILITARIZATION & EXPANSION

Certain strategic goals are deep rooted within CPI (Maoist) right from its inception but the past few years too have witnessed CPI (Maoist) coming up with newer tactics to meet the need of changing time. Militarization and expansion have always been the core areas of Maoist modus operandi. If militarization was responsible for the rise in the violence graph of the Maoist movement, their expansion saw several newer geographic areas and people being added into the Maoist fold.

At times, it may look appear that the Maoists have sacrificed former for the later but that has never been the case. True, during the past couple of years, many CPI (Maoist) top leaders were either eliminated or put behind the bars; this has its own impact on the course of the movement. But, the Maoists with their various acts too have proved that they may be down but they are still a force to reckon.

On the other hand, the past few years have also noticed twists in the government handling of the Maoist issues. While at one point it was noticed that an over enthusiast Union Home Ministry pushing through its maiden anti Maoist strategy of 'clear, hold and develop', the April 2010 incident of Chintalnad in Chhattisgarh which saw the killing of 76 security personnel significantly altered the government's stand on 'area domination'.

While security and development continues to be crucial to all the government sponsored anti - Naxal policies and strategies, capacity building and containment of Maoist violence are two other objectives of the government. As early as 2006, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh branded the Maoist threat

to be the single largest internal security problem of the nation. (PM's Speech, 13 April, 2006)

As per the available statistics 3,607 persons including civilians and security forces were killed in the Naxal violence between 2008 and 2012. (Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI) This is no simple Mathematics because it means more than double the deaths reported from Jammu & Kashmir and north-eastern states collectively during the same period. On the other hand with the likes of Arundhati Roy branding Maoists as Gandhians with Gun, (Roy, 2010) Naxalism has also this distinction of being viewed from the looking glass of prevalent injustice and oppression in the society.

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What reasons have kept this movement alive for a period of about over four decades? Despite all the tall claims made by successive governments, people in the Naxal infested regions continue to lead a miserable life. The metamorphic growth of violence and the inability of the State to come out with a well thought strategy have entirely paralyzed the rural administration in the Naxal-infested regions. The Maoist movement influences political process, especially the electoral process, though it offers a strategy of negation of the same political process in its avowed methods since its inception in 1968. From a socio-political movement to the single largest internal security problem of the nation, the Maoist transformation has indeed been phenomenal.

States	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths
Andhra Pradesh	92	46	66	18	100	24	54	9	67	13
Bihar	164	73	232	72	307	97	316	63	166	44
Chhattisgarh	620	242	529	290	625	343	465	204	369	109
Jharkhand	484	207	742	208	501	157	517	182	479	162
M.P	35	26	1	0	7	1	8	0	11	0
Maharashtra	68	22	154	93	94	45	109	54	134	41
Odisha	103	101	266	67	218	79	192	53	171	45
U.P	4	0	8	2	6	1	1	0	1	0
West Bengal	35	26	255	158	350	256	92	45	6	0
Other States	14	4	5	0	4	0	6	1	8	0
Total	1591	721	2258	908	2212	1003	1760	611	1412	414

Table: State-wise extent of naxal violence during 2008 to 2012

Source: Naxal Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India

I

NAXAL MOVEMENT: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

“Revolutions never proceed in a straight line. The history of all successful revolutions are a proof to this. The path is zigzag, there are ups and downs, there is victory and failure ; repeated a number of times before the final victory. Of course, there is no final victory until the stage of communism is reached.” (30 Years of Naxalbari) This statement, believed to be drafted by some senior leaders of erstwhile PWG, explains the state of affairs within the contemporary Naxal Movement.

A. ESCALATION AND DE-ESCALATION OF MAOIST VIOLENCE

Violence, as a technique of the Naxal movement was right there from the beginning, courtesy Charu Mazumdar’s Annihilation Doctrine. (Mazumdar, 1970) From 2003 up to 2010, the Maoist violence has been increasing particularly during 2009-10. Those years witnessed extraordinary rise in the number of Maoist related incidents and fatalities. However, the past two years have witnessed considerable drop in the number of Maoist related fatalities.

What are the reasons which could be attributed to the extraordinary rise of Maoist violence in the country? The answer to the question holds key to crack many of the Maoist riddles. Equally important is to understand what could be the possible reasons for the sudden and significant de-escalation of Maoist violence in the past two years.

Many believe that the Operation Green Hunt, (The Hindu, 6 February 2010) as a reason behind the escalation of Maoist violence. In 2008, P. Chidambaram took over as the Union Minister of Home Affairs and 2009 witnessed general elections. As Chidambaram retained the Home ministry in the second edition of UPA, 2009 witnessed the formalization of GoI’s first ever interstate military offensive against the Maoists. Maoists also responded to this changed strategy with an increase in the number of incidents and casualties.

Decision makers and strategists within the government attribute this to be a part of the successful implementation of their long term agenda. This is what the then Home Secretary of India had to say on the escalation of Maoist violence in 2010:

“If you see the violence profile of the left wing extremism itself, it has been going up year after year. Last year was possibly one of the bloodiest years and our estimate is this year it is only likely to go up whether we like it or not. Because we will no longer allow this policy of continued expansion by the Maoists to continue unabated and the State has now decided that this must stop and we will take back areas which we have lost. We are in one sense taking back those areas and much of the shouting and violence which is going on is because some of the areas we have, in fact, started to take back.” (Pillai, 2010)

On the other hand, the Maoists have a different version. Prasad, an influential member of the Andhra Orissa Border State Committee of the CPI (Maoist)

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considers that the Naxals have been working on a systematic strategy to increase their influence, power and area of operation. He said the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) should be transformed into a People's Liberation Army (PLA) for which a liberated zone was necessary. PLGA formations were being developed to achieve this target and it had also carried out "mobile" war by carrying out raids on targets at faraway places, by mobilising its armed cadre from different parts and taking assistance from the people along the way. (The Hindu, 8 December 2010) This statement underlines that the Maoists are preparing to enter in to another stage of their revolutionary war. The call for transformation of PLGA in to PLA underlines a tactical shift in Maoist strategy.

Opinion may vary, but increased number of deaths among the security forces during 2009-10 seriously question the rationale of the Operation Green Hunt. The security forces deployed to carry out the Operation Green Hunt were certainly on a disadvantageous side in the absence of real time intelligence and jungle warfare training. This period 2009-10 witnessed some of the deadliest attacks on the security forces meticulously and mercilessly executed by the Maoists; the worst being the killing of 76 security personnel in Chintaland in Chhattisgarh.

Another reason for the increased Maoist Violence during 2009 - 2010 was their ability to penetrate in to people's resistance movements. Lalgadh in West Bengal is a clear example where the focused infiltration by the Maoist forces in to the tribal movement enabled them to inflict maximum damages to the security forces. West Bengal registered 26 deaths in 2008, while 158 and 256 deaths in 2009 and in 2010 respectively .

Opinions also differ regarding the decline of Maoist violence during 2011-12. Many attribute this to the success of sustained military operations against the Maoists since 2009. Undoubtedly in the recent years the CPI (Maoist) suffered huge losses in terms of killings and arrest of some of its top leadership; however, the relative calmness can not be seen as withdrawal symptom. Although 2011-12 reported lesser number of Maoist related incidents and casualties as compared to 2009-10, the number still remained high compared to incidents reported in northeast and J&K during the same period.

Some incidents orchestrated by the CPI (Maoist) during 2011-12 suggest that they deliberately avoided direct confrontations with the security forces, but also never missed an opportunity to showcase their supremacy over the government forces. The January 8, 2013 incident of Latehar (NDTV, January 2013) again brings back the violent memories of 2010. Of course it is too early to make a prediction but it proves that the Maoists have never compromised over the issue of use violence for their so called 'People's War'.

B. CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP & ITS IMPLICATIONS

Past few years have witnessed significant loss of cadre and leadership by the CPI (Maoist) and this has been a major concern for them. Politburo, the highest decision making body of its organizational structure had originally 16 members of which 2 have been exterminated, while 7 are in custody. As of now the Politburo is left with just Muppala Lakshman Rao @ Ganapathy, the party

General Secretary, Prashant Bose@ Kishan Da, Nambala Keshavarao @ Ganganna, Mallojula Venugopal Rao @ Bhupathi, Katakam Sudershan @ Anand, Malla Raji Reddy @ Sathenna and Misir Besra @ Sunirmal; all of them are undercover but active.

Similarly out of the 39 member Central Committee which also includes the Politburo; 18 have been neutralized, 5 killed and 13 are in custody. Those killed include Sande Rajamouli, Wadkapur Chandramouli and Patel Sudhakar Reddy, Azad and Kishenji. Among those arrested include Sumanand Singh alias Sumanda, Kobad Ghandy alias Rajan, Sridhar Krishnan Srinivasan alias Vishnu, Balraj, Chintan, Varanasi Subrahmanyam alias Sukanth alias Srikanth, Vijay Kumar Arya alias Yashpal alias Jaspal and Jantu Mukherjee alias Sahebda alias Ajay. (Independent Sources)

The most fatal blow that the CPI (Maoist) suffered in recent past was the death of legendary Cherukuri Rajkumar @ Azad and Malojula Koteswara Rao @ Kishen Ji, who were considered to be the voice and face of the Contemporary Maoist Movement in India. (Kujur, IPCS, 2011) As per their own estimates, the Maoists have lost at least 150 of their leaders at various levels just within the past few years. The most recent of these losses was Mohan Vishwakarma, a senior member of the Maoist's Central Technical Committee and Technical Research and Arms Manufacturing Unit, who was arrested in Kolkata (West Bengal) on July 26, 2012.

Past few years have also witnessed large number of Maoist cadres either being arrested or surrendered in different parts of the country. As per the available Statistics, 905 Maoists have been arrested in 2012, in addition to the 1003 arrests of 2011, 1281 of 2010 and 836 of 2009. Similarly, 414 CPI (Maoist) cadres had surrendered in 2012, as against 227 in 2011, 150 in 2010 and 73 in 2009. (South Asia Terrorism Portal)

All the recent losses definitely have its impact on the course of Maoist movement. This is also one of the reasons for the significant fall in the volume of the Maoist violence. West Bengal saw an extraordinary upsurge in Maoist violence under the leadership of Kishenji. His killing has largely left the movement clueless which subsequently weakened the impact and the base of the movement in the state. Maoists know this and this realization is evident from one of their recent press statements: *Our failures and shortcomings in studying the deceptive strategy of the enemy and taking up counter tactics by understanding the tactics taken by them to wipe (out) our leadership and subjective forces as part of that strategy are reasons behind the serious losses we are facing.* (People's March, 2012)

The above realization has its own implication. After the death of Azad, managers of India's counter Maoist operations were jubilant in believing that his death would stop the electrifying Maoist propaganda war. But it was not the case and Mallojula Venugopal, the brother of slain Maoist leader Kishenji swiftly moved into the shoes of Azad to become the official spokesperson of the party. (The Times of India, 26 November 2011) Similarly the death of Kishenji was a major blow to CPI (Maoist) particularly in Bengal - Odisha - Jharkhand region; there may not be another Maoist leader of his stature but the party has already nurtured a second level leadership that can take control in the event of a major setback.

There are experienced leaders like Prashant Bose alias Kishanda, Katakam Sudershan, Nambala Kesava Rao, Kadari Satyanarayana Rao and Ramakrishna who have now swiftly positioned themselves to oversee the course of Maoist Movement. Politburo members Malla Raji Reddy and Misir Besra, who were arrested by the police, have rejoined the organization after escaping the police net. The crisis of leadership faced by the CPI (Maoist) cannot be ignored, but the real strength of this guerrilla organization lies with a large number of leaders who have not yet appeared and are unknown. While government measures its success on the elimination or arrest of the known figures, Maoists do have a strong network of unknown figures who can step in if the situation warrants.

The crisis of leadership faced by the CPI (Maoist) cannot be ignored, but the real strength of this guerrilla organization lies with a large number of leaders who have not yet appeared and are unknown. While government measures its success on the elimination or arrest of the known figures, Maoists do have a strong network of unknown figures who can step in if the situation warrants.

C. INTER ORGANIZATIONAL AND INTRA ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

The most prominent effect of the crisis of leadership has been the rising dissent within the CPI (Maoist) and creation of several new fractions within the broad tradition of Maoism. As per the available statistics, Jharkhand has seen emergence of at least eight splinter groups in the recent past; most prominent among them being the Tiritiya Prastuti Committee (TPC), the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI), and the Jharkhand Jana Mukti Parishad (JJMP). (The Telegraph, 18 January 2013) Inter organizational and intra organizational feud apart, the cycle of competitive violence has sucked entire Jharkhand which now is grappling to tackle the Maoist violence from multiple fronts. The internal friction between various rival LWE groups in Jharkhand is the principal reason for the alarming Maoist violence in the state.

Recently the Telugu leadership of CPI (Maoist) came under severe attack from the top Odisha Maoist leader Sabayasachi Panda. On 1 June 2012, Panda wrote two letters to CPI (Maoist) General Secretary Ganapathy, politburo members Prashant Bose, Narayan Sanyal, and other Maoist leaders. In the two letters, which ran upto 39 pages, he leveled serious allegations against the Party leadership of mindless violence, dictatorship, financial irregularity, tribal exploitation, sexual harassment, big brother attitude of the Andhra Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC), discrimination against minorities and Christians and so on. Further, in an audio tape released to the media recently, Panda declared to have severed all ties with the CPI (Maoist) and announced the formation of his Odisha Maovadi Party (OMP). Since then the Maoist Movement in Odisha has been experiencing certain new conflict dynamics which could have serious implications in the future course of the movement.

In an attempt to prove his strength even after his divorce from CPI (Maoist), Sabyasachi Panda's OMP engineered the high profile kidnapping of two Italian nationals, Bosusco Paolo and Claudio Colangelo, on 14 March 2012 from the Kandhamal district of Odisha. Responding to it, the armed cadres of AOBSZC kidnapped the ruling Biju Janata dal legislature Jhina Hikaka on 23 March 2012. Interestingly, in both the cases, the hostages were freed unhurt after hectic negotiations. However, the unfolding of both the events has made it very clear that the Maoist Movement in Odisha is heading towards a stiff battle for turf between the OMP and AOBSZC led by Ramakrishna and Daya. (Kujur, IPCS 2013) Time will testify in whose favour the situation will tilt, but there is

no denying that the ultimate winner will be the Maoist agenda. In all likelihood the conflict between the two would result in more Maoist related casualties, new areas coming into Maoist fold, new bases of popular support, newer issues and all these would again deteriorate the already complicated Maoist situation in the state.

The history of Naxal Movement so far has been the history of conflicts and splits; however, it also represents the history of mergers. Recent happenings within the Maoist movement makes it amply clear that this particular thread of Maoist history still continues into the present trajectory of Maoist Movement in India. In a significant development in June 2012, the CPI (Maoist) decided to call off violence against various Left Wing Extremist (LWE) faction and splinter groups in Jharkhand for three months, an effort largely being viewed as an attempt to unite separate groups fighting for the same ideology. Bihar Jharkhand North Chhattisgarh Special Area Committee (BJNCSAC) spokesman Gopal in a statement categorically said that the decision of unilateral ceasefire was taken to invite the other armed groups working in individual capacity for the common people, to work from a unified and stronger front. "We can set aside our personal differences in ideology for the betterment of common people and when the government is harassing villagers and trying to suppress their movement for neo-democracy; all the groups must understand the need of the hour and join hands". (The Times of India, 25 June 2012)

Inter-organizational and intra-organizational conflicts have been the unique features of this decade long Maoist movement of India. This organizational conflict, has remained an inseparable character of the movement and has resulted in the movement growing in different areas. Because the inter organizational and intra organizational conflict actually smoothens the fulfilment of larger Maoist goal of 'area domination or area wise seizure', at the same the reconciliation process facilitates them to consolidate and in both the cases it's an advantage to the Maoist Movement. It is unlikely that the contemporary Maoist Movement will escape from this dominant trend.

D. THE MAOIST EXPANSION: ONE STEP BACK, FEW STEPS FORWARD

Underneath the dramatic decline in the number of Maoist related fatalities there were several 'behind the scene' developments which gave sufficient indication that the Maoists are certainly working on improving their operational strength. Due to massive deployment of security forces, it may appear that the Maoists have become weak in their traditional support bases. But the Maoist forces are making inroads into several untouched but strategically vital locations.

As of now The CPI (Maoist) has set up a formidable organizational structure in the form of 'Regional Bureaus'. These 'Regional Bureaus' are further subdivided into Special Zonal and State level jurisdictions for co-ordinated political and military mobilization. According to reports, there are at least five regional bureaus, thirteen State committees, two Special Area Committees and three Special Zonal Committees in the country. (Independent Sources)

Inter organizational and intra organizational feud apart, the cycle of competitive violence has sucked entire Jharkhand which now is grappling to tackle the Maoist violence from multiple fronts. The internal friction between various rival LWE groups in Jharkhand is the principal reason for the alarming Maoist violence in the state.

With the formation of its 'Upper Assam Leading Committee (UALC), the 'Look North East Policy' of CPI (Maoist) got a major boost. Although Assam is yet to witness a fatal Maoist strike yet there are reports of Maoist organisational activities in the 22 police stations of upper Assam districts like Tinsukia, Golaghat, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Lakhimpur, Jorhat, and Dibang Valley. Even the Chief Minister of Assam Tarun Gogoi has requested the Prime Minister that seven districts mostly from upper Assam to be included in the list of Integrated Action Plan. (The Indian Express, 20 April 2012)

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The CPI (Maoist) managed to have close fraternal ties with two vital north-eastern insurgent groups namely the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur. In October 2008, the CPI (Maoist) issued a joint statement with PLA in which both reiterated their commitment to "consolidate the mutual understanding and friendship" and to "stand hand in hand to overthrow the common enemy". However, Intelligence agencies maintain that the links between the two had been firmed up in 2006. Since then, the PLA has been assisting the Maoists in procuring Chinese arms and communication equipment via Myanmar. Recently the PLA - CPI (Maoist) nexus case was revealed in a supplementary charge sheet filed by the National Investigation Agency on 21 May, 2012. (The Times of India, 20 December 2012)

Significantly, in Manipur a faction of the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) has now rechristened itself as the Maoist Communist Party of Manipur. The CPI (Maoist) was working on this since quite some time but as of now the Assam-Arunachal border has emerged as another theatre of Maoist activity. Another North Eastern state, Nagaland also witnessed moderate Maoist activity during 2011 and independent sources now declare at least one district from the state as Maoist infested. Instances of Maoist links with insurgent groups such as NSCN-IM [National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah)] to procure arms and ammunitions have come to the notice of the Intelligence Bureau. (Pandita, 2011)

Past few years also have witnessed the CPI (Maoist) giving a concrete shape to its long standing agenda of forming a 'Golden Corridor Committee' to connect the untouched industrial areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Golden Corridor Committee stretches from Pune to Ahmedabad, to connect commercial hubs like Mumbai, Nashik, Surat and Vadodara. Besides, the Red Ultras have planned to expand their movement to Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara and Yavatmal districts of Maharashtra. (The Times of India, 14 December 2011) Since 2011, the CPI (Maoist) has a new thrust to its agenda of grand revival in southern states which was even admitted in the Parliament by the then Minister of state for Home Affairs Sri Jitender Singh. "The CPI (Maoist) cadres, active in the Wayanad district of Kerala have also been known to engage in efforts aimed at establishing a forest route from Wayanad district to Mysore district of Karnataka. The CPI (Maoist) is gradually expanding their activities in these states." (Economic Times, 9 May, 2012)

Although there has been no confirmation about the presence of Malayalis in the PLGA in spite of the reports that the Maoists had raised a few squads comprising Malayalis and they had been operating in the Nilambur-Gudallur area in the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. Reports from Intelligence sources reveal that the Maoists have been exerting particular efforts to set up bases on the tri-

junction of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Telengana is now back again on the Maoist radar and the CPI (Maoist) North Telangana Special Zonal Committee (NTSZC) is now pushing hard for the revival of the naxal movement. Noticeable movement of CPI (Maoist) armed cadres in forest areas of Adilabad, Khammam, Karimnagar, and Warangal districts in the recent times have confirmed the apprehensions that Maoists have begun serious efforts to regain their foothold in areas that had witnessed intense revolutionary activity earlier. (The Hindu, 13 November 2011).

The Maoist grand revival plan in central India got a major boost recently with the CPI (Maoist) forming the 'North Gadchiroli Gondia Balaghat Divisional Committee' comprising of strategically important areas of Gadchiroli, Gondia and Balaghat in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Gadchiroli being a Maoist stronghold, the CPI (Maoist) with the formation of a new Division under the leadership of senior Maoist leader Pahad Singh wants to implement its expansion plan in to other areas of the region. (The Indian Express, 10 December 2012) In 2012 the Maoist prone Odisha Chhattisgarh Border also witnessed the formation of Chhattisgarh-Odisha Border (COB) committee with Maoist leader Malla Raja Reddy being appointed as its first secretary. The committee has been entrusted to oversee the activities of the CPI (Maoist) in the eastern part of the Sukma-Darbha plateau in Chhattisgarh and the forest areas of Odisha along the border of the two states with the Mahasamund-Bargarh-Bolangir division being placed under its direct jurisdiction. In view of heavy deployment of security forces in the Maoist traditional bases of Chhattisgarh and Odisha the creation of COB is likely to facilitate creation of another Maoist base in the line of Abujmad. (First Post)

In recent years, many states of North India have been witnessing considerable amount of Maoist activities. As per the available information the CPI (Maoist) Northern Regional Bureau (NRB) has been entrusted to oversee the revolutionary movement in Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and other areas comprising of Uttar Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The larger game plan of CPI (Maoist) recently became public after the arrest of senior leaders of the CPI (Maoist), including its central committee members Balraj alias B.R. alias Arvind, head of the NRB, and Banshidhar alias Chintan Da. (Frontline, 2010)

Delhi's Maoist connection has always been a matter of private discussions but the arrest of Polit Bureau member Kobad Ghandy on September 20, 2009, revealed the larger Maoist game plan for New Delhi and NCR region. As per the available information, Delhi now has a six member CPI (Maoist) committee which is managing the Maoist state of affairs in Delhi since the past 4 -5 years. Right from 2005, Maoist activities have been continuously reported from places closer to Delhi, such as Jind, Kaithal, Kurukshetra Yamunanagar, Hisar, Rohtak and Sonapat. In June 2009, Haryana police claimed to have arrested eight important Maoists in Kurukshetra, including Pradeep Kumar, the Haryana state secretary of the CPI (Maoist). The state police also claimed that the Maoists have formed a number of front organizations in the state, viz. Shivalik Jansangharsh Manch, Lal Salam, Jagrook Chhatar Morcha, Krantikari Majdoor Kisan Union, Jan Adhikari Suraksha Samiti and Shivalik Jansangharsh Manch. (Ramanna, 2010 & 2011)

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Telengana is now back again on the Maoist radar and the CPI (Maoist) North Telangana Special Zonal Committee (NTSZC) is now pushing hard for the revival of the naxal movement. Noticeable movement of CPI (Maoist) armed cadres in forest areas of Adilabad, Khammam, Karimnagar, and Warangal districts.

which dwells with the strategy of the Maoist revolution in the urban areas. (CPI - Maoist Party Document) The UPP makes a forceful plea for making cities their guerrilla base on the ground that cities are the strongholds of the enemy and have a large concentration of enemy forces. A base inside the enemy strong hold would enable them to infiltrate in to the enemy camp. It is the successful implementation of UPP that past years have witnessed significant Maoist activities in many urban centres more prominently in the capitals and industrial hubs/cities of the country like Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bangaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Patna, Raipur, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh. As far as their urban focus is concerned Maoists certainly are not after short term goals of guerrilla warfare but they are following a long term approach which include among others congealing their existing bases in urban areas, gaining over the industrial working class, trade unions, unorganised labour, employees unions, youth & student bodies and NGOs. In other words the Maoists are looking towards the urban areas to supply them with literate cadres which would form the base of their leadership in the rural areas and which could be used to mobilise the front organisations, media, social activists and human right activists to espouse their cause.

A closer look at the execution of Maoist expansion plans reveal that the Maoist have been working systematically as per their 'Urban Perspective Plan (UPP)' which dwells with the strategy of the Maoist revolution in the urban areas.

While analysing Maoist strengths or weaknesses in terms of their area of operation there is no denying that during past one year or so Maoists suffered heavily in their strongholds of Abujmad (Chhattisgarh), Saranda (Jharkhand), Lalgah (West Bengal) but what is more worrying is that they have added several new territories to their map which do not necessarily fall under the category of conventional Maoist areas. Maoists have always made it very clear that their ultimate political aim is to replace the parliamentary democracy in India and establish their own model of People's Government and for this they need pan Indian presence and they are systematically working towards that goal. And remember they are in no hurry.

E. THE CORPORATE - MAOIST NEXUS: TARGET INFRASTRUCTURE

What started essentially as an agrarian movement, Naxal Movement today has entered in to an era where the Corporate - Maoist nexus has imparted huge impetus to the extortion industry and financial and political muscle of the Maoists. Maoists are often alleged of collecting ransom and protection money from business houses. This nexus has resulted in a stunning parallel economy which in turn is enhancing the armed might and internal and external clout of the Maoists. Due to this, the Maoists have acquired huge financial and political stake in illegal mining.

There are is a dilemma for the corporate houses; if they do not heed to the extortion demands of the Maoists, their personnel, property and the unit itself would be attacked. On the other hand, if the police detect their payments they can be booked. This nexus has malicious security implications for India, both internal as well as external.

F. CPI (MAOIST) & ITS GROWING BONHOMIE WITH THE ISLAMIST TERRORISM

There have reports that the Pakistan based LeT and the CPI (Maoist) have now established a relationship. Even the Chief Minister and Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh on record, have expressed the possibility of such an alliance. "Two LeT operatives attended a CPI-Maoist central committee meeting as observers held sometime in April-May this year. They met in a jungle inside Orissa, close to Bastar." (The Times of India, 10 November 2010)

Adding fuel to the speculations the Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir recently said "While we have no experience with the Maoist insurgency, of late, we find effort being made to build bridges between the Maoists and Naxalites of rest of India with the militants of Kashmir and also some Left-thinking academicians and students in Jammu region as well." (India Today, 19 November 2010) West Bengal Director General of Police (DGP) Naparajit Mukerjee in one of the MHA Review meetings disclosed that the link between the Maoist and the ISI was clear in four districts bordering Bangladesh, including Murshidabad. (NDTV)

In the gruesome Maoist ambush of 8th January 2013 where for first time a dead body was used as human bomb grenades and ammunitions made in Pakistan were among the items that were recovered from the spot of attack. Probably this is the first time that ammunition with Pakistani markings has been recovered from Maoists. Indian Intelligence Agencies in 2011 claimed to have concrete evidence to prove that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has established direct contact with Naxal outfits in India. "The ISI in particular wants Naxals to cause large scale damage to infrastructure projects and industrial units operating in the interior parts of the country where ISI's own terror network is non-existent. The ISI is using its Bangladesh-based operatives to establish contact with the top leadership of the CPI (Maoist). The task has been assigned to a key ISI operative, Mohammed Aslam, who normally operates from Dhaka and Chittagong." (Asian Age, 1 March 2012)

There has also been media reports that Dawood Ibrahim has been trying to get connected with the CPI (Maoist). His intention is to get in to the multi thousand illegal mining trades in the vast areas of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. In one of his interviews the then Home Secretary of India G.K. Pillai admitted, "last year he paid Rs. 25 Lakhs to a Chhattisgarh operative but was coned. He is now trying to use the Maoists in Nepal to touch base with their counterparts in India and offer them arms and ammunitions." (India Today, 6 June 2011)

Indo - Pak relationship, being the most sensitive, it is natural that Indian leadership and think tanks will take a cautious approach on this. Given the fact that the contemporary Maoist literature is very vocal on its support for extremist movement in Kashmir, it is also necessary to view this from the Maoist angle of strategic expansion. Perhaps this is too early to predict anything on Pakistan's interest with Maoist Movement in India but there is no denying that a partnership deal suits the interest of both CPI (Maoist) as well as of Pakistan.

Maoists are often alleged of collecting ransom and protection money from business houses. This nexus has resulted in a stunning parallel economy which in turn is enhancing the armed might and internal and external clout of the Maoists. Due to this, the Maoists have acquired huge financial and political stake in illegal mining.

G. CPI (MAOIST) & INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Maoism in India is altogether a different experience, quite different from that of China and for that matter, Nepal. So far it has managed to sustain relying mostly on indigenous issues and formulas, nevertheless over the years Maoist Movement in India has become a dominant character of the international Maoist current. For any revolutionary movement, international support is a crucial factor and this has been realized by Indian Maoists since long. Although the Government of India so far has not given much importance (at least in public) to Maoist international connections, since 1995, Maoists in India started making contacts with the Maoist groups from Philippines, Turkey, Germany, France, Holland and Italy.

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In March 2012 the then state Minister of Home Affairs Jitendra Singh said “The CPI (Maoist) [has] close links with foreign Maoist organizations in Philippines, Turkey, etc. The outfit is also a member of [the] ‘Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia [CCOMPOSA]”. The Minister further disclosed that “The so-called People’s War being waged by the CPI (Maoist) against the Indian state has also drawn support from several organizations located in Germany, France, Holland, Turkey, Italy, etc.” (The Hindu, 18 May, 2012)

Information available with the Maoist documents reveal that in 1996 Vernon Gonsalves alias Pradeep, a central committee member of the erstwhile CPI-ML People's War (PW) attended the May Day seminar organised in Brussels by the Workers' Party of Belgium (WPB) where he submitted a paper on the armed struggle in India. Impressed with his talk and on being invited by CPI - ML (PW), the WPB chief Bert de Belder visited Nizamabad district, a part of the north Telangana guerrilla zone, to study the armed struggle. The international exposure of Indian Maoists in Brussels facilitated them to establish contacts with the Philippines Communist Party at another seminar, also held in Brussels. In 1998, certain Indian Maoist ideologues were in Germany to attend a meeting of Marxistisch Leninistische Partei Deutschlands (MLPD), the Marxist-Leninist party of Germany. In the same year, Maoists from India sent a representative to a meeting of the International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL) in the Netherlands. After the formation CPI (Maoist) in 2004 it was left to Kobad Ghandy to garner international support for the Maoist Movement in India and it has come out from his interrogations that he too had visited countries like Canada and United Kingdom.

Indian Maoist’s growing international clout got a major boost when the erstwhile PW was made a member of the Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties of South Asia (CCOMPOSA) in 2001. CCOMPOSA comprises of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist factions and parties in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka and till date it has conducted five annual conferences in different locations of South Asia. It provides an important platform of cooperation and collaboration for Maoist forces in South Asia. However, the organization was more or less defunct after the Maoists in Nepal renounced violence and joined political mainstream. The recent expansion mode of CPI (Maoist) too witnessed the reactivation of CCOMPOSA.

In its 5th Annual Conference held in March 2011, CCOMPOSA congratulated CPI (Maoist) for ‘successfully withstanding the state’s counter revolutionary

offensive.' (Maoist Party Document, 2011) This was attended by the representatives from the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and also from the Maoist organizations of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Realignment of Maoist forces in South Asia, particularly the unification bid between CPI (Maoist) and United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) could prove to be fatal as it will give Indian Maoist secure safe passage into Nepal also they will be able to acquire weapons from Nepal. Further the CPI (Maoist) foreign connection became public after the death of Kishenji @ Koteswara Rao. Organizations like Communist Party of Philippines, Association for Proletarian Solidarity - Italy (ASP), Maoist Communist Party of France, Revolutionary Communist Party Canada (PCR - RCP), Partito Comunista Maoista (PCM) - Italia, Struggling Workers Union - Italy, Party of the Committees to Support Resistance for Communism (CARC) - Italy, Socialist Party - Malaysia, Communist Party of the Philippines, ESP International Bureau - Turkey, Communist Party of Greece (ML), and Communist Party of Ecuador sent their condolence and expressed their solidarity with the CPI (Maoist). (Maoist Information Bulletin, 2011)

Clearly CPI (Maoist) is working with its international agenda which could be an added advantage for them in their attempt to take the movement to a higher stage. Maoists realize that their strength lies not with their arms but with their brand of politics and acceptance of their brand of politics depend much on their tactics of visibility and propaganda. Their international connections may not have brought them money or arms but it surely have taken them in to different parts of the world and added to their strength of visibility and strength. CPI (Maoist) knows the importance of international recognition and it surely would work to make itself more acceptable globally and this is a reality that the government needs to wake up early.

II RESPONDING TO THE MAOIST CHALLENGE: GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIES

Responding to the Maoist violence has not been easy for the policy makers. Given the complex nature of the problem, it requires sound political mind along with a compassionate heart unbiased of ideological considerations. Past few years have witnessed hectic parleys at the government level for the evolution of a grand anti Maoist strategy. For long, the rhetoric of all anti naxal programmes were deep rooted with a fallacious law and order approach.

In May 2006, the Planning Commission appointed an expert committee headed by D Bandopadhyay, along with Prakash Singh, former DGP of Uttar Pradesh and an expert on Naxal issues, Ajit Doval, former director of Intelligence Bureau, BD Sharma, a retired bureaucrat and activist, Sukhdeo Thorat, UGC chairman and K Balagopal, a human rights lawyer, as its members to study and address the causes of 'Discontent, Unrest and Extremism.' The committee in its report made a forceful plea to make a departure from the usual ways of looking at Naxal conflict and instead suggested to address the development related issues in order to have a long term solution to the problem. (Kujur, IPCS 2008)

On the other hand, it was also difficult for the government to ignore the increasing violence graph of CPI (Maoist) and physical loss of country's territory

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to the Maoists. After imposing a ban on CPI (Maoist) in 2009, the Government of India set tones for a coordinated approach against the Maoists. The Ministry of Home affairs (MHA), the Government of India has emerged as the principal state actor in the Maoist Conflict. Under the leadership of the MHA, the government has now devised an integrated approach combining security and development in order to defuse the Maoist crises. It was a conscious decision at the Government level to go beyond the traditional law and order approach. The Government of India has taken a stand that the governments of the affected state will deal directly with the issues related to the Left Wing Extremism in their state while the Union Government will monitor, coordinate and supplement the efforts of the states. .

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A. TALE OF TWO STRATEGIES: 'CLEAR, HOLD AND DEVELOP' & 'CONTAINMENT OF VIOLENCE'.

US does not have a history of Maoist insurgency nor does India use its Army for its counter naxal operations but still the mandarins of India's internal security strategies decided to take a leaf from the U.S Army Counter Terrorism Handbook before launching their grand anti-Maoist offensives of 'Clear - Hold & Develop' in 2009. Chapter 5 of the US Army Counter Terrorism Handbook elaborately discusses the counter insurgency approach of Clear, Hold and Build.

Of course, there is nothing wrong in referring to the U.S model but it should be done in a realistic manner. Clearly, the Union Government focused on the objective part on which the U.S handbook says "Create, secure physical and psychological environment, establish firm government control on populace and area, gain the populace's support" but it clearly missed the crucial strategic aspect of the CHB which as mentioned in the US Handbook is "To create success that can spread, a clear - hold - build operation should not begin by assaulting the main insurgent stronghold". (US Army Counter Insurgency Hand Book)

The way the security forces had to face setbacks after the launching of this ambitious interstate military offensive, it is clear that not much of ground work was done and was more of an adventurous design far from the ground reality. The statement by the then Union Home Secretary G.K. Pillai, on October 12, 2009, pitifully highlights government's farsightedness over the whole issue of LWE. "We hope that literally within 30 days of Security Forces moving in and dominating the area, we should be able to restore civil administration there." (The Hindustan Times, 10 October 2009)

Subsequent events that followed the launch of this ambitious offensive, also saw finest display of guerrilla warfare by the CPI (Maoist). Handicapped by the lack of real time intelligence and experience in jungle warfare, the security forces had to suffer severe losses. The high number of casualty among the security forces forced the government to rethink its strategy of 'area domination' which subsequently led the government to follow a cautious approach and focus more on 'containment of violence'.

The low degree of violence witnessed during 2011 and 2012 should not be misinterpreted with the success of the changed strategy of 'containment of

violence', because given the Maoist experience in India; it has crossed the stage where focus should be on the containment of violence rather a sound strategy based on past experiences and present realities backed by intelligence inputs is the need of the hour to provide a long term solution to the problem of Maoism. Of course there is a positive aspect which has come out of the Chidambaram's 'Doctrine of Aggressive Prolonged Area Domination'.

In the past it has often been observed that initial security advantages are nullified primarily because, upon the withdrawal of the security forces from the affected area and the subsequent slow movement of the State machinery to take position and possession, enables the Maoists to quickly reassert their influence and regroup to mount a fresh offensive in the future, resulting in a never ending cycle of violence interrupted by short periods of peace. Hence, the presence of security forces till the time the State machinery is activated fully is a strategy that can have considerable positive impact in handling the crisis of Maoist movement.

B. UNION GOVERNMENT'S SECURITY CENTRIC INTERVENTIONS

The security related interventions of the Union Government has several aspects to it.. Specifically, it includes police modernization, security related expenditure, deployment of Central Para Military Forces, raising of Indian Reserve battalions, Deployment of CoBRA Battalions, CIAT schools, Scheme for Special Infrastructure, Recruitment in the Central Armed Police Forces, and Fortification of Police Stations. Police Modernization in the context of Left Wing Extremism needs to include professional and credible policing along with intelligent institutions in its agenda of Police Modernization.

Although the MHA Annual Report, 2011-12 voices concerns over the poor performance of Police Modernization in the Maoist infested states but surprisingly it too fails to include these as the key elements of Police Modernization. Under the Security Related Scheme, the Government of India released a sum of Rs. 315.17 Crores during 2010 -11 while the budget estimate of Rs. 250 crores has been provisioned in 2011 - 12. 74 battalions of CAPFs and CoBRA teams are currently deployed for assisting the state police in the Maoist infested states.

In 2011, the Government approved raising of ten new Specialized India Reserve Battalion for the Naxal affected states between 2011 - and 2014. A sum of Rs. 114.52 crore has been released by the Union Government under the scheme of Special Infrastructure for the LWE affected states. Under the scheme of fortification of police stations, the Union Government so far has released Rs. 110 crore to the Maoist infested states. (Annual Report 2011 - 12, MHA, GoI) The Government of India in December 2010 announced a set of new guidelines for its Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy applicable to the Maoists and now pushing it hard for its uniform application by all the affected states. The article in its first part discusses the Maoist - foreign link and perhaps the government has started reacting. The Ministry of External Affairs was reportedly compelled to put in place stricter norms for those applying for visa particularly from certain western and northern European nations including Netherlands, Belgium and Nordic countries, as some citizens from these countries allegedly misused their

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visa and indulged in subversive activities. It is learnt that 'Look out Notices (LoN) ' were issued against four citizens from these countries in 2011 for alleged 'subversive' activities in Maoist controlled areas. (Mail Today, 27 July, 2012)

The government initiatives look good on paper but the ground realities suggest something different. Although in 2011 MHA claimed that the police-population ratio had been raised to 176 per 100,000, from a National Crime Records Bureau figure of 133 per 100,000 as on December 31, 2010; the principal Maoist affected States of Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar suffer from endemic deficiencies in their security structures. All these states are facing an acute problem of shortage in IPS officers. In a shocking revelation, the MHA conceded that as many as 46,000 officers and personnel took voluntary retirement from the CRPF between 2007 and September 2011, while another 5,220 officers and personnel resigned from service over the same period. 461 suicides and 64 instances of fratricides were also recorded. Also the MHA noted that the rate of increase in resignations in the CRPF and Border Security Force (BSF) was "alarming", at more than increase 70 per cent in 2011, over 2010. (Sahni, 2012)

In other words, tall claims of significant improvements in capacity in terms of Police modernization, fortification of Police Stations, and training are yet to create a decisive operational impact. India's security experts still need to put their minds together to devise a credible security doctrine which would be able to check the rise and growth of LWE with all its changing dimensions.

C. THE UNION GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT OVERTURES

Development continues to occupy significant space in government's anti naxal strategy while onus is more on capacity building. In a significant decision taken in 2010 the Government of India identified 35 Naxal infested districts from 9 states for special attention on planning, implementation and monitoring of development schemes. As a part of its Focussed Area Approach, it was further decided that special funding and monitoring of the flagship government programmes -the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Forest Rights Act 2006, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana, National Rural Drinking Water Supply Programme, Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan, and Indira Awas Yojana will be done in those districts.

An analysis of the Government of India's Development related interventions in 2011 shows that the government is convinced over its strategy and worked for its continuance while adding certain new elements to it. With the Union Government adding 18 more Naxal infested districts for the implementation of Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in 2011, the total numbers of such districts have now become 78. A sum of Rs. 1, 500 crore was released to the concerned districts during the year 2010-11. Another Rs. 1, 090 crore has also been released in the first part of the year 2011-12. In 2011, the Ministry of Home Affairs recommended Rs. 10, 700 crore for the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways which is implementing the Road Requirement Plan for the Maoist infested districts. The Union Government made provision of funds on a hundred percent grant basis for the LWE infested districts for establishment of

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hostels for Scheduled Tribe girls and boys as well as Ashram Schools in Tribal sub-plan areas.

While implementing the government programmes, the staff on the ground very often were facing problems from the existing forest laws. In a significant decision the Ministry of Environment and Forest announced some relaxation in its provisions to enable smooth implementation of government flagship projects in the forest areas. It allowed the diversion of forest land (up to 5.00 ha) in the Naxal infested areas for activities like schools, dispensaries/hospitals, electrical and telecommunication lines, drinking water, water/rain water harvesting structures, minor irrigation canal, non-conventional sources of energy, skill up gradation/ vocational training centre, power sub-stations, rural roads, communication posts; and police establishments like police stations/outposts/border outposts/ watch towers in sensitive areas and laying of optical fibre cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines. On the other hand the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Member, Planning Commission to look into the aspects of Minimum Support Price (MSP), value addition and marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) in Fifth Schedule Areas. During the financial year 2011 - 12 an amount of Rs. 20 crore has been made available to the Central Armed Police Forces to undertake Civic Action Programme in the Naxal infested states. The Ministry of Rural Development has always been involved with the implementation of development projects in the Naxal infested areas but the Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellowship Scheme and introduction of the ambitious Land Acquisition Bill marked the year 2011 for the Rural Development Ministry.

With all its mega plans and high profile visits, the Union Government may have shown its keenness on resolving the crisis of governance in the Maoist infested areas but as far as the implementation level is concerned the government still has to match its own perception levels. MNREGS, which is portrayed by the government as one of its trump card in Counter Maoist strategy, is marred with corruption charges from almost all the states. As per the information provided by the Sarpanch of village Hitameta Dantewada, about one Crore rupees was spent on four non-existent stop dams, while 122 workers out of the total 145 listed workers never worked at the site. The muster roll even brought back six deceased villagers to life by listing their names under the workers who have collected their wages. As per information provided by a senior IAS officer, nearly 40-50 per cent of all government expenditure in Dantewada is lost in corruption. (Basi & Kumar, 2011) This is just one of the myriads of frauds which are prevalent in NREGS projects. The details released by the MHA regarding the utilization of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) funds till the end of 2011 reveals an altogether dismal picture. Of the 68,173 development projects taken up across the country, only 27,687 have been completed. (Mail Today, 5 February, 2012)

This raises some serious concern over the Developmental aspect of the government's two pronged strategy. All these tailor made ambitious programmes are the result of a consensus at the highest level. Despite the sound development visions, policies and programmes articulated in colourful and expensive development plan, why are there poor implementation of developmental projects and underdevelopment in the vast stretch of Naxal infested regions?

The government initiatives look good on paper but the ground realities suggest something different. Although in 2011 MHA claimed that the police-population ratio had been raised to 176 per 100,000, the principal Maoist affected States of Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar suffer from endemic deficiencies in their security structures.

Perhaps, the answer to this question needs to be properly located in all the strategies aiming at solving the Naxal violence.

III POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Irrespective of casualties high or low, the Maoist Movement never showed any signs of weakness. It suffered some losses in 2011 and in 2012 but at the same time, the government did not succeed in transforming those Maoist losses into its major gain. While estimating the strength and weakness of the Maoists, one needs to tread cautiously to read 'in between' the lines.

Maoism is not going to vanish immediately. But the future of Maoist Movement in India will depend much on the process of change that is now going on within the movement. Maoists know their strength and they really don't expect to win from armed offensives like Operation Green Hunt.

It is a political problem and its solution also lies at the political level. Undoubtedly, there is a problem of coordination and consensus on Maoist issues. There remains a problem between the bureaucrats and political leadership. At the MHA level and at the Chief Minister's Conference level, much exercise is done on the coordination but the government is yet to develop a structure where both bureaucrats and elected representatives can share their understandings and arrive at a consensus on the solution at the ground.

Naxal problem is crucially linked with the problem of underdevelopment. However, these areas need to be secured and then one can go on implementing time bound participatory development projects. Real Development can't take place in an atmosphere of terror and chaos. Human Security is an important aspect of human development.

Land continues to be a powerful slogan for the Maoists, and hence it is necessary to chalk out a national programme on the successful implementation of Land Reforms. Land is a state subject yet the Union Government does have a crucial role to play in motivating the states to implement phase wise land reforms. Given the fact that the Maoists also try to take advantage of the issues pertaining to industrial and mining displacement, it is necessary that the whole process of Rehabilitation & Resettlement (R&R) should be transparent and the process of land acquisition should start only after the details of R&R is placed before and accepted by the displaced people.

For the tribes, displacement does not only mean loss of land but it is something deep rooted with their survival and the survival of their culture, tradition and livelihood. Hence it is necessary that the government should insist the industrial houses (both public and private sector) to make the tribes the permanent beneficiaries of the development projects.

An unfortunate outcome of the Maoist Movement is the collapse of Local Self Governance. In the recent past we have seen a number of PRI members being targeted by the Maoists, it has also resulted in the mass resignation by them. Without getting over-ambitious, the government must work on the

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empowerment and revival of PRIs in the Naxal infested regions as it would give people the test of self governance and in a way minimize the gap between the ruler and the ruled.

The Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) still is considered to be one of the finest pieces of legislation which could do wonders in empowering the rural people particularly the tribes. But the states have considerably diluted the spirit of PESA resulting in the failure to devolve power to the lowest governance structure, the Gram Sabha. This is important primarily because PESA envisages “direct local governance” through the Gram Sabha, which accounts for the smallest unit of the Local Self Government. While State Government's transfer of powers to the Panchayats, has not effectively addressed concerns of the local tribal population. Empowerment- being one of the core issues of Maoist conflict, a real de-centralization in the form of empowering the Gram Sabhas to take key decisions on mining, forest produce, land etc. could help eliminate conflicts and general discontent among the tribes vis-à-vis the Indian State.

Corruption at the delivery level has severely curtailed the impact of all government flagship programmes. This needs to be addressed urgently because a nexus has been formed between the corrupt officials and the Naxals and the public money meant for development is ultimately going in to the hands of Naxals who in the name of underdevelopment are waging a war with the state of India. Corruption to a large extent can be checked if the state governments formulate and follow strict guidelines for the presence of administrative officials and functioning of administrative structure.

Lack of employment is a crucial reason which allows the Naxals to win over the innocent tribal youth. Hence, schemes like MGNREGA should be extended throughout the year in the Naxal infested areas. 'The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006' is yet to give desired results and the government must ensure that the tribes get the legal rights over the land they are living. Civil - Military partnership is very much crucial for the successful implementation of all development projects in the Naxal infested areas.

On the security front, every one should realize that the Police should play the most significant role in establishing a secured environment in the Naxal infested area. Police modernization is one aspect of government's multi pronged approach but at the same time it is grossly neglected. While the states are very vocal on central assistance, it must also be made mandatory for the states to release their share of financial contribution for the purpose on a regular basis. Police modernization must include the crucial elements of recruitment and training.

The states must reduce their dependence on the Special Police Officers (SPOs). Intelligence gathering and Intelligence sharing are two other aspects which must be taken care of instead of launching adventurous operations. The security managers must focus on the centrality of an intelligence-led campaign of erosion against the top Maoist leadership that could secure the internal collapse of the movement in very real time. Of course, Creation of such qualitative and quantitative intelligence assets is not an easy task but it is far more attainable

Despite the sound development visions, policies and programmes articulated in colourful and expensive development plan, why are there poor implementation of developmental projects and underdevelopment in the vast stretch of Naxal infested regions?

than the current flail about to 'clear - hold - develop' the vast territories over which the Maoists have established disruptive dominance.

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