

Development and the spread of Extremism

Assessments of India's internal security challenges take into consideration various threats in various regions, how they are connected- insurgencies, terrorism etc; communalism, international crime syndicates etc.

A succession of high-profile terrorist attacks across India—outside the areas of chronic terrorist and insurgent conflict—through 2008, culminating in the dramatic and devastating attacks in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, created an enveloping atmosphere of insecurity in the country.

Apart from terrorism and insurgency, lesser conflicts—including caste and communal conflicts, as well as criminal disruption—appear to have attained a measure of predictability over the decades. Poor governance and declining standards of administration—including within the areas of security and justice—have been observed to be among the reasons.

In the realm of security, globalisation has produced a whole new range of interactive threats and risks. Globalisation has also led to a blurring of the distinction between external and internal threats.

While it has enormously benefited many, the unequal and often inequitable process of globalization has at the same time marginalized large populations, generating a widening schism between two emerging worlds. Nowhere is the schism more dramatically manifest than in Asia.

India's external environment hardly lends itself to stability, and this is demonstrated with particular urgency by the 2009 Failed State Index. According to the index, 25 of the 60 states most at risk of failure are located in Asia. Significantly, every country that shares India's borders is among those countries listed—Afghanistan ranks 7th; Pakistan, 10th; Myanmar, 13th; Bangladesh, 19th; Sri Lanka, 22nd; Nepal, 25th; Bhutan, 48th; and China, 57th. South Asia is also the new epicenter of global terror—with “Af-Pak” at its core and Bangladesh having an important place. This is the quintessential “bad neighborhood,” arguably “the most dangerous place on earth.”

Extreme uncertainty and instability, consequently, afflict all aspects of South Asia's enveloping geopolitical context. Briefly, the principal elements that compound regional destabilization include:

1. The release of a variety of violent nationalist and subnationalist movements across Asia and Eastern Europe
2. The resurgence of radical political ideologies of mass mobilization, including religious—particularly but not exclusively Islamist—extremism, ethnic fundamentalisms, and Maoism, across wide regions
3. The emergence of “new ways of warfare”—specifically terrorism and sub-conventional wars—and their adoption by both nonstate actors and a number of state entities to secure political goals
4. The proliferation of technological force multipliers and sophisticated weapons and explosives among nonstate groups, facilitated by irresponsible, predatory, and rogue states
5. Widening areas of escalating environmental, economic, resource, and social stresses
6. Rising challenges to state power, the progressive weakening of governments, and widening spheres of non-governance and disorder

Three principal streams of conflict presently dominate the Indian internal security scenario: Islamist extremism and terrorism, left-wing (Maoist) insurgency, and ethnic fundamentalisms and militancy. End-of-year assessments for 2011 indicated that as many as 254 of India's 640 districts are afflicted by chronic conflict variables connected with these various threats. In addition to these theaters of chronic extremism, sporadic attacks have also been executed across the length and breadth of the country, principally by Pakistan-backed Islamist terrorist groups, though now also including at least attack by an incipient extremist group based in Hindutva (the Hindu right wing).

Islamist terrorism, overwhelmingly spawned and supported by Pakistan, finds its principal locus in the north Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, but has seen progressive expansion through terrorist mobilization, subversion, and attacks across the country. As international pressure to decrease terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir mounted on Pakistan, and as domestic circumstances in the country worsened rapidly, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) handlers have found it expedient to increasingly redirect the terrorist groups into areas outside Jammu and Kashmir. A steady stream of Islamist terrorism and subversion has been sustained in widening theaters across India over the past several years, culminating in the startling attacks in Mumbai in November 2008.

The networks and support structures of a multiplicity of Islamist terrorist organizations operating in India have been painstakingly constructed by the ISI and, backed by enormous flows of financial support from West Asia and affluent expatriate Muslim communities in the West, are engaged in a sustained strategy of "erosion, encirclement, and penetration". There is now no doubt that the Mumbai carnage of November 26–29, 2008, was engineered by the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which has been permitted to operate openly in Pakistan under the name Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) since its supposed ban in 2002. In addition to the Lashkar formation, the most significant terrorist groups created by the ISI that operate in India include what can be spoken of as the "Harkat Triad," comprising the Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HuJI), the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), each of which is also linked with the Afghan jihad, the Taliban, and al Qaeda.

There are a number of other Pakistan-based groups operating in India, playing roles of varying significance in the machinery of Islamist terror that has been assembled over the years, including some that have substantial Indian membership. Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) has been involved in terrorist activities—principally as a facilitator for various Pakistan-based groups—since the 1990s, providing a range of services, such as couriers, safe havens, and communication posts for specific terrorist operations or terrorist cells. There has always been an Indian face to terrorism. Terrorism in Kashmir, which has been unambiguously Islamist despite its subnationalist pretensions, was initiated by Indian cadres. Similarly, the 1993 Mumbai blasts were engineered by an Indian organized-crime group, the Dawood Ibrahim gang. Thereafter, groups such as the al Umma, the Deendar Anjuman, the National Development Front, and the Islamic Sevak Sangh, among others, executed a succession of serial blasts throughout the 1990s. Crucially, however, the transition of each of these groups to terrorist activities—and often the very creation of these groups—has been facilitated and supported by Pakistani agencies and actors.

Naxalism

Naxalism refers to militant Communist movement operating in different parts of India under different organizational names. In the eastern states of the mainland India (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha), they are usually known as, or refer to themselves as Maoists while in southern states like Andhra Pradesh they are known under other titles. They have been declared as a terrorist organization under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of India (1967).

The term 'Naxal' derives from the name of the village Naxalbari in West Bengal, where the movement had its origin. The Naxals are considered far-left radical communists, supportive of Maoist political sentiment and ideology. Their origin can be traced to the split in 1967 of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), leading to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Initially the movement had its centre in West Bengal. In later years, it spread into less developed areas of rural southern and eastern India, such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh through the activities of underground groups like the Communist Party of India (Maoist). For the past 10 years, it has grown mostly from displaced tribals and natives who are fighting against exploitation from major Indian corporations and local government whom they believe to be insensitive and indifferent.

Research and Analysis Wing estimated that 20,000 armed cadre Naxalites were operating in addition to 50,000 regular cadres and their growing influence prompted Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to declare them to be the most serious internal threat to India's national security.

In 2009, the Indian Central government announced a new nationwide initiative, to be called the "Integrated Action Plan" (IAP) for broad, co-ordinated operations aimed at dealing with the Naxalite problem in all affected states (namely Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal). Importantly, this plan included funding for grass-roots economic development projects in Naxalite affected areas, as well as increased special police funding for better containment and reduction of Naxalite influence in these areas.

In 2011, the number of Naxal affected areas was reduced to 83 districts across nine states. These conflicts go back to the failure of implementing the 5th & 6th Schedules of the Constitution of India.

Practically all Naxalite groups trace their origin to the CPI(ML). A separate offshoot from the beginning was the Maoist Communist Centre, MCC later fused with the People's War Group to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist). (read ahead)

Ethnic Fundamentalists

Ethnicity-based insurgencies are endemic in India's northeast region, with Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland being the worst-affected states. A ceasefire exists between the government and the two principal insurgent groups in Nagaland, and a negotiated solution is being sought to the half century-old insurgency in this state. Lesser insurgencies afflict Meghalaya, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh. There is a vast proliferation of ethnic insurgent groupings representing progressively narrower tribal interests. A majority of the surviving insurgencies in the region are

“degraded”—large organized criminal operations focusing overwhelmingly on extortion, with little coherent ideological or political content or consistency.

The border-management problem in Northeast India is gigantic. The Bangladesh border—a total of 4,095 kilometers long—is by far the most urgent and intractable crisis. Illegal migration, the existence of terrorist safe havens across the border (many of which have recently been dismantled by the Sheikh Hasina government), the growth and entrenchment of organized criminal gangs and syndicates with powerful political and communal influence and patronage along this border, and a strengthening network of well-funded institutions for the communal mobilization of the migrant community are some of the dangerous trends that counterinsurgency forces are required to contend with in the region.

Emerging Trends

India's development offers one of the most dramatic studies in contrast. Despite the most extraordinary dynamism in certain thriving sectors of the economy amply confirms Michael Renner's phrase that “scarcity and abundance may very well coexist.” To take some examples, India's GDP grew from \$331 billion in 1992 (the first year of reforms) to \$2 trillion in 2013, yet India's current rank in the UN Human Development Index—136th—is abysmal. In the Global Hunger Index, India ranks very low.

There were many Indians on Forbes' 2012 list of billionaires, but 22% of the country's population is BPL (2013 July)

The essential lesson here is that “development” is not a smooth, unidirectional process that benefits all and harms none. Indeed, the processes of development within India mirror the broader disjunctions between a globalizing world order and states and societies that are progressively marginalized by or isolated from the processes of globalization. These disjunctions feed into cycles of local violence and radical mobilization across the ideological spectrum.

One unique driver of ethnic mobilization in India is the appeal to caste and tribal identity. Identity conflicts also have the potential to coalesce into other patterns of conflict, such as the mobilization under the Maoist banner, as has already occurred in many states in India's east, where caste and tribal conflicts have been tapped by the spreading Maoist insurgency. Such patterns of conflict, which simultaneously harness identity and ideology for mass and violent mobilization, could see an extension over the coming decades.

Population, Environment, Ecology, and Resource Conflicts

Environmental stresses and resource crises as a result of population growth, overexploitation of the natural environment, consequential pollution from the irresponsible utilization of resources, and poor resource and waste management, have significant potential for conflict creation. Further, these factors constitute immediate risks in terms of the broader concept of human security, inflicting enormous distress on large populations and directly jeopardizing the country's developmental potential. The declining per-capita availability of fresh water is one of the most urgent concerns in this context.

Rampaging and poorly managed urbanization is creating new and urgent security challenges. Urban vulnerability to political destabilization, terrorism, organized criminal violence, and

administrative disorders has been one of the most underestimated aspects of urban development in India.

It is significant that the rising proportion of the population in urban centers—projected to rise from around 30% in 2011 to 40% in 2020—will not result in any relief in rural India, where the population will increase from 742 million in 2001 to 810 million in 2020. As much as 63% of India's population growth in the first quarter of the present century is expected to be in its most undeveloped states, increasing the share of these states in India's population from 40% to 50%. These are the areas that have demonstrated the most rapid growth of disorder and misgovernance in the recent past. Moreover, the more progressive states of South India have "completed the demographic transition" with very low growth rates of population and an increasing age profile. This could provoke massive migration from the north to these states, and such migrants could take with them the culture of lawlessness and violence that afflicts so many of their states of origin.

Ghettoization has characterized the political economy of urban settlements in India, with ghettos marked by the "concentration of poverty and de-concentration of opportunity." Caste, communal, and class ghettos are a consistent feature of most Indian cities and create the specter of the "gated city" in a tense standoff between sections of its own people. These broad aspects of the city have given rise to escalating trends in crime and a widening sphere of urban terrorism. The Indian city lends itself to terrorism. The sheer size of some Indian cities (Delhi, for instance, has a population greater than 171 of the world's 227 countries), the pervasive and insidious contempt for law, the scant regard for municipal regulations, the absolute anonymity provided by the city's chaos and the lack of a centralized and comprehensive identity system contributed to an air of license and disorder.

At the national level, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is charged with the maintenance of internal security and the responsibility of protecting states from "external aggression and internal disturbances" under Article 355 of the Constitution of India. Responsibility for maintenance of "public order" and "police," under List II of the constitution (the State List), is, however, vested in the various state governments. This division of responsibility has created a fragmented system that has contributed enormously to the evasion of responsibility by both the central government and the states, and an enduring neglect of the internal security apparatus. The Union Government has the constitutional authority to seize control of a state under certain circumstances of a breakdown in public order (Articles 257, 258, 365, and 356), and a national emergency can also be declared under Article 352, if "a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or of any part of the territory thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or armed rebellion."

Despite these apparently sweeping powers, there has been a progressive decline in the central government's capacities to influence states on issues relating to internal security management, despite the very significant central outlays supporting police modernization, the augmentation of state security capacities, and the underwriting of the security-related expenditures of the states. The infirmities of the system were highlighted by the Group of Ministers' 2001 report on internal security, which noted that constitutional, legal, and structural infirmities had "eroded the Union Government's authority to deal effectively with any threat to the nation's security" and called for the "appropriate restructuring of the MHA." The report also underlined the growing incapacity of

state governments to “deal with grave offences, which have inter-state and nation- wide ramifications.”

The lack of sustained investment in and the neglect of the transforming role of the police within a modernizing state system has enormously compromised the capacities, efficiency, and effectiveness of state police organizations. Constant political interference and a subordination of legal mandate to partisan political objectives has undermined the ability of the police to deal effectively with internal security problems.

The infirmity of the states’ internal security apparatuses has resulted in a constant clamor for central assistance and the “paramilitary panacea”—the deployment of increasing numbers of Central Paramilitary Forces (CPMF) in local disorders across the country.

The central government’s MHA presides over a multiplicity of CPMFs, most prominently the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the largest of these forces. The CRPF is a “striking reserve to assist the State/Union Territories in Police operations to maintain law and order and contain insurgency,” and in 2006 it was designated the “lead agency” to respond to terrorism and insurgency in the country.

Other CPMFs that play a prominent role in the more acute aspects of internal security management include the Assam Rifles (strength: 65,290), the Border Security Force (210,261), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (50,326), the Central Industrial Security Force (103,860), the Sashastra Seema Bal (armed border police: 48,934), and the National Security Guard (7,334).

The MHA also supervises India’s principal domestic intelligence agency, the Intelligence Bureau (IB), which operates across the country through its network of subsidiary intelligence bureaus.

The MHA also maintains a range of specialized technical, forensic, training, and research organizations in support of internal security and policing operations for both central and state organizations. In addition, the National Technical Research Organisation, operating under the national security adviser in the prime minister’s office, provides specialized technical intelligence flows to both internal and external security agencies.

The principal instrument for the projection of a coherent Indian framework of internal security management is the centralized Indian Police Service (IPS), which provides the top leadership cadre for almost all central and state police, paramilitary, and intelligence organizations.

In addition to the various central organizations explicitly involved in internal security operations, forces drawn from the 1.1 million-strong Indian Army can also be called “in aid to civil authority” to deal with a wide range of emergencies and crises, including “maintenance of law and order, maintenance of essential services, disaster relief and other types of assistance.”

While the preceding outline of central and state forces and organizations available for internal security management creates an illusion of great strength, the reality is that India is afflicted by an acute crisis of capacity.

The crisis of the police has been widely and repeatedly recognized at the national level, with numerous national and state police commissions calling for sweeping reforms. The Supreme

Court of India finally intervened in September 2006 with a seven-point directive

There is concern whether the police structure today has relevance and validity in the rapidly changing circumstances of the 21st century, with insurgency, sub-conventional warfare, and terrorism—and the rising specters of WMD terrorism and cyber-crime and cyber-terrorism.

Perhaps the most visible and dramatic index of the crisis in policing is the general deficit of manpower in all ranks of the police, both in absolute numbers of sanctioned posts and in the numbers of vacancies that exist against such sanctioned posts. At the level of police leadership, according to the MHA data on the shortage of IPS officers, there is a 28.11% deficiency in the number of IPS officers in position (as of January 1, 2011), against sanctioned strengths, and worse, most states feel that the sanctioned strength is deficient. The overall crisis of manpower in the police is even more acute. According to norms set by the United Nations, a minimum police-to-population ratio of 1 to 450 (222 per 100,000) should be maintained for peacetime policing. Most Western countries maintain ratios well above this minimum standard; for instance, the ratio is as high as 559 per 100,000 in Italy and 465 per 100,000 in Portugal. Significantly, most of these countries have policing needs that are certainly less demanding than those confronting India, where the culture of the rule of law is far from entrenched and virtually all compliance needs enforcement. Yet, India's police-to-population ratio stands at a bare 125 per 100,000.

This dismal picture is, in some measure, balanced out by India's extraordinary growth in the recent past and the economic and political resilience that the country has demonstrated in the face of recurring challenges. Financial resource deficits that threatened the very possibility of resolving the country's many problems are a thing of the past, though a range of other structural impediments persist. There is a real danger, however, that widening spheres of disorder may come to threaten the dynamic core on which India's successes and future potential are founded.

Nevertheless, a range of factors constrain the scope of extremism in India and favor—although they cannot guarantee—broad stability. Critically, while cyclical conflagrations and radicalization on the fringes—variously supported by external powers and internal elements—remain a reality, extremism fails to secure sufficient traction among the masses to present a coherent and national challenge to the state. The reasons are many. Chief among them is a cultural proclivity to nonviolence, or at least a rejection of extreme violence. The constitutional edifice, for all its political neglect, is extraordinarily inclusive. Democratic processes, imperfect and even occasionally perverse as they are, do create the spaces for the articulation of grievances and the relatively peaceful expression of political discontent. The sheer diversity of the population is a source of manifold frictions, but it also prevents mobilization on a national scale under any single divisive or extremist banner. These and other structural and cultural factors constrain even radical players from their greatest excesses. Thus, for instance, electoral considerations have repeatedly forced the Hindu (majority) Right to accommodate Muslim (minority) concerns. Parties that exploit narrow caste mobilization find it necessary to progressively widen their caste base as their electoral successes open up a larger regional or national platform. Similarly, even where some state agencies have colluded with extremist elements—as, for instance, in the Gujarat riots of 2002—constitutional checks and balances do eventually reassert themselves to bring offenders to some measure of justice.

Deep national, psychological, and civilizational reserves manifest themselves in the face of catastrophic emergencies. Indeed, India has an extraordinary record of defeating a number of the most virulent insurgencies and terrorist movements and of exhausting and outlasting the country's many adversaries. Harnessing complex national reserves to adopt coherent national

perspectives and policies remains a crucial challenge, but it is clear, especially in the wake of the November 26, 2008, attacks in Mumbai and the rising challenge of the Maoist insurgency, that the national leadership now recognizes the core imperatives of response.

Successes in certain spheres—especially in the realms of economic growth and globalization—over the past decade and a half have also fed a surge in confidence, a relative augmentation of competence, and the launch of a wide range of initiatives intended to address the country's cumulative deficits. While the initial impact has been limited, this combination of factors is expected to snowball once it secures a certain critical mass. Crucially, with a vibrant democracy, substantially non-doctrinaire economic perspectives, progressive engagement with modernity and a globalizing order, and a culture of tolerance and pragmatism, the Indian people have positioned themselves on the right side of history. This reality, above all else, warrants the expectation that India will not only endure but flourish.

Excerpts from PM's speech at the CMs meet on internal security in mid-2013(post-Bastar)

Steps taken by the government include strengthening the security apparatus, improving road connectivity in 34 most Left Wing Extremist affected districts, relaxation of norms of various development schemes in the affected areas, and the Integrated Action Plan for 82 selected tribal and backward districts.

In the last couple of years there has been a substantial reduction in the number of incidents and deaths caused by Left Wing Extremist groups and an increase in the number of Naxalite surrenders. But, major violent attacks by Naxalites like the recent one in Chhattisgarh are setbacks that have occurred periodically.

The year 2012 saw a significant improvement in the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Our strategy to prevent cross-border infiltration by militants and our intelligence based counter-terrorism operations in Jammu and Kashmir have resulted in a decline in the level of terrorist violence by about one-third in 2012 as compared to 2011. In fact, terrorist violence parameters in 2012 have been the lowest since the upsurge in terrorist activities two decades ago. The record inflow of tourists and pilgrims during 2012 also points to an improved security situation in the State.

The implementation of several infrastructure projects in Jammu and Kashmir is progressing well. The Himayat and Udaan schemes which aim at providing additional gainful employment to the youth have also achieved a fair measure of success.

The security situation in the North East continues to be complex, with insurgency, extortion and agitations being the main disruptive elements in the hands of the insurgents. However, there has been considerable progress in dialogue with several insurgent and ethnic separatist groups in the North-Eastern region. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with both factions of Dima Halam Daogah of Dima Hasao in Assam. Three Meteì insurgent groups have signed a Memorandum of Understanding in February 2013. Talks with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland are continuing.

The Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) has been set up as an autonomous body in August 2012 to administer the Gorkhaland region and ensure its all-round development. The Centre is committed to providing financial assistance of Rs 200 crore per annum for three years for projects aimed at developing the socio-economic infrastructure in the GTA areas.

GOI is committed to undertaking and bringing to a satisfactory conclusion dialogue with all groups and organizations which are willing to give up violence to seek solutions within the framework of our Constitution. GOI is equally firm in the determination to continue assisting the States of the North-East to enhance their law and order enforcement capabilities, so that the people of the North-East enjoy the normal fruits of democracy and development.

On the front of communalism, there is the increase in number and intensity of incidents of communal and sectarian violence during 2012 as compared to the previous year. Maintenance of communal harmony is critical for our continued growth and prosperity. Crimes against women and children are increasing. We have recently enacted several laws providing stringent punishment for such crimes and more sensitive treatment of victims during investigation and trial. These include the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013; The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.

We also need to put in place institutional mechanisms to ensure the safety and security of women and children, particularly in the urban context. Such mechanisms include sensitization of police personnel, particularly at levels with which the victim comes into contact, setting up dedicated help-lines, measures for safety at the work place, and so on.

Capacity building and modernization of State Police Forces are absolutely essential for meeting the emerging challenges to internal security which range from terrorism to urban policing. The Centre is supporting States in this regard. The scheme for modernization of State Police Forces has been extended for a further period of five years with a total outlay of about Rs. 12,000 crore. An amount of Rs. 433 crore has been additionally provided for Mega City Policing in the six cities of Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.

Goi is committed to improving border management and coastal security. Greater focus and priority than before is being given to the work of fencing and construction of additional Border Outposts along the India-Bangladesh border, the construction and up-gradation of roads along the India-China, India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders as well as the development of integrated check posts on the India-Pakistan and India-Nepal borders. We are also continuing implementation of the Border Area Development Programme and of Phase II of the Coastal Security Scheme. Time has now come to view the challenges of terrorism, communal violence and Left Wing Extremism in a holistic manner.

Extremism

It is any ideology (particularly in politics or religion), considered to be far outside the mainstream attitudes of a society or to violate common moral standards. In liberal societies, individuals or groups that advocate the replacement of democracy with a more authoritarian regime are labelled extremists; in authoritarian societies, those who espouse liberal ideals are labelled as extremists by the ruling class or government.

Extremists are usually contrasted with centrists or moderates. Political agendas perceived as extremist often include those from the far left or far right, as well as radicalism or fundamentalism..

The term "extremism" is usually pejorative, but it is sometimes used in a purely descriptive sense, referring simply to a viewpoint that is inconsistent with existing norms, rather than implying that the extremist position constitutes a threat (to the society, government, mainstream morality, etc.).

Fourth-generation warfare (4GW)

It is a conflict in which one of the major participants is not a state but rather a violent non-state actor.

AFSPA

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), was passed 1958, by the Parliament. It grants special powers to the armed forces in what the act terms as "disturbed areas" in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. It was later extended to Jammu and Kashmir as The Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers in 1990.

The Republic of India has seen a history of insurgency in the states of Kashmir, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Each of these states are in regions that border with Pakistan or China - countries which India has border disputes with.

State or central government can exercise the power to declare areas as being disturbed following which armed forces could be deployed. For declaring an area as a 'disturbed area' there must be a grave situation of law and order on the basis of which Governor/Administrator can form opinion that an area is in such a disturbed or dangerous condition that use of Armed Forces in aid of civil power is necessary.

According to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), in an area that is proclaimed as "disturbed", an officer of the armed forces has powers to:

- To arrest without a warrant anyone who has committed cognizable offences or is reasonably suspected of having done so and may use force if needed for the arrest.
- To enter and search any premise in order to make such arrests, or to recover any person wrongfully restrained or any arms, ammunition or explosive substances and seize it.
- Stop and search any vehicle or vessel reasonably suspected to be carrying such person or weapons.
- Any person arrested and taken into custody under this Act shall be made over to the officer in charge of the nearest police station with the least possible delay, together with a report of the circumstances occasioning the arrest.
- Army officers have legal immunity for their actions.

In 2004, in the wake of intense agitation and the indefinite fast undertaken by Irom Sharmila, Central Government set up a five-member committee under the Chairmanship of Justice B P Jeevan Reddy, former judge of the Supreme Court. The panel recommended that the law be scrapped.