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India's Naxalite Insurgency: History, Trajectory, and Implications for U.S.-India Security Cooperation on Domestic Counterinsurgency

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Cover: Hard-line communists, belonging to the political group Naxalite, pose with bows and arrows during protest rally in eastern Indian city of Calcutta December 15, 2004. More than 5,000 Naxalites from across the country, including the Maoist Communist Centre and the Peoples War, took part in a rally to protest against the government's economic policies (REUTERS/Jayanta Shaw)

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Institute for National Strategic Studies
Strategic Perspectives, No. 22

Series Editor: Laura J. Junor

NDU Press

National Defense University Press
Washington, D.C.
October 2016

First printing, October 2016

The author thanks Alex Johnson, Brittney Laufer, and Graham Vickowski for their research, administrative, and technical assistance during the composition of this paper.

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Executive Summary

The pace of U.S.-India defense cooperation over the past decade—and especially the past 2 years—has been unprecedented and impressive in many areas. These areas include defense technology cooperation, the discussion of a framework for military-to-military agreements, and the expansion of joint military exercises. U.S.-India defense cooperation, however, will remain limited in critical areas where India's historical independent interests remain firm. Among these areas of Indian reserve include strategic autonomy, the imperatives of domestic federalism, and the preference for a go-slow approach toward redressing civil unrest. Attempts by U.S. policymakers to press harder in these areas will likely prove counterproductive.

India's long-running class-based, economic insurgency—the Naxalite insurgency (or Community Party of India [CPI]-Maoist insurgency)—is a case study in which external security partnerships will remain limited, if not mostly unwelcomed, in New Delhi. Known as "the greatest domestic security threat faced by India" from 2006 to 2011, the Naxalite insurgency has receded and largely been contained—albeit still far from eliminated—as of 2016. India's security response to the Naxalite insurgency from 2004 to 2015 demonstrates that New Delhi will prefer limited interaction with external security partners when addressing matters of domestic counterinsurgency.

With this insight, U.S. policymakers should not expect that New Delhi will accept direct assistance for its domestic counterinsurgency units in the foreseeable future, and the United States should not press India too hard on this issue. Washington would be ill-served by an Indian backlash to such unwelcomed assertiveness. Any Indian backlash might curb or reverse far more important bilateral military-to-military interactions including joint maritime security activities in the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific, bilateral interoperability exercises that improve Indian confidence and capabilities against potential Chinese encroachment in disputed Sino-Indian border areas, and military-to-military collaboration in global counterterrorism intelligence-sharing and operations. The United States instead should focus on not only its offers of major near-term bilateral military assistance for security cooperation but also, to the extent that Indian sensitivities will allow, actions by China that threaten mutually held security concerns in New Delhi and Washington.

Introduction

This paper frames the contours of the recent and ongoing expansion in U.S.-India security ties. Then it briefly sketches the trajectory of the Naxalite insurgency through its first two phases and then focuses on the factors that made its third phase—from 2004 to the present—such a serious security challenge. The paper highlights the unique domestic factors that allowed the Naxalite rebellion's rise to the status of India's most significant internal security challenge from 2007 to 2010. It also identifies those domestic factors that enabled effective counterinsurgency actions beginning in 2011 and effective containment of the threat by 2014. After indicating the kinds of bilateral security assistance offered by the United States to India in recent years, the paper indicates the limited appeal of outside assistance to India in the domestic counterinsurgency arena and assesses why India's self-selected counterinsurgency partnership limitations remain firmly in place. It concludes with some lessons learned for U.S. policymakers in terms of the opportunities and limitations for working with India in matters of domestic insurgency, advising that these limitations make sense on many levels. It also asserts that India's limitations should be respected in Washington and Honolulu to avoid backlash from New Delhi. Any such backlash might threaten far more important U.S.-India bilateral interests in which shared maritime and other strategic interests seem to increasingly diverge with those of China and in areas of mutual benefit from global counterterrorism cooperation.

The analysis in this paper is based on 3 years of author research into the unique features of the Naxalite insurgency in India. The research includes field interviews conducted on three visits to India during 2014 and 2015, one of which featured time in Kolkata and West Bengal.

Expanding U.S.-India Security Framework, with Limits

Growing for more than a decade, bilateral defense and security cooperation between the United States and India began accelerating quickly in 2014 and continued into 2016. Much of this acceleration, although not all of it, owed to the tone and tenor of the Indian government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, elected and seated in 2014. Modi's government, which is Indian nationalist with a dynamic economic, diplomatic, and security agenda, followed a decade-long Indian National Congress (INC) government that had become sclerotic in its dealings with the United States and other global partners from 2009 to 2013. The INC government set the table for U.S.-India defense and security cooperation during the mid-2000s, demonstrating a broad-based Indian commitment to improved bilateral relations with the United States after decades

of limited transactions. But the nationalist government of Prime Minister Modi has been driving it forward vigorously.

The ongoing acceleration in broad Indo-American relations has taken many forms, including high diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi made visiting the United States a priority, traveling to America within 4 months of his May 2014 accession to the position of prime minister. Modi then made President Barack Obama the first ever U.S. President bestowed the high honor as chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade in January 2015. During this visit, Obama and Modi signed a historic Joint U.S.-India Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.[1] Modi made a third informal visit to the United States in September 2015, using this historically rapid return to enhance economic relations between the national private and public sectors.[2] The United States has committed to a wide array of economic projects in India featuring public-private innovation, deeper financial cooperation and inclusive digital networks, "smart city" development in selected Indian cities, and support for increasing economic connectivity between India and the states of South and Southeast Asia.[3]

The acceleration of broad bilateral ties has been showcased by the steady increase in defense and security cooperation between the two countries. In June 2016, on a historic fourth visit to the United States and in conjunction with a third bilateral summit,[4] Prime Minister Modi made a joint statement with President Obama declaring India and the United States to be "major defense partners," expressing aspirations for expanded exchange of dual-use technologies and maritime security cooperation.[5] The outcomes from this mid-2016 leadership engagement underscored the fact that there have been noteworthy enhancements in military technology interaction processes, basic military logistics and administrative arrangements, and joint military exercises.

Since 2014, Prime Minister Modi has accelerated the process of bilateral security collaboration on military modernization with emphasis on greater foreign investment in the Indian defense sector than ever before. Modi's government covets American participation in India's defense industry build-out to a degree not seen in the previous Indian government. The United States has worked to expand its 2012 bilateral defense initiative with India known as the U.S.-India Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). Pursuant to President Obama's January 2015 visit for Republic Day, the United States has focused DTTI in pursuit of six major defense technology co-development and co-production efforts. There has been a particular focus on deeper cooperation in the areas of maritime security and maritime domain awareness.[6]

The United States and India also have done serious work on establishing basic framework defense agreements that would enable closer cooperation and collaboration between their

militaries. Throughout 2015 and early 2016, both governments worked hard to develop mutually acceptable text for three critical military-to-military agreements. The Communication and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA), Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), and—perhaps the most consequential of the three—Logistics Supply Agreement.[7] Aimed to move beyond the limited U.S.-India 2002 General Security of Military Information Agreement that underpinned modest U.S.-India defense interactions for more than a decade, the bilateral effort on these documents demonstrated important forward progress. Yet this progress did not beget culmination in formal agreements. Many observers hoped that these arrangements would be ready for signature during Secretary of Defense Ash Carter's April 2016 visit to New Delhi for discussions with Minister of Defense Manohar Parrikar. But Indian sensitivities and complications in language and trust limited the April joint announcement to one confirming that the defense leaders were agreed in principal—but had not yet signed—a modified Logistics Supply Agreement, known as a Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement.[8] It also signaled that both parties must continue to work on "other" agreements to enhance military cooperation and technology transfer. The CISMOA and BECA were not formally mentioned in the final statement of the meeting.[9]

In the area of joint military exercises, the U.S.-India partnership has been expanding. In 2015, India conducted more joint military exercises with the U.S. military than any other in the world.[10] India and United States agreed in 2015 to extend a permanent invitation for Japanese naval forces to participate annually in Exercise Malabar. The United States, India, and Japan held Malabar 2016 in early June in the northern waters of the Philippine Sea, an area close to the East and South China seas, signaling to Beijing that the three nations hold a common interest in freedom of high seas navigation in all areas of the Pacific Ocean.[11]

But the acceleration and expansion of bilateral security interactions come with Indian limitations—ones that must temper U.S. policymaker aims, ambitions, and expectations. While agreeing to participate in the 2016 Malabar exercise with Japan and the United States in the northern Philippines, India firmly declined an offer by the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Harry Harris, to sign on for joint naval patrols with the United States, Japan, and Australia in the South Pacific.[12] India also has remained wary of any firm commitment to a bilateral defense CISMOA or BECA. Despite more than 2 years of bilateral effort, there remains no real progress on the joint development of jet engines or aircraft carrier technologies—both of which are target technologies for joint development.[13] Each of these factors and more demonstrate that crafting a bilateral defense partnership between the United States and India will be a slow process

that requires better understanding of differing critical equities. This process requires sustained, patient leadership in both countries in the face of certain frustrations moving forward.

Scoping Bilateral Security Collaboration Limits: Indian Domestic Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism

The U.S. and Indian militaries have their own detailed and unique experiences in counterinsurgency operations, so counterinsurgency seems a logical focal point for greater U.S.-India defense collaboration and partnership, and in many ways it is. But in other ways, it is not. U.S. policymakers and security analysts should understand the differences.

When it comes to outside assistance and security partnership collaboration with India in its ongoing experiences with domestic insurgency, U.S. policymakers and military leaders must remain aware that India does not—and likely will not—treat U.S. military offers of direct assistance with a warm welcome. India's experiences with its long-running domestic Naxalite insurgency provide a powerful example about the limited scope for U.S. military engagement and the circumspect manner in which any U.S. security assistance must be approached with New Delhi. The lessons about context, tenor, and tone found in the example of the Naxalite insurgency over the past 10 years demonstrate that the United States is a better partner for India when remaining at distance, as New Delhi deals with its unique domestic insurgency challenges.

India's Approach to Domestic Insurgency

Over the past 60 years, India has confronted three major domestic insurgencies.[14] In Jammu and Kashmir, disaffected Muslim groups and unsatisfied local populations have contested India's so-called occupation of its territories on the southeastern side of the Line of Control. India's northeast has undergone multiple, overlapping waves of tribal, socioethnic-based insurgent movements since the mid-1950s. These northeastern separatist insurgencies have ebbed and flowed as Indian military and political approaches to their grievances eliminated some and catalyzed others. India also has been confronted with economic class–based violence and armed confrontation in its eastern regions, violence referred to as a Naxalite or Maoist insurgency.

Numerous Indian analysts, and some outsiders, argue that India has among the best records in the world when combating insurgencies.[15] The claim is debatable on many levels. Yet it does accurately reflect that India has persistent experience with a variety of domestic insurgencies over a considerable period of time. Official Indian counterinsurgency doctrine formally espouses a population-centric strategy focused on winning "hearts and minds."[16] A more detailed examination of India's record reveals that India often does take a political

approach in combination with a military one when facing domestic insurgencies. However, India's political approaches often are less about hearts and minds and more often feature extended periods of national-level tolerance of state- and local-level politician and police leadership manipulation of insurgent groups. Often this manipulation is in the pursuit of regional and local vote banks (or vote blocks). Frequently manipulation is followed by the co-option of rebellion elites in an effort to buy-out, or limit the insurgency once it festers to a level beyond the ability of the state and regional authorities to manage. Co-option approaches have taken the forms of turning insurgents through monetary compensation, creating new political space for a "turned" insurgent group, or abducting and torturing key insurgent leaders.[17] Quite often these nonkinetic approaches have created their own problems with corrupt security forces, increased criminal activity, and a litany of human rights complaints and investigations.[18]

India's employment of military forces in domestic counterinsurgency operations has featured a number of innovative practices, some successful and others counterproductive. When engaged fully, the Indian national response tends to feature a combination of state police forces, Central Armed Police Forces, special paramilitary units, and—in some cases such as Kashmir and India's Northeast—the introduction of regular army units. India's federal statutes mandate that the chief minister (or governor) of a state formally request national police (including Central Armed Police Forces units), paramilitary, or national army support before such forces can be introduced into a counterinsurgency fight. In those cases when the army is introduced, it must be authorized by the prime minister and given authorities by the Indian parliament to operate under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which includes the authority for military forces to make arrests, search without warrants, and shoot to kill civilians when required.[19] India's martial counterinsurgency activities are normally "enemy centric" and have been assessed to regularly feature a strategy of attrition and raw coercion where overwhelming numbers of security forces attempt to suffocate the insurgency at the same time that political activities are conducted to co-opt its leadership.[20]

There are several important conclusions to be drawn about India's historical approach to domestic counterinsurgency. First, India does pursue varied counterinsurgency approaches to its multiple domestic insurgencies, depending on the unique context of each. Some responses—such as those in Jammu and Kashmir and Northeast India—have featured a permanent deployment of the Indian army. Other responses, such as those toward the respective phases of the Naxalite insurgency in eastern India, have been limited to national central armed police forces (mainly but not exclusively Central Reserve Police Forces [CRPF]) deployment into the unsettled states from the central government (see appendix B for detail on national special

police units). Second, India's political and military approaches toward domestic insurgency generally do not follow a classic hearts and minds approach. Instead, they normally feature enemy-centric and highly kinetic military operations combined with creative, and often controversial, political co-option of selected insurgent groups and group leaders. Third, India's federal democratic structure often drives domestic counterinsurgency responses that feature uncomfortable political tradeoffs at the local level, state level, and between the state and the national governments. The political mobilization aspect of domestic insurgent groups creates incentives for political parties to harness these groups for their own ends.[21] Invariably, this political utility makes them hard to counter in a timely manner and then difficult to address in the face of growing corruption, illegal activities, and often human rights questions as they embed into the political and social space.

In general, Indian domestic counterinsurgency has worked for the country out and its distinctive system of governance and its complex national ethnic makeup. India's approaches have contained, but not eliminated, the three major insurgencies that it has faced since independence. But for many Westerners, India's domestic counterinsurgency "successes" can look exceptionally violent and uncomfortably incomplete.[22] This divergence in perspectives is important. It indicates why India prefers strict autonomy in the conduct of its domestic counterinsurgent operations, routinely brushing aside the limited offers of direct outside military support that it receives. It also demonstrates why outside partners, including the United States, should realize that if they push too aggressively in offering well-intentioned direct assistance in these areas, they could encounter significant resistance in New Delhi—possible to the point where security cooperation could be dampened in other more important areas of mutual interest. India's deep past and recent experiences with the Naxalite insurgency demonstrate the wisdom of these conclusions.

The Naxalite Insurgency—History and Context: Phases 1 and 2

The Naxalite insurgency started as a communist peasant revolt in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It later evolved into a combination of ethnic-, caste-, and class-based political violence across a number of the poorest provinces in India's east.[23] It became known as Naxalism, or the Naxalite movement, given its late 1950s origins as a Maoist movement struggling for independence in the small village of Naxalbari in the state of West Bengal, along the Indo-Nepal border (see map 1).[24] The 1967 Naxalbari uprising against feudal landlords sowed the seeds for insurgency in India.[25]

Map 1. States and Union Territories of India

The Naxalites were a group of far-left radical communists who promoted Maoist political sentiment and ideology to fight exploitation by landlords in India's feudal postcolonial socio-economic system. In this approach, the Naxalites broke from the tradition of Indian communist

political participation in the electoral system supplemented by general worker strikes that had been the staple of Communist Party of India activity from the 1920s through the 1950s.[26] During the 1940s and 1950s, the CPI had become aligned with Moscow in its international leanings, functioning in India mainly as a political party. Around the same time, communism in India split in a third direction, with the CPI-Marxist group taking a more radical approach to its political rhetoric but mainly pursuing its own independent parliamentary path.[27]

Naxalism is based upon an extremist belief that the Indian government is a semicolonial, feudalistic, and imperial entity that needs to be overthrown. Naxalism's objective is to seize state power through a protracted armed struggle against big landlords and petty government officials. Naxalism takes up the cause of the marginalized sections of society. It often opposes the implementation of various developmental projects such as construction of roads, rails, schools, and hospitals in affected areas in order to demonstrate to the people the ineffectiveness of the state. When successful, the Naxalite movement has operated in a vacuum created by the absence or collapse of the administrative structure at the local, provincial, or state level.[28]

The Naxalite movement has evolved through three separate phases in India. The first phase ran from the late 1960s through 1973. The second phase occurred from the late 1970s through 1994. The third and most significant phase formally began in 2004, reaching a peak of violence from 2005 to 2011 and declining to a nadir in 2014. A short review of the first two phases of the Naxalite insurgency establishes its patterns and India's preferred security framework for dealing with this domestic stability threat. A more detailed review of the third and most noteworthy phase of the Naxalite insurgency follows in a subsequent section.

First Phase, 1967–1973

Inspired by Maoist revolutionary tactics and the Cultural Revolution in China, the Naxalite movement gained momentum and began in the late 1960s and 1970s. Initially the movement centered in the Indian states of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh (map 1). It featured peasants seizing land by force and then taking up arms to protect themselves against police and landlord response.[29] Soon these rural activities merged with politically disillusioned and ideologically driven university students from Kolkata and other urban areas in India's Far East—with active cells stretching from the state of Bihar in the north to Adhra Pradesh in the south. By 1969 under charismatic leader Charu Mazumdar, the Naxalites organized as the CPI–Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML) and attempted more centralized and violent tactics.[30] CPI-ML moved to organize peasants and seize political power through guerilla warfare while focusing on annihilation of its class enemies.[31] In urban areas such as Kolkata (then known as Calcutta), Naxalite insurgents

targeted police and local constables, attacking police outposts and patrols with an aim to capture weapons.[32]

Despite some limited weapons assistance and rhetorical support from Mao's Communist government in the 1960s, China never undertook a strong campaign of support for the Naxalites.[33] The Naxalites remained fragmented and without much training or organization. This first wave of Naxalite violence peaked in 1971 when over 3,650 acts of class-based attacks were reported and more than 850 people were reported killed. But it quickly succumbed to its own weaknesses and a state counterinsurgency response that featured two waves of activity.

From the summer of 1969 through the end of 1971, state-led counterinsurgency campaigns against the rural Naxalite cadres decimated much of those insurgency cadres. State police, assisted by the CRPF, moved against poorly armed Naxalites with great effect. By 1971 these police forces were joined by army units deployed into West Bengal. It took the failure of local and state police to contain Naxalite insurgents for more than 2 years before the West Bengal deputy chief minister—himself a politician from the CPI-Maoist party—requested assistance from a central paramilitary force, the Eastern Frontier Rifles, to assist state security forces. Then in July and August of 1971 a more dangerous component of the Naxalite insurgency in West Bengal's Birbhum District was put down by a joint campaign led by the army known as Operation Steeplechase. Army involvement only came after the collapse of an Indian National Congress–led coalition government in West Bengal and the New Delhi declaration of "President's Rule" throughout the region. This made the central government responsible for the fight against the Naxalites and enabled Prime Minister Indira Ghandi to divert elements of the army massing along the East Pakistan border for what would become the December 1971 Indo-Pakistani War that assisted local police in decisive counterinsurgency operations.[34]

The urban dimension of the first wave of the Naxalite insurgency remained violent throughout 1971 and festered into the next 2 years, even as the rural component succumbed to Operation Steeplechase. Interparty political violence in Kolkata among the INC, CPI-M, and CPI-ML led to a swirl of assassinations and attacks against security forces and political leaders across urban areas. The election of a new West Bengal chief minister from the INC in March 1972 turned the tide on the urban Naxals. The law and order platform of Chief Minister Siddharth Shankar Ray played out in a much more muscular police role across Kolkata and its surroundings throughout mid-1972 and into mid-1973. Kolkata police apprehended Naxalite leader Charu Maumdar in July 1972, and he died in custody several weeks later. Naxalite leaders across the city succumbed to increasing police and state paramilitary presence. By 1973 the main cadres of the Naxalites had been eliminated and were dead or behind bars.[35]

In this first Naxalite insurgent phase, the national government followed a pattern that would be repeated in subsequent phases. It did not forcibly intervene in the beginning. In keeping with the federalist framework of the constitution, the government in New Delhi left it to local and state officials in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and other afflicted states to take their own security actions to stop the threat. In the late 1960s, these state and local responses were often inadequate and ineffective.[36] The central government only engaged with security forces once it had a critical mass of army forces in the region for the 1971–1972 war with Pakistan over Bangladesh and when the President's Rule special authorities were in place, which enabled the military the power to make preventative arrests, search premises without a warrant, and shoot to kill civilians. Once engaged, the slowly evolving national response became one featuring intense force and coercion, eradicating the violence without eliminating the insurgency's socio-economic preconditions.

Second Phase, 1977–1994

India's first wave of insurgent violence ended badly for this domestic left-wing extremist movement but did not eliminate the conditions inspiring the movement or all of those willing to hold to the Naxalite cause. The movement fractured into more than 40 separate small groups.[37] Slowly—over the course of a decade—these groups began to remobilize and consolidate. Particularly in the southeastern Indian state of Adhra Pradesh, a new Naxalite organization called People's War emerged. Its leader, Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, sought a more efficient structure to boost morale, recruitment, and funding. By 1978 Naxalite peasant revolts had spread to the Karimnagar District of Telangana and Adilabad District of Adhra Pradesh. The major grievance was unpaid wages. Second-wave Naxalite insurgents kidnapped landlords and forced them to confess to crimes, apologize to villagers, and repay forced bribes. By the early 1980s insurgents had established a stronghold and sanctuary in the interlinked North Telangana village and Dandakaranya forests areas along the Adhra Pradesh and Orissa border.[38]

In 1985 Naxalite insurgents began ambushing police. After they killed a police sub-inspector in Warangal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh responded by creating a special task force called the Greyhounds to establish control in the seven worst affected districts. An elite anti-Naxalite commando unit that still exists today, the Greyhounds were drawn from within the Andhra Pradesh police forces and given special treatment. A 2,000-strong force in 2015, the Greyhounds were given preferred payment and training—better than federal or state paramilitary forces. They were also highly supported by the entire state police force. The Greyhounds played a minimal role in combatting the Naxalites during the second phase of the Maoist insurgency.[39]

In 1987 the Naxalite political party (People's War) and other Maoist groups in Andhra Pradesh were barred from elections after kidnapped government officials were exchanged for Naxalite prisoners. The ban was briefly lifted in 1991. In December of that year, however, insurgent attacks increased. Affected states responded by establishing special laws that enabled police to focus on capture, detention, and extra-normal means of violence against Naxalite cadres—fighters and presumed supporters.[40] Adhra Pradesh and Orissa invited additional central paramilitary forces in Telangana to augment state and federal government security forces already there. Besides brute force, the state set up rival mass organizations to attract youth away from the Naxalites, started rehabilitation programs, and established new informant networks.[41]

The new counterinsurgency strategy reduced violent incidents, and nearly 9,000 Naxalites surrendered. Consequently in 1994 the ban on ostensibly moderate Naxalite political parties was lifted.[42] The second wave of the Naxalite insurgency had been stopped. However, and as at the end of the first phase of the Naxalite insurgency, the socioeconomic conditions underpinning Naxalism remained largely unchanged in many regions of eastern India.

Third Phase, 2004–2015

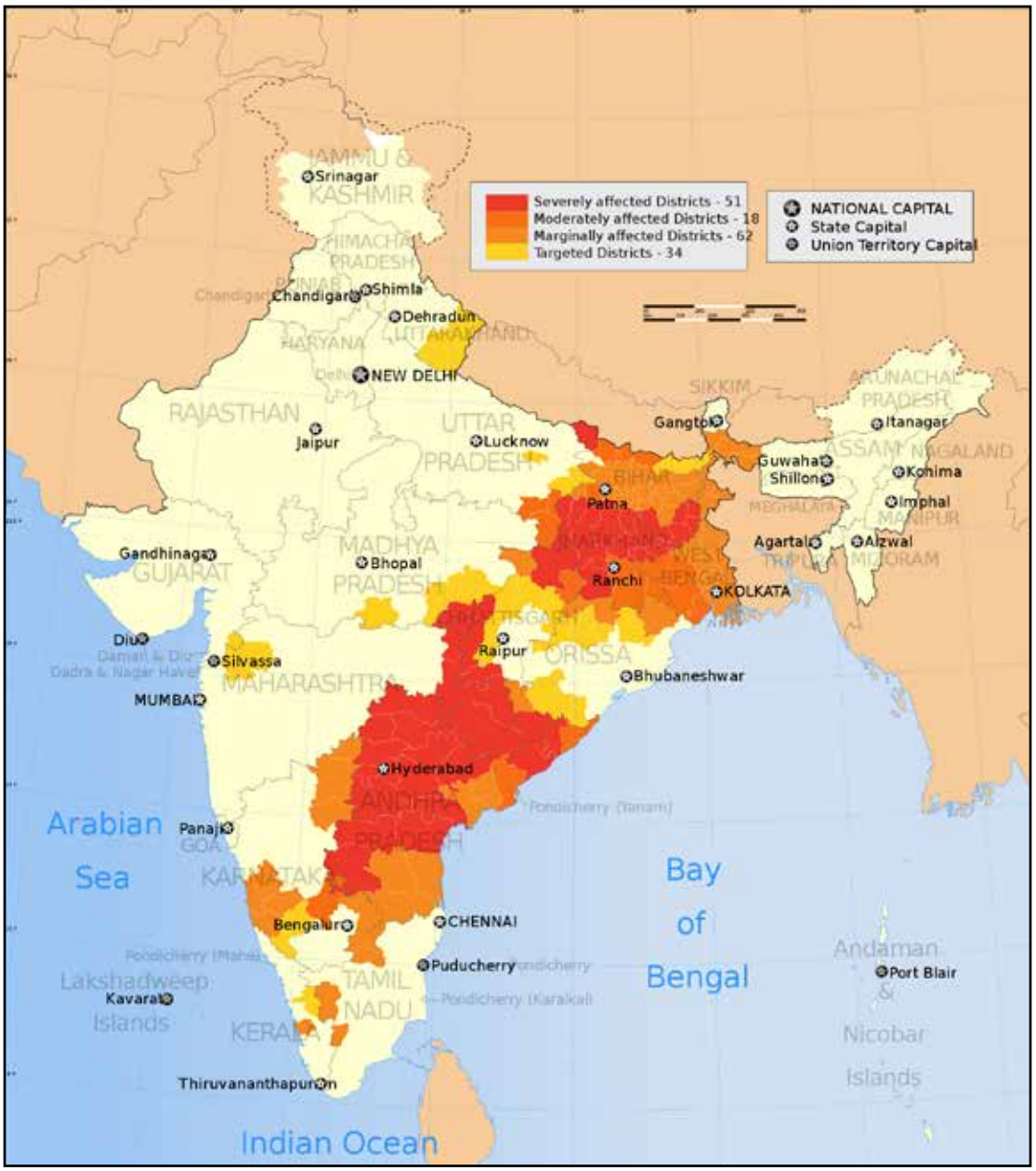
From the mid-1990s to the early 2000s the Naxalite insurgency remained largely out of the public eye, but the movement had not gone away. Taking advantage of rising local support for violent response to economic conditions, fragmented Naxalite groups created a united front: the People's War, Party Unity, and the Maoist Communist Center (MCC) combined to form the People's War Group (PWG). Naxalism manifested itself in episodic spurts of violence by the PWG, which had its most pronounced presence in Adhra Pradesh. From 1999–2002, local level violence increased. The PWG accelerated attacks on state government locations in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and Chhattisgarh. By 2000 an estimated 3,000 armed Naxalite rebels were reportedly active in India's east.[43]

During this time, Indian government agencies took actions that accelerated grievances among the poor and displaced with sympathies for left-wing violence. First, economic growth and development led to local and state government appropriation of land for infrastructure and resource development, displacing many underprivileged people who had no political voice. Second, governments responded to Naxalite violence with acute violence, reportedly including the extra-judicial murder and torture of suspected rebels and rebel families.[44] The MCC intensified its campaign of violence against Indian security forces and government agencies in 2002–2003 after its leader was killed by police.[45]

In 2004, the PWG was superseded by the CPI-M.[46] From this 2004 merger of the two largest Naxalite factions—the PWG and MCC—into the CPI-M, Maoist ideology was fused with a cadre of armed groups for the first time.[47] A third and more lethal wave of violence—more sophisticated and more destructive—rapidly spread throughout eastern India. Naxalite leaders expanded control over natural resource rich areas (for example, coal, gas, precious minerals, and timber). They also collected taxes and extortion money to fund weapons production, including the production of crude but effective improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Estimates from 2004 to 2011 suggest the Naxalites extracted at least $18.4 million annually from government offices, contractors, businessmen, and industrialists. They embarked upon more choreographed terror campaigns including the murder of local politicians, overwhelming attacks on local police stations, impressment of child soldiers, and a general campaign to scare away outside investors.

By the second half of 2005, Naxalites demonstrated a lethality and reach far beyond the capacity of other domestic terrorist and insurgent groups. They destroyed buildings, captured weapons, and killed several local policemen in an attack on a village in Uttar Pradesh. They also attacked the Jehanabad Prison in Bihar, killing two, freeing more than 300 inmates, and abducting about 30 inmates who were members of an anti-Naxalite group. Total deaths from Naxalite-attributed insurgency and terrorism grew to more than 800 in the impacted east and northeastern regions.[48] In 2006 and 2007, this trend expanded. In 2006, Naxalite groups launched several high-profile attacks against civilians and security forces, expanding the rural territory under Maoist control and under threat of extreme violence. In one event, an attack by some 800 armed Naxalites in Chhattisgarh killed 25, injured 80 more, and saw some 250 people declared missing.[49] In 2006, the government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh grew concerned about the mounting threat posed by Naxalite groups to internal stability and democratic traditions across the east and southeast of India. The Naxalite menace had grown such that 18 of India's federal states and 194 of its total districts were effected by Naxalite violence. For the first time Prime Minister Singh called the Naxalite/Maoist insurgency and associated terrorism "the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country."[50] In 2007 Naxalite and Maoist violence reached an apex where it would remain for the next 4 years through 2010 (see map 2). Over 971 Naxalite attacks were recorded in the first seven months of 2007. That number would grow to over 1,500 attacks by the end of the year (see table[51]). Left-wing extremists began targeting elected officials including a member of the Indian parliament from Jharkhand state and the son of a former chief minister (or governor) of Andhra Pradesh.[52]

By 2010 the Naxalites were active in nine Indian states and reported to have a strong foothold in parts of seven: West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh,



Map 2. India Naxalite-Affected Districts, 2007

and Maharashtra. This region happened to sit atop tremendous iron ore, coal, and aluminum deposits as well as irrigation and hydroelectric power potential. Across these states there were more than 2,200 incidents of Naxalite violence and almost 1,200 killed in 2010 alone (table).[53]

Table. Major Incidents During Naxalite Insurgency, Third Phase

Year	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
All Incidents	1,088	1,091	1,136	1,415	1,760	2,212	2,258	1,591	1,565	1,509	1,608	1,533
Attacks on Police	118	155	143	135	131	230	250	192	N/A	210	194	N/A
Total Deaths	251	280	376	321	532	1,138	907	648	650	685	846	636

N/A = specific data not available

Sources: "Left Wing Extremist (LWE) Data," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, available at <www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/2011/Left_Wing_Extremist_Data.htm>; "State-Wise Extent of Naxal Violence During 2008 to 2012," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, available at <www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/documents/papers/SWENV-2008-12.pdf>; "State-Wise Extent of LWE Violence During 2011 to 2016 (up to 31.03.2016)," *South Asia Terrorism Portal*, available at <http://mha.nic.in/sites/upload_files/mha/files/LWEViolanceStatistic2016.PDF>; Government of India Ministry of Home Affairs, "Annual Reports," available at <http://mha.nic.in/AnnualReports>.

The threat to Indian national interests became obvious to the federal government and more coordinated actions followed.

From 2005 through 2010, Naxalite violence and the insufficient state-led, federally supported efforts to counter it cost India an average of more than 700 deaths per year. Most of these individuals were classified as civilian (see appendix A). Recruited from the disaffected rural poor, Naxalite cadres grew by 2010 to an estimated 20,000 armed fighters and an additional 50,000 supporters.[54]

In 2010, as he had first done in 2006, Prime Minister Singh trumpeted the risks of Naxalite violence to the stability and the ever important economic growth for the country. In May of that year, Prime Minister Singh referred to Naxalism as the "biggest internal security challenge" India has ever faced.[55] The national government was understandably frustrated. From January to June 2009, India witnessed over 1,100 Naxalite-generated incidents of violence. These would double by the end of 2009 (table). Major violence occurred during national elections held from April to May 2009 as Naxalites called for an election boycott, attacked polling places, set off land mines, and even took control of a region of West Bengal known as Lalgarh. Paramilitary and police response operations against Naxalite locations were largely unsuccessful.[56] Naxalite atrocities gained national notoriety. But simultaneously, accusations of systematic local police brutality and local and federal police human rights abuses against innocent civilians grew more vocal throughout the affected zones.[57] In 2010 Naxalite violence inflicted 9 separate states of India and over 200 individual districts.[58]

In March 2010, after months of prevarication and confusion, the national government launched Operation *Green Hunt*. The initiative added an additional estimated 20,000 federal paramilitary troops, mainly from the CRPF battalions, to existing state, local, and already present Ministry of Home Affairs forces from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Border Security Forces, and Shashastra Seema Bal.[59] (See appendix B for detail on MHA special police units.) The operation sent federal, state, and local police and paramilitary forces into former no-go zones deep in the forests of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra states to rid them of militants, but these operations struggled. In April 2010, Naxalite insurgents ambushed 80 troops of the Indian Central Police Security Forces (CPSF) in Chhattisgarh, killing an estimated 75 in the worst attack on Indian security forces since the third phase of the Naxalite insurgency began.[60] In February 2011 Naxalites kidnapped two Indian government officials, demanding a halt to *Green Hunt*. The government agreed. The Naxalites also demanded the release of seven top imprisoned leaders in exchange for the two officials. After a May 2011 Naxalite attack, 10 bodies of policemen were found dismembered in dense forest.[61]

Despite the major setbacks of 2010–2011, Indian federal and state authorities made some headway against a Naxalite insurgency now generating international headlines.[62] Better coordinated joint federal-state anti-Naxalite security operations killed a prominent Naxalite military leader, Koteswara Rao, in a November 2011 operation. In 2012 government paramilitary and police operations in West Bengal and Chhattisgarh began to produce results, with more than 1,800 Naxalite insurgents reported arrested and another 440 surrendered during the year.[63] In late 2012 several Naxalite regional military leaders were captured and killed in those provinces.

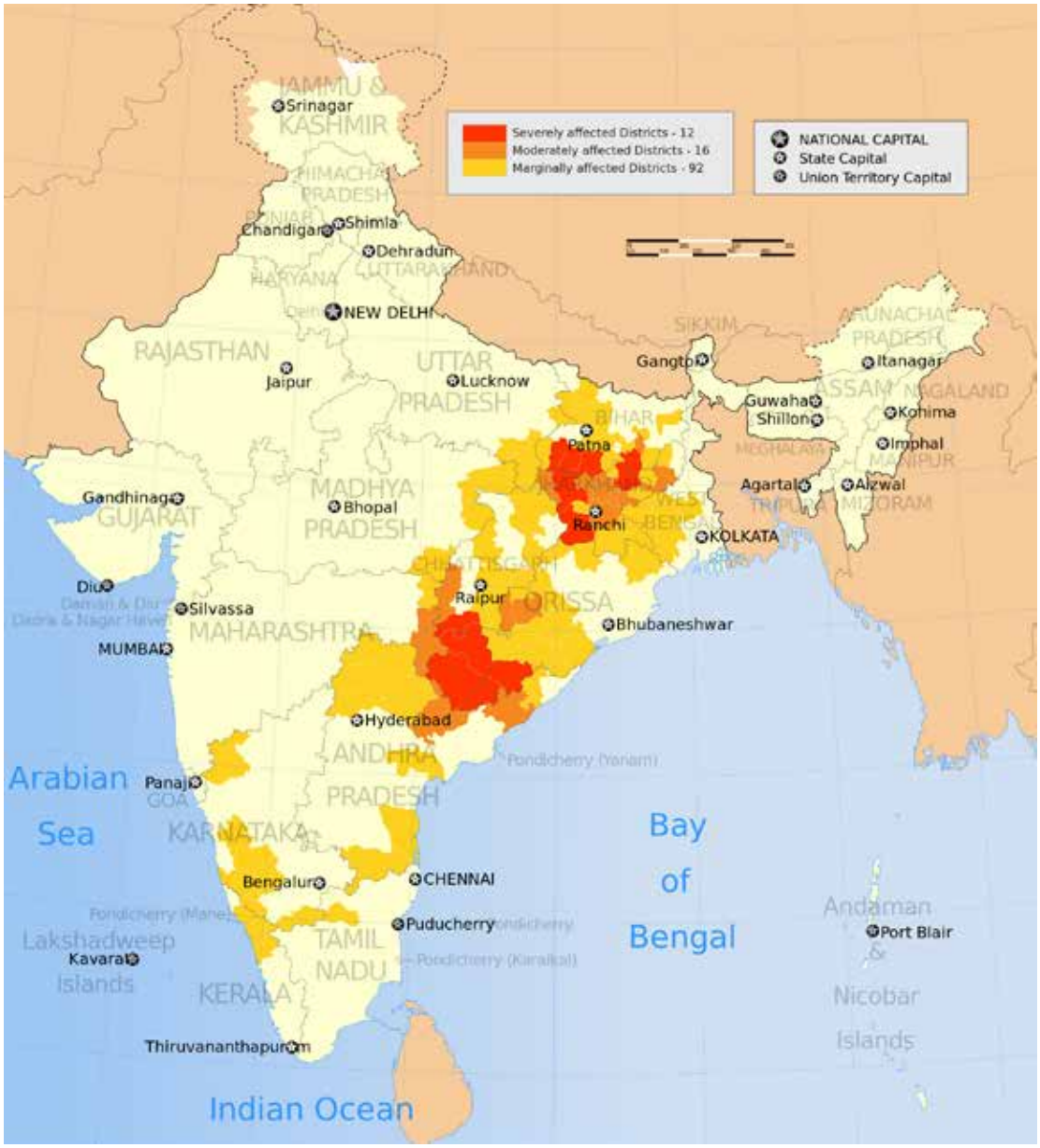
Acts of extreme violence continued during 2012 and 2013, but the expanse of the insurgency began to abate. Insurgency-related fatalities declined in 2012 and remained below 400 in 2013 (table). West Bengal reported sharp declines in Naxalite presence and activities during 2013, although some observers declared that the decline in those states was offset by a corresponding increase of Naxalite violence in neighboring states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa (appendix A). The Naxalites began the practice of including booby-trapping the bodies of dead Indian soldiers with IEDs in their stomachs. They killed national Congressman, and anti-Naxalite militia Salwa Judum founder, Mahendra Karma in an attack on his convoy while he was campaigning for election in rural Chhattisgarh communities. Prime Minister Singh called for a two-pronged approach to dismantle the Naxalite network: sustaining joint and proactive military operations with greater economic development and responsible governance programs in the areas with strongest Maoist support. The CRPF successfully launched a 5-day interstate offensive in late December 2013 to dismantle core Maoist groups.[64] It shut down a gun manu-

facturing factory and recovered numerous weapons and explosives. Remote triggering devices were also found, indicating that the insurgency was using more advanced weaponry.

By 2014 fatalities from Naxalite violence dropped below 300 for the first time in more than a decade (table). Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh remained most affected by the violence, and some Naxalite groups conducted operations and expanded into southern regions of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka states. But a review of the map in 2013 of Naxalite-impacted areas revealed a significant drop in the overall number of affected districts since 2007—from 165 to 120 overall—and an even more significant drop in districts categorized as experiencing severe or moderate amounts of violence from Naxalite activities over the same period—from 69 districts in 2007 to just 28 in 2013 (see map 3). Eighty percent of Naxalite violence now afflicted only three states of India, down from the nine states impacted by serious Naxalite violence in 2010. On balance the tide had turned. By the end of 2014 the Naxalite insurgency was down if not out.[65] In 2015, Indian joint security and economic efforts to counter the remaining Naxalite threat focused on 30 key districts in these 3 most impacted states, enabling more concentrated efforts matching gradually applied paramilitary enforcement with legal reforms and development activities.[66]

As in the first two waves of Naxalite insurgency, the Indian federal-state government disconnect hampered its counterinsurgency efforts throughout the 2000s. Under the Indian constitution, states bear the responsibility for enforcing law and order. When required, however, the federal government can send police and—under more limited conditions—military troops. In the case of federal police, assistance can come only upon request from the state government. In the case of military troops, assistance can come in the event of a state of emergency declaration—as during the first phase of the Naxalite insurgency.

Throughout the period from 2000 to 2010, the federal and state home (interior) ministries supervised multiple police and intelligence agencies without much unity of effort or command. An operation against Naxalite groups in the state of Bihar early in the 2000s faltered. Federal paramilitary border security forces in seven districts helped the local police, and millions of rupees were promised in economic development opportunities. But the economic promises were broken, and poorly coordinated security operations only further alienated Naxalite moderates, derailing hoped for results by early 2002. In advance of 2004 elections in Chhattisgarh, the federal government sent 180 companies of paramilitary forces armed with helicopters and other advanced equipment. The Naxalites disappeared. Once the elections were over, federal troops and equipment departed and the Naxalites returned.



Map 3. India Naxalite-Affected Districts, 2013

From the 2004 merger of Naxalite groups, the Indian government, particularly at the federal level, applied both carrots and sticks, incentivizing insurgents to pick constitutional remedies and brutally punishing those who refused. But the splits between state and federal authorities limited effectiveness. In part, state and local governments saw themselves in a conundrum; they wanted an end to the organized Naxalite violence targeting them, their infra-

structure, and their legal enforcement structure. However, they did not want to alienate the vote banks across their states who sympathized with the Naxalite view of economic injustice but did not actively participate in violence. In one notable but far from unique instance, the chief minister (or governor) of the Naxalite-wracked state of Jharkhand won election in 2009 with strong insurgent sympathizer and insurgent vote bank support.[67] State-level leaders desired greater economic support from the central government, not overwhelming force, as the primary means to redress deeply held communist sympathies in their vote constituencies. National political leaders within the INC empathized with these state-level concerns, offering some economic support and some additional policing support—but too little of either to make significant headway prior to 2010–2011. The politics of left-wing issues and voter concerns made effective coordination of counterinsurgency versus the Naxalites difficult.

It took the extensive violence and loss of life between 2007 and 2010 to demonstrate the failure of an ill-coordinated approach. In 2009 the central government signaled that it wanted to provide 80,000 paramilitary and federal police to help in the fight, but these were too slowly fed into the region without strong local coordination. From the desperation of the peak year of Naxalite (CPI-Maoist) violence in 2010, and then–Prime Minister Singh's second declaration that Maoist violence was India's most grave internal security threat, a combination of state-level requests and federal-level policy improvements paved the way for late-arriving successes against the Naxalites.[68] The path to success was also paved by corresponding Naxalite failures.

Beginning in 2010, the Indian federal government finally undertook several successful initiatives that slowly but steadily spanned the coordination gap between federal and state security forces and linked with improved local economic development aid.[69] First, the government took steps to increase the costs to Maoist insurgent group operations—both financial and physical. Second, the central government deployed an additional 66 federal paramilitary security battalions, CPSF and others, into the field where the insurgency had been winning against small and poorly trained local police. As noted above, these came slowly and in tranches between 2010 and 2014 but reached an impressive number of more than 200,000 by early 2014.[70] India's military and its special operations forces (SOF) have not participated directly in the third phase of Naxalite counterinsurgency operations. Instead, SOF units have provided indirect assistance—offering specialized training to Indian Central Armed Police Forces (see appendix B) preparing to deploy to the anti-Maoist counterinsurgency fight.[71] Third, the federal government built 444 new police stations in affected areas and regenerated the policing capability in them.[72] Fourth, the government established a civil development program in the worst affected areas. Finally, government security forces worked more effectively in a combined action environment where

economic development and human rights were established in the communities most vulnerable to Naxalite recruiting and propaganda.[73]

These five national factors interacted with several organizational failures by the Naxalites themselves. First, the Maoists failed to generate a message of systematic economic exploitation to the degree necessary for serious attention in Indian urban areas, where the gulf between rich and poor was great and growing every year. Second, despite their highly publicized violence, the Naxalites never won the "mindspace" in India; the Maoist ideology of class conflict generated limited appeal outside of primitive and tribal areas in India, never resonating in urban areas other than with a marginalized group of activist university students.[74] Indian youth moved onto other causes and other areas of activism in the wider Indian economy.[75] Third, Naxalites proved to be their own worst enemies. They often splintered into criminal syndicates dealing narcotics and running both extortion and kidnapping rackets. This profiteering, evident from as early as 2009–2010, revealed that Naxalism was less about communist ideology or well-coordinated violent insurgent activity and much more about local and regional organized criminal activity, which exploits rather than benefits the lower class (and lower caste) Indian Hindus who live there.[76]

In self-reflective statements, ministry-level officials in the Indian federal government acknowledged that most Naxalite gains before 2010 had come too often because local governments and security officials incorrectly assessed and mishandled the problems of the disgruntled Indian minority groups in rural areas. At the same time the central government remained tepid in its involvement—unable to induce state governments to request more assertive federal security assistance and caught in a political conundrum where some of the state government leadership was both courting Naxalite sympathizer votes while simultaneously fighting Naxalite militant cadres. Once the federal government got serious and increased paramilitary security presence with a wider number of local economic development programs, the Naxalites began to wane.[77] Attention to a holistic approach by the Indian central government caused the worst of the Naxalite insurgency to recede in a visible manner.[78]

In 2016 the Naxalite insurgency in eastern India remains a security factor, but one far from the menace publicly announced by then–Prime Minister Singh in 2006 and again in 2010.[79] Instead it is now much more of a nuisance, largely a constellation of organized criminal enterprises with a loose affiliation to a Maoist credo than an ideological insurgency. The socioeconomic factors that inspire Naxalite groups remain in place, and this insurgency could again evolve into a more serious threat to local security agents in India. In the poor eastern districts of India, the possibility of a fourth wave of Naxalite insurgency cannot be dismissed if the rich

continue to get richer without the benefits of economic growth filtering down to the people who really need it.[80]

India's long slog toward corralling the third phase of its Naxalite insurgency again demonstrated the challenges and strengths of its counterinsurgency framework. State and local government police forces must fail obviously and admit to their failures before major federal assistance can come forward. Left-wing (or communist) inspired violence mixes awkwardly with Indian electoral politics in many eastern states of the country. Communist political party voters often sympathize with Naxalite grievances but not their violent means. State and local officials thus have incentives to take uncertain and indecisive action with their police and security forces. Too often, they can tolerate incompetence and even human rights abuses by local-level counterinsurgency police and militias, exacerbating wider grievances. They appeal for national economic help while avoiding national security help out of a fear that too much outside intervention might harm their local political interests. Federal-level forces, when these do arrive, come with their own issues. They can lack local knowledge and fail to be sensitive to popular culture and traditions. This leaves them vulnerable to insurgent ambush and to charges of torture or human rights abuses from an uncertain or frightened local population.

U.S. Security Engagement with Indian Ministry of Home Affairs

U.S. engagement with India in the areas of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency has developed over a 16-year period from January 2000. This engagement has advanced along three parallel lines of interaction. One line has been through bilateral dialogue and exercises between U.S. and Indian SOF, which have focused on counterterrorism training events and conversations. A second line has been through collaboration between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Indian Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). This collaboration has focused on criminal investigative techniques; port, rail, and maritime security training and best practices; and a general growth in liaison and information exchange between respective special police and border security agencies. A third line of interaction has evolved in more general bilateral military-to-military exchanges between the national armies, navies, air forces, and coast guards. Advancements in each of these areas have been noteworthy but not comprehensive. For all the noteworthy advances, limitations have remained, especially when it comes to the matter of outside assistance for Indian units and organizations conducting domestic counterinsurgency.

The history of special operations training and exercising is most noteworthy. Bilateral U.S.-Indian SOF have undertaken joint exercises that work on interoperability in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operation skills and drills. Small-scale counterterrorism training

exercises have been conducted on a recurring basis since 2002, including exercises in India's northeast territories where longstanding domestic insurgencies continue.[81] Under the broad definition of U.S.-India maritime security cooperation, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) SOF also have been training Indian military special forces officers in counterterrorism, learning from Indian counterterrorism experiences at the same time. In the main, these exercises have focused upon special techniques and capabilities for SOF activities in counterterrorism operations (see appendix C).

Despite a decade of offers by U.S. senior commanders and defense officials, Indian leaders declined to have U.S. SOF engage with or provide direct assistance to the MHA paramilitary and police forces optimized for domestic counterterrorism or counterinsurgency operations.[82] But in October 2015, India, for the first time, welcomed U.S. SOF to a joint training exercise with its MHA counterterrorism unit, the National Security Guards (NSG).[83] This was a meaningful step forward and, as most observers believe, became possible only after the change in perspective accompanying the government of Prime Minister Modi. Yet the limit of U.S. SOF interaction with that of only the NSG—the single special police unit focused on counterterrorism rather than counterinsurgency operations—is telling. After more than a decade of U.S. offers, the Indian government still remains uncomfortable about direct bilateral counterinsurgency training with its large array of MHA domestic counterinsurgency forces.

Washington and New Delhi first established the U.S.-India Counterterrorism Joint Working Group (JWG) in January 2000. Among more than a dozen major steps, the United States and India initiated antiterrorism training programs for Indian law enforcement officials and began a dialogue on cooperation in homeland and internal security.[84] First, these programs involved limited military-to-military counterterrorism engagements. Then, after the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack, a more formal set of interactions between DHS and MHA counterterrorism and law enforcement officials began to take shape. Notably, however, neither of these lines of engagement have witnessed the MHA welcoming direct U.S. military or special police assistance for its special police or border police engaged in combating the Naxalite insurgency.

In September 2005, USPACOM conducted a counterterrorism tabletop exercise that brought together Indian and American military, diplomatic, law enforcement, and humanitarian assistance leaders. A U.S. National Guard unit co-trained with Indian troops at India's Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School in Mizoram. U.S. antiterrorism assistance advanced again after the November 2008 terrorist attacks in the commercial district of Mumbai. The U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program (ATA) provided enhanced training

consultations with senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officials on the topics of hotel security, rail security, responses to an active shooter incident, as well as major event security management.[85]

In 2010, the two governments began the U.S.-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue. Since then the dialogue has enabled bilateral cooperation on mutual strategic interests and strengthened "security cooperation through expanded dialogues and exercises as well as sharing of advanced technologies."[86] A subsequent 2010 U.S.-India Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative allows the United States to facilitate capacity-building and training in India across a number of specific areas, including but not limited to:

- developing investigative skills
- promoting cooperation between forensic science laboratories
- establishing procedures to provide mutual investigative assistance
- improving capabilities to act against money-laundering, counterfeit currency, and terrorist financing
- trading best practices on mass transit and rail security
- increasing interactions between coast guards and navies on maritime security
- exchanging experience and expertise on port and border security
- enhancing liaison and training between specialist counterterrorism units, including the National Security Guard and its U.S. counterparts.[87]

Beginning in February 2012, American trainers under the ATA have been training Indian police in cooperation with the MHA. This training includes forensic examination of terrorist crime scenes and advanced explosives incident countermeasures. These courses are also available to state police, for example, in Kolkata (West Bengal). Intelligence agencies of both countries are sharing resources to support specific counterterrorism operations.[88] These training courses have had a positive impact upon hundreds of Indian local and national police, including IPS. They have also engaged some members of the MHA special police units such as the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and CPSF. Noteworthy and prudent, these bits of individual training have occurred

with individual Indian police and paramilitary officers and *jawans* (junior paramilitary soldiers) who have later participated in counterinsurgency operations against the Naxalites and other rebel groups.[89] At the same time, though, direct U.S. military engagement with Indian domestic counterinsurgency police and security forces units involved in domestic counterinsurgency has remained limited.

American military interactions with regular Indian army units also have grown in an impressive manner over the past decade. As discussed earlier, Indian, just as American, military and defense leaders are keen to state that India has more joint military training events and exercises with the United States than with any other defense partner worldwide.[90] Yet India's civilian defense establishment leadership appears amenable to many military-to-military training and exercise interactions with the United States but continues to view access to military technology to be the litmus test of fruitful bilateral defense relations.[91]

Although the Indian military highly prizes joint service-to-service interactions and exercises, no U.S. military units have been engaged with or even indirectly assisted Indian central police or paramilitary units directly involved in the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations against the Naxalites. In those instances in which the U.S. military and DHS personnel have had interaction with Indian domestic counterinsurgency police and paramilitary forces, the rule has been that indirect general skills training is acceptable for Indian leadership, but specific engagement and activities directly with Indian domestic insurgency forces is altogether something else.

Some analysts have recommended that the United States formally inject direct domestic counterinsurgency assistance into the U.S.-India security relationship. In 2013, one such analyst, Haider Ali Hussein Mullick, made a robust proposal, stating that the United States should formally generate a $400 million India counterinsurgency initiative, jointly run by the Department of Defense (DOD), State, and DHS.[92] He proposed that this initiative should bundle together the indirect assistance provided by the ATA and DOD International Military Education and Training program, as well as establish a Foreign Military Finance Account for India (where one then did not exist) and apportion other money into DHS and Justice department accounts to better enable Federal Bureau of Information resources for its India-focused international police training program. In this well-intentioned recommendation, U.S. largesse could be used to provide vital equipment to India's CRPF, including armored personnel vehicles, mine-resistant vehicles, flak jackets, GPS trackers, and night-vision goggles. As Indian attack helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were deemed vital for providing counterinsurgency ground

support, this proposal provided for U.S. funding to assist the Indian air force in creating dedicated air surveillance and support for the CRPF—including helicopter and UAV support.[93]

Noble in intent, Mullick's recommendation of a major U.S. push to provide direct assistance to Indian domestic counterinsurgency units and operations remains as misguided today as it was in 2013. Likewise, periodic offers by U.S. defense officials of direct U.S. military assistance to Indian counterinsurgency forces are similarly well intentioned but off target.[94] These and similar initiatives ultimately push unhelpfully against Indian protection of its absolute sovereignty in domestic counterinsurgency operations. Moreover, even if India were to unexpectedly welcome direct U.S. military and whole-of-government support for its domestic counterinsurgency activities, that very success would create significant problems for the growing but delicate U.S.-India security relationship. These problems are evident in the patterns observed during Indian counterinsurgency operations against the Naxalites.

Direct American support for Indian domestic counterinsurgency operations (such as those against the Naxalites) would quickly expose significant divergence between views in Washington and Indian cultural and political concerns with its domestic insurgents. First, Indians are historically tolerant of long, protracted counterinsurgency operations, including the four-and-a-half-decade Naxalite rebellion, a six-decade swirl of insurgency in northeast India, and the insurgency and rebellion extant in Jammu and Kashmir since 1947. American patience with such protracted counterinsurgency operations has not been a hallmark of its international ventures over the past century.

Second, Indian domestic insurgencies have a political cadence and rhythm about them that is alien to American sensibilities. In all three phases of the Naxalite insurgency, state and local political dynamics played to Naxalite sympathizer vote banks, allowing insurgent activities to grow to an uncomfortable level. In the second phase and especially the third phase of the Naxalite insurgency, Indian national police and paramilitary assistance began with limited but targeted security help for local authorities that focused upon managing major events—like election security—but then quickly vanished. Only when the political calculus of local, state, and national officials aligned did coordinated and effective policing, paramilitary, and local assistance programs come together. American patience with the dynamics of this Indian political rhythm would be sorely tried.

Third, with much of India's Naxalite insurgency featuring organized criminal activity as its underpinning by 2014–2016, it is arguably more useful and feasible for the United States and India to focus meaningful collaboration on individual policing techniques and investigative activities to counter these dimensions of residual Naxalism. There will be less Indian resistance

to this kind of DHS-to-MHA support. Thereafter, the focus of the U.S. military and its SOF can then better orient on wider regional and international counterterrorism activities.

In addition to these historically supported cautions, direct American training and equipment support for Indian domestic counterinsurgency operations might run afoul of U.S. legislative mandates and human rights standards. All U.S. assistance to foreign security forces must conform to what is known as the Leahy Law, named for legislative author Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT). One part of the law applies to State Department foreign assistance programs and the second applies to DOD training and assistance programs for the security forces of a foreign country. Both versions prohibit any U.S. security assistance if the Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense have credible information that a military, paramilitary, or police unit of a foreign government has committed a gross violation of human rights in the conduct of its activities—past or present. The law allows for an exception (or waiver) permitting resumption of security assistance if the Secretary of State or Defense reports to Congress that the government of the assisted country is taking effective steps to bring the violating members of the security forces to justice.[95] Direct U.S. assistance to India's paramilitary and police units combatting the Naxalite insurgency (as others) could quickly run into a problem with the Leahy Law. There have been frequent reports of Indian local police units' involvement in human rights violations against innocents in the Naxalite insurgency areas.[96] Indian central policy forces, including units from the CRPF, have been accused of human rights abuses and torture against apprehended militants and presumed supporters in Naxalite-afflicted areas.[97] It is hard to imagine Indian pride reacting well to American demands for certification of the human rights corrections made on its national counterinsurgency paramilitary forces.

It also is hard to imagine the U.S.-India security relationship holding up well if, in order to secure training and equipment for its already well-supported national paramilitary units, New Delhi must face repetitive Leahy Law inquiries. Indeed, in a country with growing wealth and a proud belief in the relative successes of its autonomous, indigenous paramilitary counterinsurgency forces, U.S. direct assistance (with strings) is not likely to be well received.[98] At the least, such conditioned assistance would strain security relations that both sides desire to see improve. At the worst, the outcome might set back bilateral security progress on far more important U.S.-India security initiatives including those involving joint maritime security activities in the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific Ocean, interoperability exercises that improve Indian confidence and capabilities against potential Chinese encroachment in disputed border areas, and military-to-military collaboration in global counterterrorism intelligence sharing and broader operations.

Lessons Learned and Policy Implications for U.S.-India Relations

A review of the history of Indian approach to dealing with its Naxalite insurgency indicates the unique nature of New Delhi's approach to domestic security. The limited engagement with the United States on military and security assistance offers also indicates the continuing barriers inhibiting a deep and unbridled bilateral security alliance at this time. A decade of U.S. interaction with India on the Naxalite insurgency reinforces the notion that Washington should not expect New Delhi to become a tightly coupled military ally anytime soon. Instead, New Delhi is more likely to be a friendly strategic partner with the United States where mutual security interests align, while interacting more often in a restrained and limited manner where U.S. and Indian security interests and prerogatives do not well align—as in the case of the Naxalites.[99]

Given this insight, U.S. policymakers should focus on bilateral counterterrorism and counterinsurgency security cooperation efforts toward externally sponsored Islamist terrorist groups and, to the extent that Indian sensitivities will allow, against actions by China that threaten mutually held security concerns. As a complement, U.S. military assistance programs focusing on technical skills and practices for individual Indian police, paramilitary, and SOF will remain most promising and prominent for the foreseeable future.

Appendix A. Naxalite Insurgency Statistics Tracker

		Bihar	West Bengal*	Jharkhand	Chhattisgarh	Odisha	Anhadra Pradesh	TOTAL
2015	T	9	21	58	120	35	8	**251**
	C	4	13	16	34	20	6	**93**
	SF	3	4	5	41	4	0	**57**
	M	2	4	37	45	11	2	**101**
2014	T	17	0	97	113	41	12	**280**
	C	7	0	48	25	31	6	**117**
	SF	7	0	12	55	1	1	**76**
	M	3	0	37	33	9	5	**87**
2013	T	48	2	131	128	54	13	**376**
	C	21	0	48	48	22	10	**149**
	SF	25	0	26	45	7	1	**104**
	M	2	2	57	35	25	2	**123**
2012	T	41	4	98	108	60	10	**321**
	C	15	2	48	26	27	6	**124**
	SF	10	0	24	36	19	1	**90**
	M	15	2	26	46	14	3	**106**
2011	T	61	53	157	176	75	10	**532**
	C	39	41	79	39	36	6	**240**
	SF	3	2	30	67	16	0	**118**
	M	19	10	48	70	23	4	**174**
2010	T	98	425	147	327	108	33	**1,138**
	C	54	328	71	72	62	17	**604**
	SF	24	36	27	153	21	0	**261**
	M	20	61	49	102	25	16	**273**
2009	T	78	158	217	345	81	28	**907**
	C	37	134	74	87	36	10	**378**
	SF	25	15	67	121	32	0	**260**
	M	16	9	76	137	13	18	**269**
2008	T	71	39	163	168	132	66	**648**
	C	35	9	74	35	24	28	**220**
	SF	21	10	39	67	76	1	**214**
	M	15	10	50	66	32	37	**214**
2007	T	49	7	120	350	23	73	**650**
	C	23	6	69	95	13	24	**240**
	SF	21	0	6	182	2	4	**218**
	M	5	1	45	73	8	45	**192**

Appendix A. Naxalite Insurgency Statistics Tracker, cont.

		Bihar	West Bengal*	Jharkhand	Chhattisgarh	Odisha	Anhadra Pradesh	TOTAL
2006	T	40	20	94	361	23	147	**685**
	C	16	9	18	189	3	18	**253**
	SF	5	7	47	55	4	7	**125**
	M	19	4	29	117	16	122	**307**
2005	T	107	*27*	126	200	17	369	**846**
	C	72	*11*	92	121	13	186	**495**
	SF	24	*8*	27	47	1	22	**129**
	M	11	*8*	7	32	3	161	**222**
2004	T	172	48	189	98	8	121	**636**
	C	166	*16*	128	75	4	68	**457**
	SF	5	*30*	41	8	4	6	**94**
	M	1	*2*	20	15	0	47	**85**
2003	T	137	*16*	138	82	16	302	**691**
	C	102	*10*	101	44	3	127	**387**
	SF	26	*1*	16	30	12	12	**97**
	M	9	*5*	21	8	1	163	**207**

Key: T = total deaths; C = civilian deaths; SF = security forces; M = militants (Naxalites)
*West Bengal data in italics include other states not listed, mainly Maharashtra and Telengana

Sources: Main data from *South Asia Data Portal*, available at <www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/data_sheets/maoist_datasheet.html>; totals for West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Anhadra Pradesh for 2003–2005 cross-checked at <www.orfonline.org/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/analysis/AnalysisDetail.html?cmaid=2543&mmacmaid=794>; Indian Ministry of Home Affairs data.

Appendix B. Central Armed Police Forces, Ministry of Home Affairs

Unit	Est.	Composition	Main Purpose	Ongoing Engagements
Assam Rifles	1835	65,000 personnel; 46 battalions	Counterinsurgency and border security for Indo-Myanmar border and Northeast India tribal areas; infrastructure development (MHA controls administration; Ministry of Defence controls operations)	Border guard force for Indo-Myanmar border; counterinsurgency operations in Northeast India tribal areas; humanitarian aid and development to Northeast India underdeveloped regions; has deployed to overseas counterinsurgency/counterterrorism with Indian army
Border Security Force	1965	222,000 personnel; 159 battalions	Counterinsurgency, border security for Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh borders	Contributes to border security and counterinsurgency, including in Jammu/Kashmir; participates in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions; deploys to domestic counterinsurgency/ counter-terrorism in India on request
Central Industrial Security Force	1939	139,400 personnel	Infrastructure security	Secures airports, seaports, power plants, government buildings, airports, subways, and so forth
Central Reserve Police Force	1949	288,000 personnel; 236 battalions	Security force during partition and accession of princely states, general internal security (crowd control, riot control, rescue and relief, elections)	Performs domestic counterinsurgency operations in support of local forces or on national government mandate; protects government buildings in insurgent areas; participates in UN missions
Indo-Tibetan Border Police	1962	45,000 personnel; 45 battalions	Border security along Indo-China border, natural disaster response	Provides border security between India and China; provides rescue/ relief operations and natural disaster response in Himalayan region; combats smuggling in Himalayan region; secures Indian embassy and consulates in Afghanistan since 2008–2009; participates in UN Mission to Congo since 2005
National Security Guard	1984	10,000 personnel	Specialized operations for combatting terrorism; Special Action Group; Special Rangers Group	Involved in special operations and counterterrorism efforts
Sashastra Seema Bal	1963	76,337 personnel	Grass roots activities for strengthening national support at borders, border security for Indo-Nepal, and Indo-Bhutan borders	Engages in counterinsurgency and some internal security duties; provides intelligence from areas of operations; prevents smuggling/trafficking; provides election security

Note: Originally known as the Cachar Levy, the name Assam Rifles became official in 1917. Originally known as the Crown Representative's Police, the name Central Reserve Police Force became official in 1949. Once known as the Federal Contingency Deployment Force, the force was renamed the National Security Guard. The Special Services Bureau (SSB) was named in 2003. See "Central Armed Police Forces," May 13, 2014, available at <http://mha.nic.in/armedforces>; Rakesh Kr Sinha, "Give the Central Armed Police Forces Their Due," *Swarajya.com*, April 30, 2016, available at <http://swarajyamag.com/defence/give-the-central-armed-police-forces-their-due>.

Appendix C. "Balance Iroquois" (or "Vajra Prahar") and Other U.S.-India Bilateral Special Operations Forces Exercises

Yr./Mon.	Location	Indian Unit	Operational Focus
2002			
May	Agra	Indian special operations forces (SOF)	Interoperability, joint operations, airborne assault operations
2003			
Apr.	Mizoram	21 Para Strike Force	Training at Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School (CIJW)
May	Guam	Indian SOF	Counterterrorism
Aug.	Washington state	Indian SOF	Close-quarter combat
Sept.	Jammu/ Kashmir	Indian SOF	High-altitude warfare
2004			
Mar.	Mizoram	Indian SOF	Training at CIJW School
Oct.	Jammu/ Kashmir	Navy SOF	High-altitude warfare
2005			
Sept.	Mizoram	Para Commandos	Combat skills training at CIJW School
2007			
Aug.	Mizoram	Para Commandos	Counterinsurgency wargame at CIJW School
2008			
Aug.	Mizoram	Army SOF	Counterinsurgency at the CIJW School
Aug.	Guam	Army SOF	Counterterrorism, counterinsurgency
2010			
Sept.	Karnataka	Indian SOF	Counterterrorism
2011			
Sept.–Oct.	Washington state	1 Para Special Forces	Marksmanship, urban terrain operations, counter–improvised explosive device techniques
2012			
Aug.	Uttarakhand	3 Para Special Forces	Mountain terrain exercise
Oct.–Nov.	Himachal Pradesh	Indian army commandos	Mock war games
2015			
Oct.–Nov.	Manesar	NSG-SAG (see appendix B for NSG description)	Specialist training (including flat range work, tape drills, night-vision goggle–assisted firing into a facility), inter-operability
2016			
Jan.	Washington state	Indian SOF	Interoperability, maritime and airborne training

Sources: After a 7-year hiatus due to U.S. sanctions for India's nuclear weapons program, U.S.-India joint military exercises resumed in 2002. Among the first of these exercises, the "Balance Iroquois" (or "Vajra Prahar") special operations forces series, stood out. See Pete Brush, "U.S., India in Military Exercise," CBS News, May 16, 2002, available at <www.cbsnews.com/news/us-india-in-military-exercise/>. Also see Christine Fair, "U.S.-India Army-to-Army Relations: Prospects for Future Coalition Operations," *Asia Security* 1, no. 2 (April 2005), 164–165; "Defense Relations: Shared Strategic Future," available at <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/uploads/images/7tIuOzAx8UV0mdK5nGCpJw/wwwfpppdef.pdf>; *Annual Report 2004–05* (Mumbai: Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 2004); "Joint India-U.S. Special Force Exercise 'Strengthened' Military Ties," Government of India Press Information Bureau, August 25, 2005; "Indian, U.S. Troops to Hold Anti-Terror Drill in Mizoram," *DNAIndia.com*, August 16, 2007, available at <www.dnaindia.com/india/report-indian-us-troops-to-hold-anti-terror-drill-in-mizoram-1115948>; "U.S. troops Train at Indian Jungle War School," *The Hindu* (Chennai), August 12, 2008, available at <www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/us-troops-train-at-indian-jungle-war-school/article1315148.ece>; "Military Pacts on Hold but India, U.S. Continue with Exercises, Arms Deals," *The Times of India* (Mumbai), September 22, 2010, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Military-pacts-on-hold-but-India-US-continue-with-exercises-arms-deals/articleshow/6601777.cms>; "A Legacy of Courage," *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), October 15, 2011, available at <www.tribuneindia.com/2011/20111015/saturday/main1.htm>; "U.S., India to Hold Joint Military Exercise in March; Tanks to Roll Out in Rajasthan," *Deccan Herald Online*, January 23, 2012; "U.S. Army's Special Forces Conduct Joint Counterterror Training with NSG at Haryana," *The Indian Express* (Uttar Pradesh), available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/india-us-anti-terror-cooperation-for-the-first-time-nsg-commandos-train-with-us-special-forces/>; "U.S., Indian Armies to Hold 20-Day Joint Exercise in Himachal Pradesh from 15 Oct," *Political and Defence Weekly* 11, no. 49 (2012), 22; "Joint Training Exercise of India, U.S. Special Forces to Be Held after Four Years," *The Indian Express* (Uttar Pradesh), available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/joint-training-exercise-of-india-us-special-forces-to-be-held-after-four-years/>.

Notes

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[68] In part, this improved federal-state coordination was inspired by Naxalite battlefield successes. But it also came about after Naxalite groups began to focus on controlling areas rich in natural resources such as iron and destroying state infrastructure such as railroads, telephone exchanges, and industrial plants. By 2010 Naxalite presence overlapped critical areas such as Bihar, Jharkhand, and Orissa, which contain the bulk of India's iron ore, and Andhra Pradesh has large reserves of bauxite,

key inputs to Indian industry. Naxalites had also come to dominate areas containing 85 percent of the country's coal resources, which are used to power 55 percent of India's energy supply and 75 percent of its electricity. These economic realities made piecemeal solutions and state-level toleration of Naxalite activities untenable—driving better coordination. See "Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Division," available at <http://mha.nic.in/naxal_new>. Also see Schuyler Null, "India's Maoists: South Asia's 'Other' Insurgency," Wilson Center blog, available at <www.newsecuritybeat.org/2010/07/indias-maoists-south-asias-other-insurgency/>.

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[76] Statement by Indian Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

[77] Author interviews with economic and political analysts at U.S. Consulate in Kolkata, August 17–18, 2014.

[78] "Naxalism Biggest Threat to Internal Security." In addition—as of early 2016—Indian state security leaders report that they find no nexus between the various Naxalite groups remaining in India and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. See "Indian Minister Says No Nexus between Maoists, ISIL 'Has' Come to Government's Notice So Far," *The Times of India* (Mumbai), April 28, 2016, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>.

[79] John R. Schmidt, "Has India Peaked?" *The Washington Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2014), 88.

[80] These special operations forces' interactions have been dubbed the "Iroquois Exercises" by the United States and known as "Vajra Prahar" in India. They have occurred on a recurring basis for over a decade. See Christine Fair, "U.S.-India Army-to-Army Relations: Prospects for Future Coalition Operations," *Asia Security* 1, no. 2 (April 2005), 164–165.

[81] Author interview with U.S. political affairs officials, U.S. Consulate in Kolkata, August 2014;

Shushant Singh, "India-U.S. Anti-Terror Cooperation: For the First Time NSG Commandos Train with U.S. Special Forces," *The Indian Express* (Uttar Pradesh), November 2, 2015, available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/india-us-anti-terror-cooperation-for-the-first-time-nsg-commandos-train-with-us-special-forces/>.

[82] Singh.

[83] *Joint Statement of the India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism* (Washington, DC: Embassy of India, July 12, 2002), available at <www.indianembassy.org/archives_details.php?nid=426>.

[84] The Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program is run by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. Its interactions are mainly with the Indian Police Services. See *Office of Antiterrorism Assistance: Fiscal Year 2010 in Review* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2010), available at <www.state.gov/documents/organization/177500.pdf>.

[85] See "Security Partnership for the 21st Century," Department of State, Washington, DC, July 19, 2011, available at <www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/07/168744.htm >.

[86] Ozzie Nelson et. al., *U.S.-India Homeland Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2013), available at <https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/130618_Nelson_US-IndiaHomeland_WEB.pdf>; "Ambassador Roemer Signs U.S.-India Counterterror Cooperation Agreement," Embassy of the United States, New Delhi, July 23, 2010, available at <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr072310.html>; "India-U.S. Sign Counter Terrorism Cooperation Initiative," Embassy of India, Washington, DC, July 23, 2010, available at <www.indianembassy.org/archives_details.php?nid=1292>.

[87] Haider Ali Hussein Mullick, "The Naxalite Rebellions," *The American Interest* 9., no. 1 (August 2013), available at <www.the-american-interest.com/2013/08/11/the-naxalite-rebellions/>.

[88] Author interview with U.S. political affairs officials, U.S. Consulate in Kolkata.

[89] "Joint Press Briefing by Secretary Carter and Minster Parrikar in the Pentagon Briefing Room," December 10, 2015, available at <www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/633703/joint-press-briefing-by-secretary-carter-and-minister-parrikar-in-the-pentagon>.

[90] This reinforces a similar conclusion made in Fair, 169–170.

[91] Mullick.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Author interviews with Department of Defense civilian officials in 2014 and 2015 and U.S. Pacific Command military officials in 2015 confirmed that the United States has periodically offered to provide the Indian military and paramilitary leaders with more direct assistance and counterinsurgency expertise in support of its anti-Naxalite operations. These offers have been politely declined by mid-level Indian Ministry of Defence and MHA leaders.

[94] "Leahy Fact Sheet," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights & Labor, March 3, 2016, available at <www.humanrights.gov/dyn/03/leahy-fact-sheet/>.

[95] "India: Draconian Response to Naxalite Violence," *Human Rights Watch*, April 27, 2006, available at <www.hrw.org/news/2006/04/27/india-draconian-response-naxalite-violence>; Azaan Javaid, "Maharashtra Police Used to Torture Me: JNU Student Hem Mishra," *DNAIndia.com*, September 27, 2015, available at <www.dnaindia.com/india/report-maharashtra-police-used-to-torture-me-jnu-student-hem-mishra-2129032>.

[96] Verma, 307, 313; "CRPF Personnel Death in Naxal No Human Rights Violation," *BusinessStandard.com*, May 25, 2014, available at <www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/crpf-personnel-death-in-naxal-attack-no-human-rights-violation-114052500099_1.html>.

[97] Well-intentioned, but ill-timed conditionality on U.S. security assistance has harmed bilateral relations with aspiring strategic partners in several historic instances. Most recently, U.S. congressional conditionality on the Kerry-Berman-Lugar strategic assistance package to Pakistan of 2009 requiring that Pakistan's military relinquish absolute control of its general officer selection process to civilian oversight substantially strained U.S.-Pakistan relations at a moment that Washington aimed to make them tighter. India in 2016 is not Pakistan of 2009, but the caution against unhelpful conditionality remains a worthy one. See S. 1707, "Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009," 111th Cong., 1st sess. (2010), available at <www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s1707/text>; Omar Wariach, "How a U.S. Aid Package to Pakistan Could Threaten Zardari," *Time.com*, October 8, 2019, available at <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1929306,00.html>.

[98] For a similar assessment about the inherent limitations of U.S.-Indian security collaboration moving forward, see Dinshaw Mistry, *Aligning Unevenly: India and the United States*, Policy Studies 74 (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2016), xii–xiii, 24–27, 47–51.

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