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What is This?

Drug Trafficking and Narco-terrorism as Security Threats: A Study of India's North-east

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Abstract

Security issues in international relations, particularly during the era of the Cold War, were and had been dominated by the realist paradigm which saw the preservation of the state from external threat. Such a conception of security provided a very myopic and narrow understanding of the security problem of states, particularly smaller states. During the past decade, attempts are being made to broaden the security agenda to include not only military but also other sectors: political, economic, societal and ecological. Furthermore, with globalisation and the opening up of the economy has provided scope for cross-border migration and also illicit trade, especially narcotics, terrorism and a dangerous mix of both: narco-terrorism. This article will throw a light on the non-traditional security threats problem and issues of illicit drug trafficking and narco-terrorism in North-east India particularly in the case of Manipur.

Keywords

Security, North-east India, Manipur, South Asia, drug trafficking, narco-terrorism, AIDS, human security, terrorist

Introduction

The Oxford dictionary definition of security is relatively straightforward: 'The state of feeling safe from danger or worry' (*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 2000, 1155). Although, the study of security has generally been a central concern in the academic discipline of international relations, the notion of security continues to be a contested term. The major reason for this is that the conceptualisation of security is the product of different understandings of what politics is and what it should be about. Consequently, security in international relations is neither a neutral nor a simple idea. What it means to

be or does not mean to be not only depends on the perception of the state concerned but also upon security issues as being considered from different perspectives and different outlooks by different schools of thought with their varied political strands like political realist, Marxist, feminist, racist, liberal internationalist, and so on. For instance, security in international relations remains an arena of intense political contestation. Moreover, the object of conflict theories is about what is real and what constitutes reliable knowledge.

For instance, security is dynamic and complex, and of crucial consequence to the stability, well-being and viability of the state. The analysis of the security environment of a state is highly problematic because of conceptual, empirical and normative difficulties and challenges of security in international relations (Bhagat 1976; Berghahn 1982). The problem is further complicated given the co-existence of supposedly conflicting as well as fundamentally competing theoretical paradigms or episteme. Furthermore, all scholarly efforts to put forth a universalised acceptable meaning of the crucial factors and forces constituting the security problems have failed to achieve the desired purpose because of the highly differentiated social histories and level of social development and also the differences within states in the nature and pattern of their political development, social character of their civil societies and state structure (Bhagat 1983, 465–487).

Since the Treaty of Westphalia, 1648, which has laid the foundation of the sovereign state system, the concept of security has been dominated by Realism. Particularly Europe, conditioned by centuries of internecine warfare, dynastic competition and colonial expansionism, sought the security of their state through military strength and alliance-building rather than cooperation. The consequence for such thinking was profound and enduring. Since force seemed a more effective means of maximising strategic influence and protecting vital interests, especially for the larger states, cooperative impulses were often short-lived and expedient. In order to maintain the equilibrium of the system, and preserve their own independence and interests, states frequently sought to maintain a balance of power, either by reducing the strategic weight of potential hegemons or by increasing their own capabilities in an environment that was anarchic.

Even during the Cold War, international security was dominated by the highly militarised and highly polarised ideological confrontation between the superpowers. This confrontation divided the world into two blocks; on one side, the capitalist block led by the USA, and on the other side, the socialist block led by the former Soviet Union. Because their rivalry was intense, the danger of war was real, and political/military concerns dominated the security agenda. In short, the concept of security has been interpreted narrowly; as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from threats of a nuclear holocaust.

Non-traditional Security Threats in International Relations

With the end of the Cold War, the traditional concept of security has been challenged by many schools of thought, where the traditional concept of security privileges the state with an emphasis on military power. On the other hand, scholars as well as theorists saw the traditionalist view on security to be very myopic and narrow in its conception and called for the need of a more comprehensive and wider view of security. Barry Buzan, in his book *People, States and Fear*, attempts to analyse the concept of

security and broadened the security agenda to include not only military but four other sectors, namely, political, economic, societal and ecological security (Buzan 1991). These new sectors need to be discussed because of the changes in the policy environment facing states. Importantly, Buzan also discussed the individual as the 'irreducible base unit' for discussion on security. Moreover, the fast-changing scenario of security in international relations together leads to the most fundamental signs of rethinking and a frequent call for the 'broadening' or 'updating' of the concept of 'security' within international political theory. At their most basic level, non-traditional security issues can be defined as non-military threats that threaten either the political and social integrity of a nation–state or the health of its inhabitants. Such threats can be from within or across the borders, which can also be termed as low-intensity conflicts.

Non-traditional security issues have rapidly moved to centre stage in the world of international affairs after the end of the Cold War. Like the more traditional military and other external security threats, these non-traditional threats, national as well as transnational in nature, are capable of creating devastating political, military, economic and social impacts by undermining law and order of any particular nation–state. Thus, the non-traditional security threats create insecurity for a sovereign state and its society as a whole. Although these threats may be called by different names, they have common characteristics. They are all situated in a very complex global web created by modern communication, transportation and information technologies, and they all involve transnational and non-state actors (Mathew and Shambaugh 1998, 163–175).

Furthermore, the UNDP also proposed that the focus should shift from nuclear security to human security, as it is seen now that many conflicts are within nations rather than between nations. For the majority people, a feeling of insecurity arises not from the dread of a cataclysmic world event but more from worries about daily life. Will they and their families have enough to eat? Will they lose their jobs? Will their streets and neighbourhoods be safe from crime? Will they be tortured by a repressive state? Will they become a victim of violence because of their gender? Will their religion or ethnic origin be a target for persecution? In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons—it is a concern with human life and dignity (UNDP 1995, 229–233).

Thus, security is no longer seen only in terms of preservation of the state from external threats but is also seen in terms of protection from the threats of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards (UNDP 1995).

Non-traditional security threats are growing in magnitude as they penetrate more and more national boundaries that have now become more permeable. The problem of non-traditional security threats are not limited to one country or one region alone, but spill over into an ever-widening geographical and political context with increasing consequences for world security as a whole. Furthermore, unlike traditional security threats, which are resorted to by states, low-intensity conflict is the instrument employed by state-sponsored groups, as well by non-state actors operating inside the given states as well as beyond the boundaries of a sovereign state, such as criminal gangs or terrorist groups who hardly care for international laws and standards. Their causes are multifarious and not easily ascertainable. It is a long-term problem characterised by the dilemma of finding the ideal solution.

As such traditional outlook of security has been insufficient to combat these threats, which are both mobile and fluid (Williams and Black 1994, 127–151). The mechanisms used by the states to address

non-traditional security threats have been inadequate because the challenges have grown far beyond the range of any state's direct control.

Similarly, non-traditional security threats like terrorism and illicit drug-trafficking have become widespread enough to pose threats to the security and well-being of states in particular and the regions in general. The involvement of criminal organisations in such trafficking cannot be denied, as they have successfully exploited the global interdependence to expand their activities (Mathew and Shambaugh 1998, 163–175). Furthermore, the growth of world trade with the increasing unification of financial markets along with computerised transfer of funds, and decreasing transport costs—all have worked together to facilitate the growth of transnational organised crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism that criminals find so profitable.

On the other hand, the non-traditional security threats shoot out from the growing empowerment of non-state actors such as separatist movements, religious cults, anti-government extremists and other groups that use terrorist tactics, as well as organised crime syndicates including, most prominently, drug trafficking 'cartels'. Though, again, this threat is hardly a product of the post–Cold War era, the capacity of such groups to pursue their goals has increased considerably as a result of globalisation. Access to financing and advanced weaponry including even weapons of mass destruction (WMD) has become easier for the same reasons as it has for weak states, perhaps more so. Their ability to operate globally has likewise grown not only because international travel is easier and harder to monitor but also through the increasing use of cooperative arrangements or 'strategic alliances' with like-minded groups around the world. Networks based on globally dispersed emigrant communities have also added to the reach of non-state actors. The magnitude and the transnational nature of the activities make a state vulnerable to newer forms of threat as it is capable of impacting the political, military, economic and social fabric, as these non-state actors hardly care for international laws and standards. This so-called new security threat directly involves human life and dignity and endangers the stability and security of the states both internally as well as externally. This article attempts to explore the dynamics and security implications of narcotics trafficking in North-east India, particularly Manipur, and the relationship between drugs, narco-terrorism, transnational crime and implications for non-traditional security threats.

Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking is considered to be the largest international crime problem in the world. Drug trafficking is also connected to other categories of transnational crime that include money laundering, illegal immigrations, terrorism, etc. (Castel 1997). The global trade of illicit drugs is believed to be worth as much as US$400 billion a year; this figure is almost comparable to the tourism industry. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that 200 million people consume illegal drugs worldwide, mostly cannabis (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2003, 86).

The drug trade occurs in a global market where narcotics are transported from a producing country to transit states and then to their final destinations. Drug cartels operate across national boundaries and produce, process, transport and distribute illicit drugs. The drug trade is based on a complex transnational structure that includes farmers growing coca, opium poppies and cannabis, heroin and cocaine producers, manufacturers of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), smugglers, corrupt officials,

distributors, wholesalers and small local traders. The laundering of drug money depends on accountants, lawyers, bankers and other actors (Castel 1997).

Drug trafficking is also connected to other categories of transnational crime that include money laundering, arms smuggling, corruption, illegal migration and terrorism. It has causes and effects that cut across national borders, at times eroding the power and authority of the nation–state. Weapons and drug trafficking, together with the organised crime, are among the problems that have posed threats to the security of the state and are transnational in nature. In the sub-field of international security studies, especially during the Cold War, some scholars referred to these problems as 'gray area phenomena', or 'low intensity conflicts', as they did not pose an immediate and obvious danger to a state or region in the way that traditional military threats did. However, in the post–Cold War era these issues have come to the forefront and it poses threat to the state and society as a whole (Cusimano, 2000).

It is estimated that global arms trafficking involves more than US$50 billion per year. Of that total 75 per cent of arms sales are made to developing countries, particularly in the Middle East, and most of the countries buying them are engaged in internal military conflicts (Williams and Black 1994). On the basis of this analysis, this flow of arms has significant strategic implications for national and regional security. This is because it fuels existing conflicts and may form new ones. Thereby, this trafficking makes many states vulnerable and strife-ridden. Moreover, states that are riddled with strife and conflict are rendered largely incapable of effectively countering such transnational threats.

The dangers of the illicit drug problem have also been outlined by Giorgio Giacomelli, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Program: 'The drug phenomenon is unique in the number of aspects of people's lives which it affects—the health of the individual, political and economic development, the safety of the streets and the stability of governments' (Schaeffer 1997). Among the most widely abused illicit drugs are heroin, cocaine, marijuana and increasingly, ATS (ibid.).

The United Nations has estimated that the heroin drug trade alone accounts for about US$200 billion of the total illicit drug trafficking profits per year. It is further estimated that more than 100 countries are involved in the total criminal enterprise of illicit drug trafficking. The US is the largest consumer, with approximately 30 million American users, spending altogether about US$28 billion per year on cocaine, US$468 billion on marijuana and US$10 to US$12 billion on heroin (Mandel 1999). Major illicit drug producers include Latin America, South-west and South-east Asia. The 'Golden Crescent' of South-west Asia, comprising Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the 'Golden Triangle' of South-east Asia which includes the regions of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, are both currently leading opium poppy producers in the world. Bolivia, Peru and Colombia in Latin America are sites of the major producers of the coca leaf as well as the refined cocaine.

In the case of Latin America, the problem of illicit drug trafficking poses a serious threat to the regional security, contributing to problems of disease, political instability, terrorism, lack of institutional development and blocks to democratic development (MacDonald 1988).

Some observers fear that South-east Asian states are in danger of becoming like the Latin American countries such as Colombia, where the drug lords are believed to be more powerful than the state. In South-east Asia, Myanmar is the leading producer of opium (only second in the world after Afghanistan), Laos is the second-biggest producer and Thailand is a major producer of the illicit ATS drugs as well as being a major consumer of the same. Nearby, Phnom-Penh in Cambodia has been identified as one of the

major money laundering centres for illicit trafficking as well as other illegal trafficking like weapons, drugs and humans.

Similarly in India, especially the North-east Region is also encountering serious threats emanating from drug trafficking, consumption and its counter-effects. North-east India comprises eight states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, shares long porous borders with Burma, Bangladesh, Nepal and China, and cross-border movement becomes easy due to ethnic similarities. Furthermore, it has a significant impoverished tribal population coupled with high unemployment, especially among the youths. Although most of the seven states have literacy rates higher than India's average, school dropout rates remain high.

Narco-terrorism

Terrorism and the drug problem pose an enormous threat to the stability of the modern world. While both have moved to the forefront of the world's agenda during the early part of the twentieth century, they have each existed in varying forms and degrees throughout history. The drug phenomenon especially has played an important part in world politics due to modern advances in international transportation and communication capabilities. Since the end of the Cold War sponsorship for conflict, organised criminal activities have become a major revenue source for terrorist groups worldwide. Building on the precedent set by narco-terrorism, as it emerged in Latin America in the 1980s, the use of crime has become an important factor in the evolution of terrorism. As such, the 1990s can be described as the decade in which the crime–terror nexus was consolidated.

A short review of the historical development of the drug issue in world politics and a consideration of the enormous economic potential would shed light on the ways in which the drug trade could potentially foster organised crime groups and terrorist organisations. However, several decades long 'war on drugs' and the more recent 'war on terror' have found common ground in countering the threat of narco-terrorism, thus combining two threats that have traditionally been treated separately. The concept of narco-terrorism originates from an understanding that the two phenomena of narcotics trafficking and terrorism are interconnected and subsequently, that a co-ordination of anti-drug and anti-terror policy can be used, and is necessary, to effectively deal with both threats.

Chronologically speaking, the concept of 'narco terrorism' was introduced in 1983 by the Peruvian President, Belaunde Terry, to designate terrorist-like attacks against his country's drug enforcement police. Drug criminals utilised methods from political assailants to influence the politics of the country by causing terror and obstructing justice. In 1985, the phenomenon received much attention, when the Medellin cartel joined forces with the M-19 terrorist group and attacked the Supreme Court in Bogotá, Colombia, killing 11 judges, in an attempt to prevent the extradition of several leading cocaine profiteers to the United States (Hartelius 2008, 1).

In the late 1980s, American government agencies started using the concept of 'narco terrorism', in order to describe inter alia the involvement of the Soviet Union in the drug trade (Bagley 1997). In the 1990s, it was applied in a number of circumstances, referring to various complexes of illegal trade in drugs, terrorist methods of violence and ideological superstructures. Over the course of time, the concept of narco-terrorism has acquired two main usages. One of them focuses on drug gangs using the

methods of terrorists in order to protect their own drug operations, and the other is by the United States Department of Defense who use the generic definition 'terrorism' conducted to further the aims of drug traffickers (Davids 2002, 4).

Generally referring to the relationship between organised crime and terrorism, the nexus most commonly applies to the straightforward use of crime by terrorist groups as a source of funding such as facilitating and taxing the drug trade. The nexus has also been used to relate to the formation of alliances between criminal and terrorist organisations. These two types of relationship constitute the major components of the nexus, as it currently exists; however, the relationship between organised crime and terrorism has evolved into something more complex. The post–Cold War environment further provided added advantage by providing relatively unrestricted access to technological advancements, financial and global market structures, diaspora communities worldwide, weak states faced with civil war and numerous geographical safe-havens. However the distinction between political and criminal-motivated violence is often blurred. In many respects, the rise of transnational organised crime in the 1990s, and the changing nature of terrorism, has produced two traditionally separate phenomena that have begun to reveal many operational and organisational similarities.

Security, as a result, should now thus be viewed as a cauldron of traditional and emerging threats that interact with one another, and at times, converge. Notable examples of terrorist organisations that have used the proceeds from drugs to fund their political activities include the Kurdistan Workers Party, FARC and Al-Qaeda. Although it is not clear how many terrorist or separatist groups are heavily involved in the drug trade, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the number seems to be increasing. This increase can be connected to the mounting financial costs of organising large-scale terrorist acts. For example, the financial cost connected to the Al-Qaeda attack on the US on 11 September 2001 has been estimated at being between 5 million and 20 million dollars. The indications are particularly worrying due to the fact that in the last 10 years such large-scale terrorist activities, which mostly target civilians, have become more common.

Manipur

Manipur is one of the eight north-eastern states of India. Nagaland lies on the north of it, Assam on the west and Mizoram on the south. Manipur shares a 398-km long international boundary with Myanmar in the east. Geographically, Manipur is landlocked with a distinct topographic entity; the Naga Hill ranges and Lushai Hill ranges surrounded by central plains or the Imphal valley (Shimray 2001).

After India attained independence in 1947, Manipur, which was a princely state, declared independence but was integrated into the Indian union in October 1949 as a part 'C' state. In 1956, Manipur was given the status of a union territory, and in 1972 it attained the status of a state. The state has a total area of 22,327 sq. km, with nine districts—four in the valley and five in the hills. The valley districts are Imphal West, Imphal East, Bishnupur and Thoubal. The hill districts are Churachandpur, Chandel, Ukhrul, Senapati and Tamenglong (Government of Manipur 2005).

The total population of Manipur is 2,166,788 as per the 2001 census. Meiteis are the majority community in Manipur with the other two dominant communities being Nagas and Kuki-Chins. While Meiteis inhabit the plains of the Imphal valley, tribal communities reside in the hilly regions of the state.

There are a total of 29 notified Scheduled Tribes in the state amounting to 34.2 per cent of the total population. The percentage of people below poverty line during the year 1999–2000 was 28.54 per cent; about 7.47 per cent in urban areas and 40.04 per cent in rural areas. Overall the population accounts for only 0.23 per cent of the country's population. Its literacy rate is 68.8 per cent (slightly more than the national average which is 65.58 per cent) (Government of Manipur 2005).

Manipur has been marked by violence for many years now. As Bhagat Oinam says, this is due to the process of identity formation by more than 30 communities and tribes harping on exclusivity, integration and dominance (Bhagat 2003).

Illicit Drug Routes in Manipur

North-eastern India lies physically next to what is referred to as the 'Golden Triangle' comprising of Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and the Yunnan Province of China, which is the world's most prominent source of illicit heroin and opium. It is alleged that the military junta that rules Myanmar sponsors the drug trade in the country, as it does not have other sources of revenue. It was after the international pressure that the area under opium cultivation in Myanmar has come down to 130,300 hectares in 1998 from 161,012 hectares in 1991 (Singh 2000).

Since countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia became serious about drug trafficking which was taking place through their territory, and took effective measures for preventing it, Manipur became an alternative route for drug traffickers in the late 1970s and early 1980s due to its proximity to the Golden Triangle. By the late 1980s, though there was hardly any opium production, it became a user state (Sushanta 2005). However, drugs, especially 'number 4' (which is the purest form of heroin) is easily available in the state at a very cheap price (see *The Hindu*, 16 August 2005).

Burmese heroin is transported from the Burmese town Thamu to Manipur through the border zone of Moreh (a town in Manipur). Tamu is a counterpart border town located in Myanmar. There has been literally a free movement of people and goods between these towns. This is the town which regularly exports Chinese and other foreign goods to the north-eastern states (Lama 2001, 249). Most of the heroin passing through the Moreh border is from north-eastern Burma, from the Shan, Wa and Kokang growing areas, as well as from the Kachin area (Beyrer et al. 2000).

Subir Bhaumik points out that there is a threefold threat posed by the increased drug trafficking to India and particularly to its sensitive north-eastern region: one, increase in local consumption, which invariably leads to increased HIV infection; two, the lure of quick money gets the better side of the local officials—'Several military and paramilitary officials have been arrested for smuggling heroin or lesser drugs in Northeast India. The drug cartel has sucked in several politicians, bureaucrats and even security force officials to carry on their illicit trade'; and, three, many 'ethnic separatists in India's northeast are taking to protection of drug mafias as a quick way to raise funds' (Bhaumik 2005).

Illicit Drug Use and HIV/AIDS in Manipur

Drug transit, drug use and drug addiction, subsequently, led to an increased amount of HIV/AIDS infections in Manipur. By looking at the alarming condition of drug abuse, the state government has

banned drugs under the Prevention of Narcotic and Psychotropic Drug Abuse Act of 1985. The ban further led to an increase in the instances of HIV as sharing of needles increased due to the sheer unavailability of them. Some of them even started using ink fillers. The ban was later lifted when the state realised its folly.

The medical authorities in Manipur first detected HIV infection in an intravenous drug user (IDU) in 1989. Between 1990 and 1991, the HIV prevalence increased from below 1 per cent among addicts to over 50 per cent, and reached 80.1 per cent by 1997. Various reports have brought out differing accounts of the link between drug use and HIV/AIDS. Binalakshmi Nepram, a researcher from the North-east, writes that 'it is vital to note that 76% of the HIV positive cases in Manipur were IDUs' (Binalakshmi 2007).

According to Nepram, the state has around 50,000 drug addicts. Another report states that '90 percent of the nearly 50,000 drug users in the state are thought to be HIV-positive; the highest rate in the world. Around 2,000 new infections are detected every year' (Rajesh 2007).

The UNODC further claims that in Manipur 'the proportion of young drug injectors (median age 25) infected with HIV zoomed from virtually zero in 1989 to 56 per cent within six months and to between 60 per cent and 75 per cent by 2003' (UNODC 2004). Manipur is one of the six high HIV/AIDS prevalent states in the country. As per the State AIDS Control Society, the estimated cases of HIV positive in the state are around 40,000.69. It is also shocking to note that 1.3 per cent HIV prevalence rate is found among pregnant women visiting Ante-Natal Clinics (MACS Annual Report 2006–2007, p. 4). Implications of drug abuse have been enormous in the whole of north-east, especially in Manipur. Drug abuse has led to heavy indebtedness for the families of users, street violence and other social crimes. Mahendra P. Lama even considers that the prolonged insurgency is a lesser problem when compared to drug addiction in the region (Lama 2001, 253). He further argues that apart from the social implications, drug addiction in the region also has its far-reaching economic implications:

> Apart from destroying some of the main pillars of the society, especially the youth, the corridor status has given the north-east an artificially high cost economy. It might have impact on agriculture, as the arable land could be more profitable for the cultivation of poppies and marijuana…It might also lead to a sharp fall in tourist traffic thereby badly affecting the entire services sector such as hotels and transport among others. (Lama 2001)

One of its implications for the inability of the government to deliver governance has been that, as mentioned above, many government officials associate with the traffickers and even insurgent organisations (Lama 2001). A very alarming phenomenon in the state of Manipur is that drug addiction has pervaded all sections of the society: people belonging to all age groups, strata, regions and professions are taking to drugs.

Some of the reasons why drug use is so rampant are as follows: a large youth population, a lot of them with Westernised values, traditionally liberal attitudes to relationships and free lifestyle, widespread unemployment and lack of future prospects in an insurgency-ridden region, among others (Nedan Foundation 2010, 9–10).

Table 1 provides the trends of HIV/AIDS in Manipur between the year 1986 and 2010 and Table 2 provides the percentage trends of HIV/AIDS among IDUs.

Out of the total 343,539 blood samples tested until March 2007, the total number of HIV positives was 30,055 (MACS Annual Report 2010); while the disease spread through the IDU route initially, it has

Table 1. The Trends of HIV/AIDS in Manipur (1986 to 2010)

Year	No. of Blood Samples	No. of HIV Cases Reported	No. of AIDS Cases Reported	No. of Death Due
1986	371	–	–	–
1987	970	–	–	–
1988	528	–	–	–
1989	828	–	–	–
1990	3,147	961	4	4
1991	2,223	422	0	0
1992	3,409	351	0	0
1993	4,204	254	8	4
1994	16,958	1,187	56	11
1995	2,926	429	36	11
1996	2,021	557	114	35
1997	2,117	757	83	29
1998	2,779	984	61	6
1999	3,436	1,037	196	29
2000	4,856	1,242	203	18
2001	4,329	1,192	286	51
2002	6,195	1,389	632	73
2003	5,423	1,419	1,187	133
2004	6,854	2,019	461	65
2005	1,381	2,394	297	48
2006	31,811	2,749	324	50
2007	47,844	3,235	264	45
2008 (up to May)	21,114	1,116	151	13
2008–2009 (June 2008 to March 2009)	50,039	1,961	0	0
2009 (April 2009 to March 2010)	69,871	3,041	0	0
2010 (April 2010 to August 2010)	35,803	1,359	226	20
Total	343,539	30,055	4,589	645

Source: Office of the Manipur AIDS Control Society, Imphal, Manipur. Also, available in Statistical Abstract: Manipur (2010).
Notes: Out of 4,589 AIDS cases, 3,316 are male and 1,273 are female. Out of 645 deaths due to AIDS, 518 are male and 172 are female. Epidemiological Analysis of HIV/AIDS. Period: September 1986 to August 2010, Office of the Manipur Aids Control Society Imphal (2010).

Table 2. Percentage of HIV/AIDS through IDU from 1994–2009

Risk Group	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
IDU prevalence	55.7	54.19	64.13	76.9	67.63	72.78	55.48	66.02

Risk group	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
IDU prevalence	56.27	39.57	30.7	21	24.1	19.8	17.9	28.65

Source: MACS, Annual Report (2010).
Note: The sero-prevalence rate among IDUs in Manipur in 2005 was 24.1 per cent, the highest in the world (it was 72.78 in 1998, 66.02 in 2000 and 30.7 in 2003).

now penetrated into the general population through other route also. Table 2 provides a year-wise distribution of HIV/AIDS positive case and the category of transmission. While the prevalence rate among the IDU in 2005 indicated a low with some sort of stabilisation, it again shot up to 28.65 per cent by the year 2009 (MACS Annual Report 2010). So it is very much evident that the problem of IDU is one of the alarming issues in the state of Manipur.

Insurgency in Manipur

Insurgency has become the mainstay of politics and all other aspects of life in the North-eastern states, except perhaps in the case of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. There is no single day without an incident related to insurgency nor is the general population free from the dictates of the insurgents who claim to fight for their liberation. The case of the North-east is a typical example of a struggle for identity and autonomy gone astray. Nothing in the North-east can be understood in its entirety without factoring in the element of insurgency, not even the HIV/AIDS infection and its implications.

The Government of India has declared many parts of the North-east as 'disturbed areas' under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958. The whole state of Manipur, barring capital Imphal, Assam, Nagaland and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura have been so designated under the Act. While on the one hand, there is functional cooperation among many of these organisations, there are also feuds among many of them. Some of them even maintain links with Pakistani Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) and Chinese Intelligence Agencies, and have bases in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand and Bhutan. Even as they claim to represent the identity aspirations of their people, none of them has been participating in the democratic processes of the state or country.

The Kingdom of Manipur acceded to the Union of India on 21 September 1949 when Maharaja Budhachandra signed the 'Instrument of Accession'. According to the merger agreement, the state was merged into India as a part 'C' State on 15 October 1949, and administered by the President of India through a Chief Commissioner. Manipur ceased to be a part 'C' State on 1 November 1956, and became a Union Territory under the Union Territorial Council Act, 1956. On 21 January 1972, Manipur became a full-fledged state within the Indian Union with a Governor as the Head of the State and the members of the Legislative Assembly were increased to 60 under the North Eastern Re-organization Act of 1972.

However, certain social narratives in Manipur question the legitimacy of the Instrument of Accession arguing that the king was forced to sign it. The ceding of Manipur's fertile Kabaw valley to Myanmar by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1953 is another issue that continues to have an emotional resonance in Manipur till date. While it remains to be seen how much truth vis-à-vis assumptions fuel these social narratives, it is important to note that perceived feelings of unfair treatment by New Delhi gave rise to multiple revolutionary armed groups in Manipur during the 1960s and 1970s. These include the following: the United National Liberation Front of Manipur (UNLF) formed on 24 November 1964, the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and its armed wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) formed in 1976, the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) formed in 1977, and the armed outfit, the Kanglai Kana Yan Lup (KYKL) which was formed much later in 1994. In the beginning, most of these armed groups were influenced by communist ideology of China, and their leaders wanted to establish a classless society in Manipur based on social, economic and political equality for all (Goswami, 26 November 2009).

Significantly, over the years, the character of the armed groups in Manipur has undergone drastic changes from being revolutionary groups inspired by communist ideology to groups that seek to make easy money through illegal means like extortion, and small arms and drugs trade. 'Terror' and 'intimidation' are routinely used by these outfits to coercively obtain people's support. Armed outfits like the KYKL and PREPAK have also engaged in kidnapping of young children for purposes of ransom and cadre recruitment so much so that many local people have sent their children to boarding schools outside the state in order to protect them from the insurgents. Most recruits to armed groups in Manipur are in the age group of 13 to 25 years, with leaders at different levels of the hierarchy not exceeding the age of 35.

There is an incentive-oriented basis for armed groups to undertake violent organised activities in order to make profit out of the illegal political economy of small wars. Armed groups can utilise violence in order to gain access to financial and natural resources of the area. Conflict research across the globe has indicated that internal armed conflicts tend to exist in areas which are not only rich in natural resources but also are located at the arc of illegal arms or drugs networks (Lujala, Gleditsch and Gilmore, 2005). Table 3 shows the number of insurgency-related incidents in Manipur over the last 16 years.

Over the years, the insurgents have managed to infiltrate into the governance system of Manipur (Rammohan 2002, cited in Baruah 2002) observed that 'for the last couple of years the valley and hill militant groups have penetrated the state and central administration and carved out specific areas of influence'. Every month when salaries are disbursed, a percentage is deducted and paid to militant groups. Such regular deductions are labelled as house tax and ration money. In effect, this was a replication of what was done by the Naga Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in Nagaland, as also the Naga districts of Manipur.

The militant groups reportedly interfere in the award of contracts and are also known to enter offices carrying files to secure signatures of officers at gunpoint (Rammohan 2002, cited in Baruah 2002). Rammohan reported that militant groups had even subverted the government's public distribution system in Manipur through connections with local politicians (Baruah 2002). This is due mainly to the fact that the Indian state, unlike in other parts of the country, has not been able to penetrate the varied regions of the North-east through its governance and law and order delivery system. Sanjib Baruah writes, 'While mainland Indians are not used to thinking of the Indian state as weak and incapable of providing every-day security to its citizens (except in particular situations like riots) in at least many

Table 3. Insurgency-related Killings in Manipur

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Civilians	84	266	189	183	117	233	87	89
Security force personal	30	91	98	64	65	111	62	64
Terrorist	51	66	63	74	93	151	95	78
Total	165	423	350	321	275	495	244	231
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Civilians	93	70	36	27	50	138	107	150
Security force personal	93	70	36	74	93	151	95	78
Terrorist	102	161	101	148	127	143	141	218
Total	246	256	190	198	218	331	285	408

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Annual Report (2006–2007, 16–17).

parts of north-east India, something like the security dilemma is at work which leads rival ethnic groups to form their own rag-tag bands of liberation armies' (Baruah 2002).

Contacts between mainstream political parties and the factions of the Naga underground are well known and are willingly recounted by the locals. There is a lack of consent for governance through participation and the failure of the institutions of the state creates a vacuum that the insurgents make use of. Furthermore, the failure of the state to provide for public order provides scope for insurgents to play key roles that otherwise are provided by the state and they are more reliable providers of security relevant to urgent everyday needs (Baruah 2002).

The government of India thinks that the situation is not out of control though it is too complicated to be resolved; the insurgent organisations have a free hand in the affairs of the state from police recruitment to 'tax' collections—and the people are too tired of expecting anything better and so, though unwillingly, listen to the insurgent groups. The result is that there is a parallel government in Manipur, something not even heard of even in places like Jammu and Kashmir. Development and industry are directly affected by the activities of the insurgent organisations. There is hardly any industry in the state, neither basic infrastructure like roads or electricity.

Most of the businesses operating in the region have to pay or leave the region. An example often cited is that of the 1997 case relating to Tata Tea Company, where it was found to be providing funds to the ULFA militants. This is the fate of the telecommunication companies, construction companies or for that matter many more operating in the region. The impact of insurgency on work related to HIV/AIDS has also been considerable. The 'shut downs' called by various underground organisations from time to time ranging from 1 day to 51 days have hampered the HIV/AIDS prevention and care work in the states. Whenever there is a 'shut down' or strike (or *bandh* as it is locally called), the drop-in-centres would have to be closed down and patients are not able to travel to clinics and hospitals. The problem is further aggravated due to the blockade of key roads imposed by underground organisations lasting for months, as poor patients cannot afford to stock their required medicines. To cite another example, the 'June 18 mass uprising' of 2007 resulted in *bandh*s, economic blockades and curfews which went on for weeks together depriving many HIV/AIDS patients of medicine and as a result many of them died (Yumnum 2007).

There are two more ways in which insurgency is hampering AIDS prevention work in the region. One, using coercive tactics by the insurgents to get their cut from the donor organisations has scared the latter away. There have even been instances when foreign aid workers in the state were kidnapped by the insurgents. This is common today for the underground organisations to ask for a percentage (up to 20 per cent of the total funding) from the various HIV/AIDS related NGOs (*Reuters* 2007). Second, some years ago the Central government had imposed a ban on funding to Manipur after a Union Home Ministry report alleged that, 'Funds have been siphoned off to underground elements through NGOs' (AIDS INDIA eFORUM 2001).

Narco-terrorism in Manipur

Almost every state in the north-east is affected by insurgent activities. Many parts of the north-east have been declared as 'disturbed areas' under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (Government of India 1996). There is an array of insurgent outfits, many of whom have emerged very recently. There are a number of common features among these groups, beginning with their varied political demands

starting from statehood within the constitution of India to re-demarcation of interstate borders to the expulsion of 'foreigners' and outsiders. A number of them are fighting against the Union of India and have been demanding secession from the Indian Union, some of them since pre-independence times. Since most of them are well equipped in sophisticated weaponry, they seldom hesitate to resort to violence particularly against the state armed forces. This violence is sometimes extended also against a particular community or a group leading to arson, destruction and mass killings.

Many of these groups are said to have been working in close co-ordination with each other within and outside the north-east. A more notable phenomenon is their links with extraterritorial forces including China and the ISI of Pakistan. The leadership of many of these outfits is known but untraceable as they are stationed outside India, in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Thailand. Many of them have resorted to large-scale extraction of money from both the government and private agencies. Some of them have even been practicing what they call tax-collection. Most of them have been boycotting all the regular democratic processes in the respective states including the state assembly and general elections. There are quite a few of them who have come over-ground and participated in the negotiating process. Some have even surrendered and thereafter joined mainstream political movements.

The other part of the story is quite damning. The illegal arms trade through the sea off the Andamans to the north-east has come to light in recent years. Apparently many of these illegal arms consignments, including AK series rifles, rocket propelled grenades, night vision fitted rifles and hand grenades originating in the Far East, were meant to go to the Myanmar rebels fighting the military regime in Yangon, but are increasingly being diverted to insurgent groups in the north-east including the ULFA and the NSCN. All these arms are brought to Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh and consignments are broken up into small caches to be carried by three different routes. A part of it goes to the Chin rebels and the rest to the north-east. This has largely gone against the counter-insurgency operations in the north-east for which over 25,000 troops are deployed at a maintenance cost close to ₹100 crore a year.

Moreover, border states of India—Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland—are also plagued by insurgencies and separatist movements. In order to raise funds for their armed struggles, many of the groups have become involved in drug-smuggling activities. In particular, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isaac Muviah faction (NSCN-IM) and NSCN-K factions, United Liberation Front of Asom (Assam) (ULFA) and small ethnic Kuki militia in Manipur are either directly involved in smuggling narcotics, minor distribution or, more likely, extracting 'taxation' from drug convoys and smugglers at a rate of between 10 and 20 per cent (Tara 1997).

A serious riot took place on 9 June 2007 in Moreh in Manipur on the Burma–India border between two insurgent groups, the Kuki National Army (KNA) and the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) of the Meities, indigenous Hindu inhabitants of the area. Eleven people were killed in this dispute regarding illegal trade through the Moreh checkpoint.

The link between the narcotic mafia and the undergrounds is brought out by Mr Manindra Sarania, Superintendent Central Bureau of Narcotics, who says,

> Among the underground groups NSCN, IM and K are involved in narcotics. In Ukhrul and Senapati districts of Manipur, maximum marijuana (*ganja*) are produced and these are under IM. In bordering states most of the underground groups are in this trade. Not just narcotics, substances like acetic anahydride and ephedrine which are legally produced in India can be used to make amphetamine or heroin and these are again carried by insurgent groups to other side of the border to Myanmar and Laos (Bhattacharjee 2006).

Along with fuelling militancy, arms dealing and illicit drug trafficking, rise in HIV/AIDS is also a matter of concern. US reports estimate that India's HIV epidemic is set to sharply increase in the next two years, with a significant portion stemming from drug use in the North-east (Mehta 2003). The state health authorities in Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram have pursued credible HIV education and awareness campaigns and have been generally successful in controlling the flow of sexually transmitted HIV. Nevertheless, Manipur and Nagaland are India's two most affected states for HIV, mostly due to the high number of intravenous drug users. Manipur's epidemic, identified in the mid 1990s, is predominantly HIV sub-types B and E, the same strains found in Burma, and unlike the sub-types common in India, which are C and A. Sub-type C also travels along drug smuggling routes into the North-east (Chantavanich 2000). Estimates of India's total number of HIV infected persons varies from official figures of between 3.8 and 4.2 million, to unofficial figures of 10 million (Alcorn 2003). In 2001 it was estimated that 30 per cent of India's intravenous drug users were located in the North-east states, despite the fact that the population of the region accounts for only 3 per cent of the total population (Hussain 2001).

The problem of narco-terrorism is posing an immense challenge to the governmental, economic and social structures of the North-east India, particularly Manipur. Of all the multifaceted security threats India is facing; from military aggression to terrorism, arms proliferation, organised crime and other soft security threats, the problem of narco-terrorism badly impacts each of these security threats to different degrees. Furthermore, the economic and social instability in many states have accentuated narco-terrorism. Rise in civilian deaths, crime rates and terrorist activity, health problems like HIV/AIDS, prostitution, broken families and social deprivation are venerable in North-east India. Failure of the state is also one of the possibilities, in a few of the most affected states in the region, if the narco-terrorism problem is not dealt with properly.

From the above discussion, it is very clear that either illicit drug trafficking or the terrorist problem is not affecting the security of the Indian state separately but it is comprehensive and directly toward the citizens as well as Indian strategic issues in a collateral manner: either killing by terrorist attacks or by a disease like AIDS is a common phenomena of the North-east. The problem of marriage of illicit drug trafficking and terrorism with a transnational connection in North-east India is quite blurring division of internal and external security threats and the policies of India to combat such issues is not convincing. Even by having a special powers act or announcing an area as disturbed, the problem of narco-terrorism is increasing in a rapid manner even today. The relationship between organised crime and terrorism, the nexus most commonly applies to the straightforward use of crime by terrorist groups as a source of funding such as facilitating and taxing the drug trade in North-east India. The nexus has also been used to relate to the formation of alliances between criminal and terrorist organisations. These two types of relationships constitute the major components of the nexus, as it currently exists; however, the relationship between organised crime and terrorism has evolved into something more complex.

Conclusion

Illicit drug trafficking and narco-terrorism emerge as significant long-term security issues for the region. Narcotics trafficking and terrorism have grown enormously in sophistication and volume in conjunction with the spread of Asian organised crime in the decade since the end of the Cold War, and it will continue

to do so in the absence of effective national and regional countermeasures. A brief analysis of the problem in a state like Manipur in North-east India clearly indicates that the problem of narco-terrorism has already arrived in a dangerous manner. The problem of illicit drug trafficking and narco-terrorism poses a serious threat to regional security, contributing to problems of disease, political instability, terrorism, lack of institutional development and blocks democratic development. It is no more a state problem but is more a transnational one, as it goes beyond the boundaries of the state involving many of the neighbouring countries of India. Such a problem in the North-east cannot be solved through a traditional state-centric outlook of security since the nature of the problem very much lies in the premises of non-traditional security threats.

Non-traditional security threats like narco-terrorism are growing in magnitude, as they penetrate more and more national boundaries that have now become more permeable. The problem of non-traditional security threats are not limited to one country or one region alone, but spills over into an ever-widening geographical and political context with increasing consequences for world security as a whole. Furthermore, unlike traditional security threats, which are resorted to by states, low intensity conflict is the instrument employed by state-sponsored groups, as well by non-state actors operating inside the given states as well as beyond the boundaries of sovereign state, such as criminal gangs or terrorists groups who hardly care for international laws and standards and it is very much prevalent in the North–east states, particularly in Manipur. Their causes are multifarious and not easily ascertainable. It is a long-term problem characterised by the dilemma of finding the ideal solution.

Despite being one of the most insidious transnational threats to security, illicit drugs and terrorism have received little attention among scholars in security studies. Especially since the Cold War ended, this threat should now be an important area of study of the discipline of security studies. The post–Cold War environment offered an added advantage by providing relatively unrestricted access to technological advancements, financial and global market structures, diasporas community's worldwide, weak states, as well as countries like India faced with civil war, and numerous geographical safe-havens. However, the distinction between political and criminal-motivated violence is often blurred. In many respects, the rise of transnational organised crime in the 1990s, and the changing nature of terrorism, has produced two traditionally separate phenomena that have begun to reveal many operational and organisational similarities.

The fact that states are having to spend so much money to counter the illicit drug trafficking and terrorism problem (money which otherwise could be used for development purposes) is reason enough to increase our understanding of the problem. However, the complexity of the problem demands in-depth study of its various aspects, including distribution system of the drug trade, money laundering, and the destructive consequences of drug abuse and the dangerous mix of narcotics and terrorism.

Thus, the question of security does not end with the state, but transcends the state as security can no longer be seen in isolation from vulnerability or threat that emanates from both internal and external sources to the authority of the state. The concept of non-traditional security is not state-centric but comprises all issues affecting human life including both intra-state and inter-state threats and vulnerabilities encompassing social, economic and political dimensions that bear upon the wider question of security for inhabitants living within the state, and the threats that loom large over the human society in the contemporary global state system. These new sectors need to be discussed because of the changes in the policy environment facing states. Importantly, Buzan also discussed the individual as the 'irreducible base unit' for discussion on security. Moreover, the fast-changing scenario of security in international relations

together leads to the most fundamental signs of rethinking and a frequent call for a 'broadening' or 'updating' of the concept of 'security' within international political theory. At their most basic level, non-traditional security issues can be defined as non-military threats that threaten either the political and social integrity of a nation-state or the health of its inhabitants. Such threats can be from within or across the borders, which can also be termed as low-intensity conflicts. Thus, security is no longer seen only in terms of preservation of the state from external threats but also seen in terms of protection from the threats of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards.

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