

Reimagining Our National Security

What is the issue?

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- Our security discourse is focused primarily on special squads, better weaponry, satellite imagery, radars and transponders.

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- While these are indeed relevant, our counter-terrorist architecture needs to be flexible enough adapt to changing terror tactics.

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- A rational analysis of whether our preventive machinery is able to match the changing terrorist methodology is required.

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How has Terror Tactics Changed?

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- **Lone Wolf** - a helplessness is growing in countering the vehicle-mowing-down tactics of Islamic State (IS).

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- Starting in Nice (France), similar tactics were employed for attacks in Berlin, London, Stockholm, Barcelona and New York.

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- It is dreaded as it is more innovative as “low cost terror tactics” as compared to earlier ones ‘Al Qaeda’s on 9/11”.

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- Notably, Over 100 people from Kerala are suspected to have joined the IS and many have moved to Syria.

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- **Cyber Propaganda** - Counter Terror (CT) agencies are struggling to prevent the growing online terror propaganda.

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- Notably, none of the Western agencies or private watch groups could detect from where the IS sends their “online” messages.

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What are the challenges globally?

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- **Prevention** - Even stopping people already on the “Counter Terror (CT)” radar from committing carnage hasn’t been possible.
- A majority of the lone-wolfs (solo uncoordinated attackers) were n the radars of law enforcement for some or the other reason.
- This signifies that merely intercepting data in bulks is no guarantee to prevent attacks.
- This is because analysing the collected data is not catching up with the wide scope of collection.
- **Prosecution** - Yet another problem is the inability of national investigating agencies to successfully secure evidence.
- Notably, thousands of IS fighters who had returned voluntarily or were forcibly repatriated from abroad haven’t been prosecuted yet.

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How is the scene in Indian?

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- **Linear Thinking** - Mumbai’s law enforcement was focused on commando style attacks in the aftermath of 26/11 attacks in 2008.
- But IED attacks (timed devices) restarted - which was seen in Pune Bakery blast of 2010 and later in the Mumbai serial blasts of 2011.
- **Lacking Coordination** - Notably, our air defence capabilities were exposed in the air balloon episode at Ahmadabad airport.
- While it was merely an advertisement, it wasn’t coordinated with Air Traffic Control - and was mistaken for a spy drones.
- Significantly, none of our security institutions took charge of the situation, which could’ve been a potential attack.

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- **Missing Focus** - We don't have any reliable record of our overseas workers who are the source for terror recruitment.

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- Notably, the former Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), which was trying to collect such data during the UPA government.

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- But MOIA has been merged with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) after the present NDA government took over.

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- This has relegated the high-level attention that our overseas workers had to a minor wing of our vast MEA.

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Source: Indian Express

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