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## UNIT 9 NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS\*

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit, you will be studying about non-traditional security (NTS) threats. After going through the Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the concept of non-traditional security (NTS);
- Types of NTS threats in the contemporary global context; and
- Terrorism as the NTS threat and its various manifestations in India.

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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Non-traditional security has a broadened definition of security: it covers not only the security of the state but also of the communities. As a perspective to study IR, NTS perspective highlights nature and sources of new types of threats to security. NTS threats always there but admittedly have exacerbated in the post-Cold War era for whatever be the reason – globalisation, new technologies of information and communication etc. Be that as it may, NTS threats are often transnational and cross-border in their potency and magnitude. They cannot obviously be met by a single sovereign state. NTS threats demand regional and even global response. This calls for a change in the behaviour of state and greater movement towards regional governance norms and mechanisms.

Terrorism is a non-traditional security threat that has afflicted India since its independence. The case study of India indicates that terrorism is an intractable issue. It is embedded in domestic politics, identity politics and demands for

separation. State response in the form of counter terrorism (CT) and counter insurgency (COIN) measures have been ad hoc, inconsistent and often constrained by domestic political and electoral calculations.

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## 9.2 NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY: CONCEPT AND CONTENT

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Traditional security is described and understood in geo-political terms: it is confined to relationship among sovereign states; and here, security deals with issues such as deterrence, the balance of power, alliance relationship, military capability, etc. Since the end of the Cold War and, more so, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the traditional understanding of security has increasingly been questioned in terms of how security should be explained, and by what kind of approach. The concept of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) has gained ground: it highlights aspects of security which until recently were not considered as security threat. NTS as a theoretical perspective has also gained ground in the discipline of International Relations since it indicates new sources and forces of insecurity and conflict.

Two important assumptions underly the NTS perspectives: (i) challenges such as terrorism, trafficking in arms, narcotics, human beings etc, illegal migration and environmental destruction in the past were generally not considered security threats. Their impact on security was at most indirect. Dominant theories of IR also therefore paid little attention to events of this nature. Since the end of Cold War in particular, these non-traditional security threats have come to pose a direct threat to the security and well-being of the people and the state. Two points bear significance here: the non-traditional security threats have every potential of transforming into traditional security threats and lead to conflict and war; and secondly, the concept of security gets broadened to include now the security of state and community. It needs to be mentioned here that the intensification of these threats could be linked in some cases to the processes of globalisation.

So, non-traditional security threats are not new. Problems like ethnic conflict, migration and refugees, poverty, epidemics were always there as part of human living within a sovereign state and across states. What however was not there are the new characteristics of the NTS threats: **scale, speed** to rise in a short span of time, **ability to transmit** at a quick pace, **interwovenness**, and, no less important, **inability of a sovereign state** to handle these threats single-handedly and within its territorial jurisdiction. This is the “new face” of an old phenomena (Cabellero-Anthony, 2010). In fact, some times, states are not even able to define these NTS threats properly; for instance, financial turmoil, internet hacking etc. Besides, the sheer **diversity** of threat is stupendous – ranging from pandemics to environmental disasters caused by relentless pursuits of development to surfacing of old ethnic and religious animosities.

Consequently, the concept of security had to expand beyond the traditional idea of military security, which essentially meant defending the borders of a sovereign state and legitimate use of force for the defence of national sovereignty and territory. Barry Buzan *et al.* (1998) captured the idea of a broadened security when he identified five segments of security: political, military, economic, societal, and environmental. In this idea of broadened security, Barry Buzan made two profound observations: one, changes which take place in the ‘centre’ (developed

countries) affect more profoundly the ‘periphery’ (the developing world); and, secondly, although all the five elements are interwoven, each highlights a particular dimension. Once closely interwoven, these elements pose grim threats to the security of both human beings and the sovereign state.

(ii) Non-traditional security threats simply cannot be met by sovereign states; they need multilateral cooperation and a coordinated action. In that sense, NTS calls for a change in the behaviour of the state. Two points bear significance here: one, the link between the NTS and regional governance is a core element of the NTS concept; and secondly, the NTS perspective is found particularly more relevant to the needs of the Global South.. One of the unintended effects of the NTS threats is the affirmation of regional approaches to problem solving. There are calls for regional governance mechanisms and norms setting to tackle challenges like epidemics and pollution (Caballero-Anthony 2010:2). Apart, as Buzan stated, NTS threats affect more particularly the devleoping world.

In sum, the NTS concept is based on five assumptions: (a) the non-traditional challenges or threats could lead directly to conflict or war. (b) NTS threats cannot be met by a state; so state perspective is insufficient for dealing with NTS challenges. (c) Ensuring security is the responsibility of the state, the community and the individual. (d) NTS threats such as climate change or pandemics are transnational in nature and require non-military responses. (e) Because of the transnational character of these challenges, international cooperation is essential (Caballero-Anthony 2016:15).

No denying, NTS offers a new persepective on security threats and ways of addressing them. Critics however point out some of its glaring weaknesses: for one, NTS perspective makes anything as security threat – hunger, poverty, disease and epidemics, violation of group rights, human and natural catastrophes. Critics often wonder whether there is a bottom line? Do we put anything and everything that seriously affects the states and the communities in the big basket of NTS threats? Secondly, this may mean ‘securitization’ of anything and everything – illegal migration, organized crime, climate. Thirdly, states remain sovereignty-centric. They tend to agree to a supranational arrangements only when the challenges are of a technical nature, are not pliticized and don’t impinge the perceived national interests. Besdies, regions such Europe which have a long history of cooperation and regional governance mechanisms are more amenable than regions with a history of distrust and conflict such as South Asia to instituting regional governance mechanisms to meet NTS threats.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 1**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

3) Define non-traditional security threats. Explain why issues like epidemics, migration, drug trafficking etc. have become non-traditional security threats?

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### 9.3 POST-COLD WAR NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS

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Cold War and its ideological underpinnings of socialism and capitalism presented a simple binary choice. One had to choose between capitalism and socialism – if one could call it a choice. It was the era, as one eminent American strategic thinker had put it, of ‘metamyth’. Everything was large and there was this misplaced belief that all things could be subjected to control. When the Cold War ended; with it also ended the belief in the supremacy of ideologies. Scholars talked of post-Cold War ‘peace dividened’ assuring an uninterrupted long peace.

Nothing of that sort happened. When the Cold War ended, many Cold War-related inter-state conflicts continued. Several of these conflicts, it was observed, were not ideological or political in nature. Rather, these conflicts were of ethnic, tribal or environmental in nature; and therefore contineud despite the end of ideological conflict between capitalist democracy and socialist authoritarianism . In fact, many of these conflicts resumed with a renewed vigour becoming more ruthless in terms of human casualties and engulfing many other ethnic and tribal identities.

Secondly, then there were conflicts which were new and mostly of intra-state dimension. These intra-state conflicts ran along the faultlines of ethnicity, tribe or religion etc. These intra-state wars were fought with unmentionable brutalities with no norms and no one ever being held accountable. Of the total 86 armed conflicts recorded in 1997, as many as 84 were of intra-state nature. The crisis in Rwanda was one such example in the 1990s which brought untold misery on the entire nation. It was noted that the outbreak of intra-state conflicts in the 1990s had high rates of human casualty; almost 90 per cent of those who perished in those conflicts were unarmed innocent civilians predominantly women and children. Worst, these conflicts were not fought by soldiers in uniform; and no international legal convention was observed by the various combatant groups. Eight out of ten casualties in modern conflicts and wars are civilians. More people die in small conflicts – often intra-state – than in big wars involving sovereign states. More casualties are on account of the use of small arms that are easily available and have remained beyond all conferences and conventions on disarmament. Approximately 500 million small weapons were in use in the 1990s.

The domestic-international interaction has also resulted into a relatively new actor – diaspora – entering the scene of international relations. Diasporas, until then a largely unknown entity in the study of intrnational relations, gained significant salience in the 1990s. Diasporas were wooed and began to get involved in the internal politics of the countries of their origin. They became the source of funding, arms supply, campaigning at international levels and as advocacy and lobby groups. Diasporas were involved in conflicts; sovereign governments also decided to use them to leverage with the governments of their ‘host’ societies. There was thus the debate whether diasporas are ‘peacekeepers’ or ‘peace-wreckers’.

Thirdly, international system was beset with new challenges. Sovereign states, in principle, are the subjects of international system: they conclude relations and agreements with other sovereign states and legitimately exercise authority in their ‘domestic jurisdiction’. They were not the generator of security for their citizens. End of the Cold War revealed new types of states – ‘rogue’ states and

‘failed’ or ‘failing’ states. Neither liberal nor socialist, these states were ruled by crass authoritarian, chauvinist-nationalist elites, often enjoying public support. Many of such states were found indulging in what came to be described in the 1990s as ‘ethnic cleansing’. Large scale killing and uprooting of helpless civilian populations produced the phenomenon of refugees and internally displaced persons. While sovereign states took the refuge in these being internal matters falling within the ‘domestic jurisdiction’, such intra-state conflicts threatened the regional peace and stability. Further, these conflicts produced refugees seeking shelter anywhere; ‘boat-people’ remain one of the most serious and intractable problem of the last quarter of a century.

Fourthly, some of the threats emerged from globalisation. Economic globalisation has not been a uniform process; it has left both positive and negative consequences. Exploitation of natural resources and development projects, especially those related to extraction and hydropower etc., produced enormous environmental consequences which were felt beyond national borders. Many of these projects, it was realised, did not benefit the host countries; they served the interests of a tiny wealthy elite aligned with foreign financial interests.

Fifthly, there were other kind of threats which were equally damaging to the sovereignty and stability of the state. These include threats posed by trafficking in narcotics, human beings, arms and laundering of illicit money, environmental degradations etc. No denying, the global political and economic circumstances of the post-Cold War world demanded a re-definition of both the sovereignty and role of the state. It was clear that states are not immutable; they are also not that much sovereign nor were they the only actors in the international system. Myriad international organisations and international non-governmental actors; the inexorable process of deepening interdependence among sovereign states and growing globalisation of production, marketing and consumption all had raised issues related to the immutability claim of state sovereignty. As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, commenting on NATO intervention in Kosovo and the UN-authorized mission in East Timor, had stated:

State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined by the forces of globalisation and international cooperation.

The State is now widely understood to be the servant of its people, and not vice versa. At the same time, individual sovereignty — and by this I mean the human rights and fundamental freedoms of each and every individual as enshrined in our Charter — has been enhanced by a renewed consciousness of the right of every individual to control his or her own destiny. (United Nations 1999)

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Non-traditional security threats are calling for a redefinition of the sovereignty of state. Discuss.

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## 9.4 TERRORISM AS NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREAT

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There is no agreed definition of terrorism. Terrorism is a complex and controversial phenomenon. It also has a fairly long history of usage. Terrorism has been practiced by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and religious groups, by revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police. Transnational terrorism has also been practiced and promoted by one state against another for ideological or political reasons. Once the distinction between terrorism and other forms of political violence becomes blurred, it poses problems in conceptualizing it. Hence, the saying: “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”

In the 20th century, the term ‘terrorism’ is used in a more focussed manner. It is often used to describe violence targeted directly or indirectly at governments with a view to influence policy or overthrow an existing government. While not easy to define neatly, nevertheless one can identify certain elements characteristic to terrorism.

The first core element of terrorism is to instill fear in the minds and hearts of the populace in general. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*: “Terrorism involves the use or threat of violence and seeks to create fear, not just within the direct victims but among a wide audience.”

The degree to which it relies on fear distinguishes terrorism from both a conventional war and guerrilla warfare. Conventional armed forces rely on the strength of their arms to gain victory; and in this pursuit they also indulge in propaganda and a psychological warfare against the enemy. Likewise, guerilla forces, though again use lots of propaganda, eventually aim at military victory over their adversary. In 20th century, guerilla warfare that brought victory was, for example, for the Viet Cong guerilla movement in Vietnam in the 1970s. To reiterate: “Terrorism proper is thus the systematic use of violence to generate fear, and thereby to achieve political goals, when direct military victory is not possible” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). This has led some social scientists to describe guerrilla warfare as the “weapon of the weak” and terrorism as the “weapon of the weakest.”

The second core element of terrorism is the shock value of a terrorist act. Terrorists normally resort to dramatic and high profile violent attacks to generate all round fear. Typical terrorist acts include hijacking, hostage taking, bombing high profile buildings and personalities, and suicide bombing. The targets are carefully chosen so as to enhance the surprise and shock value of the act. Terrorists want to create an image of themselves as being invincible and omnipresent. One can add few more dimensions here: terrorists operate secretly; their acts are clandestine; and terrorists could choose their victims randomly, say bombing a marketplace. They generally target persons and places which will bring them high publicity and create a disproportionate image of their prowess.

The third core element of terrorism is that the terrorist hope that “the sense of terror these acts engender will induce the population to pressure political leaders toward a specific political end” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

There is the fourth core element: victims of terrorist violence are invariably innocent civilians. The US government agrees that terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets. In conflict situation, be it the armed forces or the guerillas groups, both abide by certain international legal norms; for instance, international law which prohibits intentionally targeting the unarmed civilian population. Terrorists have a disdain for observing any such norm; often it is the innocent citizen who are the target of their attacks. Hence, it is said: “One man’s terrorist is everyone’s terrorist”. No matter how justifiable is the cause, wanton killing of civilians and destruction of infrastructure remain acts of terrorism.

Thus, there exists a degree of consensus on some of the key elements that constitute an act of terrorism. While that is so, whether or not an act is classified as terrorism remains highly subjective. Problem is the term terrorism is used to describe or not to describe varied types of political violence; hence the definitional ambiguity continues.

### 9.4.1 International Terrorism

Scholars have tried to identify various types of terrorism; again, it is not an easy task. The aims, members, beliefs, and resources of terrorist groups and the political contexts in which they operate are very diverse. In 20th century, many political movements, ranging from extreme right to extreme left, have used terrorism for their political ends. Terror has been used by one or both the sides in anti-colonial context, for instance in Algeria by the colonial French administration and the Algerian liberation movement; in disputes between different national groups over possession of a homeland for instance between the Palestinians and the Israelis; in conflicts between religious groups, say the Catholic and the Protestants in Ireland; and in internal conflicts between governments and the rebels for instance in El Salvador.

Modern technology such as automatic weapons, remote controlled explosive devices, air travel, information technology, have given terrorists lots of lethality and mobility to choose their targets. The potency of terrorism continues to increase and terrorism seems to have become a feature of modern political life. International community also fears that terrorists might even lay their hands on weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, biological and chemicals weapons. There have been incidents when terrorist groups have used chemical and biological weapons. Japanese cult AUM Shinrikyo released nerve gas into a Tokyo subway in 1995. After September 11, a number of letters contaminated with anthrax were delivered to political leaders and journalists in the United States, leading to several deaths.

Spread of messianic beliefs, desire to ‘return’ to an imagined ‘golden’ past, ‘Us vs. Them’ syndrome, diasporic solidarity and access to sources of funding are some of the factors in the rise and spread of terrorism. Sense of alienation, say as an outcome of globalisation, and long-held grievances, real or imagined, are other reasons.

In the latter half of the 20th century, among the most prominent terrorist groups have been the the Red Army Faction, the Japanese Red Army, the Red Brigades, the Puerto Rican FALN, groups related to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Shining Path, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In

the 21st centuries some of the most extreme organizations that engaged in terrorism possessed a fundamentalist religious ideology (e.g., *Shamâs* and al-Qaeda). Some groups, including the LTTE, *Shamâs* and Taliban also resorted to suicide bombing to destroy an economic, military political or symbolic target. A brief discussion of these groups follows:

The Red Army Faction (RAF), also known as the Baader–Meinhof Group was a West German far-left militant organization founded in 1970. It was very active in the late 1970s but seems to have decided to dissolve itself in 1998. The West German government as well as most Western media and literature considered the Red Army Faction to be a terrorist organization. The Red Army Faction engaged in a series of bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, bank robberies and shoot-outs with police over the course of three decades. The group seems to revive itself. It was involved in bank dacoity in 2016; but the government described the incident as a criminal and not a terrorist act.

The Japanese Red Army (JRA) was a communist militant group founded in 1971. JRA's stated goals were to overthrow the Japanese government and the monarchy, as well as to start a world revolution. The group was also known as the Anti-Imperialist International Brigade (AIIB), the Holy War Brigade, and the Anti-War Democratic Front. Factions of the Japanese Red Army had close contacts with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in the 1970s.

The Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) was a Puerto Rican underground paramilitary Marxist-Leninist organization that sought to liberate Puerto Rico from US control through an armed struggle. It had wanted to transform Puerto Rico into a socialist state. It carried out more than 130 bomb attacks in the United States between 1974 and 1983. Several of the FALN leaders and activists were arrested and convicted for committing robbery and for possession of firearms and explosives. In 1999, President Bill Clinton offered clemency to sixteen of the convicted militants under the condition that they renounce any kind of violent manifestation.

Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) was a Peruvian revolutionary organization that endorsed Maoism and employed guerrilla tactics and violent terrorism. It was formed in the 1970; its leader Abimael Guzmán believed that the thoughts of Mao Zedong have a solution for Peru's rural poor and the indigenous populations. It thought that a prolonged military offensive alone will liberate Peru from the stranglehold of foreign capital and feudal landowning class. The group indulged in bombing, kidnapping and assassination in the 1980s and had developed strong bases to even attack in urban areas such as Lima city. Guzman was arrested in 1992 and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Shining Path did reorganize itself under Oscar Ramirez Durand who was also captured in 1999. In 2003 Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Committee issued a report stating that 37,800 of the estimated 70,000 deaths in Peru's 20-year insurgency conflict were caused by Shining Path.

In the late 20th century the United States suffered several acts of terrorist violence by Puerto Rican nationalists (such as the FALN), antiabortion groups, and foreign-based organizations. During the 1990s, the deadliest attack on US soil was the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City in 1993 and the Oklahoma City bombing two years later, which killed 168 people. In addition, there were several major terrorist attacks on US government targets overseas, including



military bases in Saudi Arabia in 1996 and the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. In 2000, US naval ship, the USS Cole, was bombed in the Yemeni port of Aden.

### 9.4.2 US' Global War on Terrorism

On 11 September 2001, 19 terrorists hijacked four flights and crashed three of the aeroplanes – two in the twin towers of the World Trade Centre complex in New York and one in Washington, D.C.; the fourth plane fell in the fields in Pennsylvania. This was the deadliest attack on US soil and resulted in the death of as many as 2,977 people.

The Al Qaeda-led attacks prompted US president George W. Bush to declare the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The day after the attacks, Bush said: “Every nation in every region now has a decision to make,” he declared in a national address. “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.” Under the Operation Enduring Freedom, US and its allies began the aerial bombing of Afghanistan on 7 October 2001; ground war started on 19 October with US Special Forces targeting Kandhar. Several other nations– Britain, Turkey, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, France and Poland and others – joined the military campaign to overthrow the Taliban regime and destroy Al Qaeda infrastructure in Afghanistan. Before the year end, rule of Taliban was over; and the US-backed Hamid Karzai has taken over as interim president in June 2002. On 2 May 2011, US Special Forces raided a safe hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan and killed Al Qaeda supremo Osama bin Laden. US officially declared end to the war in Afghanistan as on 28 December 2014; and president Obama announced that some 10,800 US troop would remain in Afghanistan. However, the government headed by President Ashraf Ghani continued to reveal its grave weaknesses; Afghan security forces are not able to hold on to the country. The strength of US troops was raised by the President Donald Trump; more aerial and ground attacks all took place with a view to subdue the Taliban and make them talk peace with Ashraf Ghani government. However, the regrouped Taliban have made a successful return to insurgency and occupy nearly half of Afghan territory. In October 2018, US and Taliban leadership entered into a dialogue on withdrawal of 14,000 US troops and guarantees that Afghan soil will not be used for terrorist activities after US withdrawal. The elected government of president Ghani found itself isolated and marginalized.

US and coalition forces invaded Iraq on 19 March 2003 following intelligence report that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was in possession of the weapons of mass destruction. By end of April, US had declared victory in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was captured from his hideout and was executed on 30 December 2006. On 30 August 2010, US president Barack Obama declared end to the US combat mission in Iraq.

In its scope, expenditure, and impact on international relations, the US' GWOT is compared with Cold War. It was promised to usher in a new phase in international relations and has had important consequences for security, human rights, international law, cooperation, and governance. The GWOT has had many dimensions: in its military dimension, it involved US-led multinational military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, covert operations in Yemen and many other places; and military assistance and cooperation with friendly regimes. Its intelligence dimension was equally important: US reorganized and expanded its

intelligence agencies; new technologies were inducted to gather information so as to preempt and prevent terrorism; it cut off financial resources of the terrorists; and captured terrorist suspects and detained them in Guantanamo Bay without trial. In its diplomatic dimension, GWOT sought to build and maintain a global coalition with partner countries and a public diplomacy campaign to counter anti-American sentiments in the Muslim world. The domestic dimension of the GWOT led US administrations to pass new making laws such as the USA PATRIOT Act, to create new organizations such as the Department of Homeland Security and allowed executive and judicial restrictions on civil liberties besides enhancing control of the borders.

Critics however are of the view that GWOT has not achieved its mission: despite detaining thousands of terror suspects in Guantanamo and other places, terrorist incidents took place after 9/11. Many have criticized the GWOT for its violation of human rights as thousands were detained without trial for years; and torture became an accepted practice. Besides US used unmanned combat drones to kill lots of suspected enemies far away from Afghanistan and Iraq including some who were US citizens. Taliban regime was overthrown but 18 years after, US is now negotiating peace and military withdrawal with the same Taliban leadership. Al Qaeda was down but not out; its affiliates continued with their terrorism mission with bombings in Madrid, London and other places. Al Qaeda affiliates carried out terrorist bombings on 11 March 2004, when four trains were bombed in Madrid resulting in the death of 191 people and injuries to more than 2000. On 7 July 2005, terrorist bombings on the London Underground and atop a double-decker bus killed 52 people and injured more than 700. The growth of Daesh (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant) and the continued wars in Iraq and Syria mean that neither the threat of terrorism has declined nor anti-American sentiments in the Muslim world have disappeared. There are others who criticize GWOT on geostrategic grounds: they argue that the war on terror was a smokescreen for US to advance its expansionist geopolitical agenda – strong military presence in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries; control of the important energy sources and routes; and to counter the strategic challenge posed by various regional powers.

In the case of Iraq, once the regime of Saddam Hussein was overthrown, US had no idea how to create peace and stability in Iraq. It had underestimated the difficulties of building a functioning government from scratch and did not know how to deal with the Sunni-Shia sectarian divide. Under US watch, Iraq sank into chaos and civil war; some 200,000 civilians are reported to have died during 2004-07 when infighting was at its peak in Iraq. It was under US watch that Daesh (ISIL) spread its tentacles in Iraq, Syria and beyond.

President Obama all of a sudden declared GWOT as over in 2013 stating that US would eschew a boundless, vaguely defined “global war on terrorism” in favour of more focused actions against specific hostile groups. He promised to end the wars both in Afghanistan and Iraq although at the end of his presidency in 2016 there were still US troops in both countries. Critics however find Obama’s declaration to end the US’ GWOT as rhetorical. There were important continuities with the policies of Bush administration. The Obama administration, for example, greatly expanded the campaign of targeted killings carried out with drones. Special operations forces were greatly expanded and increasingly deployed to conduct low-profile military interventions in countries outside of acknowledged war zones.

And US security agencies continued to exercise the wide-ranging surveillance powers that they had accumulated during the Bush administration despite protests from civil liberties groups.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Define terrorism and explain its core elements.

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2) Explain the US' GWOT.

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**9.5 THREAT OF TERRORISM: CASE OF INDIA**

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What has been India's experience with terrorism? And how it has dealt with this non-traditional security threat? India's experience with terrorism is highly unusual in scale, scope, and complexity. Since its independence in 1947, India has faced an unusually large and diverse number of terrorist groups – home-grown, cross-border, and transnational. These groups come with very diverse ideological and geographical backgrounds. Scholars point out that political violence in India interacts and intersects in multiple ways with issues of identity and its assertion for separateness and autonomy. Ethnicity, caste and religion feed political violence and terrorism; at the same time, they also impact and shape state's CT response or lack of it. Besides, India has a number of, what is called, internal conflicts which manifest themselves in the form of insurgencies with terrorism as their principal feature. Groups which can be described as 'pure terrorist groups' are not so common. The overlap between insurgency and terrorism makes the task of studying terrorism as a security threat a complex exercise in the context of India. It is not easy to draw a line between terrorism, militancy and insurgency. Analysts also find India's CT and counter-insurgency (COIN) responses ad hoc, inconsistent and even contradictory.

In 2013, there were at least 66 terrorist groups in India. In 2015, India's Ministry of Home Affairs listed 39 banned groups. But the list did not include many groups which were active but were not banned. Then there were groups which were dormant for some time or were involved in some sort of a negotiation with authorities. Given the sheer number and diversity of these non-state actors, a brief and broad description follows:

### 9.5.1 Militancy and Separatism in Jammu and Kashmir

One of the most complex conflicts is on in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The 'Kashmir issue' also has international dimensions. A separate identity and autonomy has been the core issue since the accession of J&K with the Indian Union. Different ethno-religious, separatist insurgent groups emerged in the 1990s carrying various agendas. The pro-independence secessionists led by the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) launched an armed campaign against the Indian state in 1996. JKLF defined Kashmiri nationalism in fairly secular terms but did not hesitate to use the language of Islam to mobilize support. The separatist pro-independence movement was soon taken over by the pro-Pakistan Islamist groups like Hizbul Mujahideen who wanted the merger of J&K with Pakistan. They saw Kashmir as a matter of jihad against an apostate state. Pakistan launched its own proxy war with India and sponsored a number of cross-border Islamist groups with terrorism as their tool. There thus emerged the phenomenon of 'Islamist terrorism' in J&K. A third type of organization emerged in the aftermath of terrorist events of 9/11. Some of the Islamist groups working from across the border gravitated towards Al Qaeda and other international Islamist terrorist and militant groups. Pro-Pakistan groups active in J&K such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) became closer to Al Qaeda. Their expanded ideological horizon and global connections meant that the two organizations launched their terrorist attacks beyond J&K and in other parts of India. Be they local militant groups or cross-border groups working at the behest of the Pakistan state, or others with links with the international terrorist outfits, they all indulged in widespread terrorist acts in J&K and other parts of India. The international collaboration enabled LeT and JeM to evolve both in ideological and tactical terms. LeT carried out 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008 far away from J&K and demonstrated its ability to use modern technology and target high profile buildings in India's business capital.

### 9.5.2 Islamist Terrorism

A fairly long history of communal riots and their marginalization and exclusion has facilitated radicalization of a section of Muslim community. The scale of radicalization and potential to carry out terrorist attacks is not clear, but seems to be limited. There were few home-grown jihadi groups in the 1980s which indulged in some criminal activities; they were assisted by Pakistan intelligence. The demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 led to series of bombings in Mumbai in 1993 which were traced back to Pakistan-based Dawood Ibrahim and the Pakistani intelligence agencies. Besides, groups like the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) emerged. More militant SIMI activists floated the Indian Mujahideen (IM).

Finally, some small footprints of Al Qaeda and Daesh have also been traced. These transnational jihadist groups see India as part of the Crusader-Zionist-Hindu conspiracy against the Muslim community. Reports have emerged that some Indian Muslims participated in the wars in Syria and Iraq under the banner of Daesh.

### 9.5.3 Insurgency in North-East India

Many insurgent movements in India exhibit elements of paramilitarism. Insurgent groups in the North-East states of India have been carrying out terrorist acts for

a long time. The number of insurgent groups and their political agendas is very large and diverse; and this poses complex security challenges for the Indian state. Insurgency became more serious a threat since the 1980s. Of the various insurgencies, the longest and the most intractable perhaps has been the separatist Naga movement. Then there are insurgent movements in Mizoram, Tripura and Manipur. Political unrest and alienation is quite widespread in the North-East. Demand for separation and autonomy in the North-East has its roots in ethnic, tribal and religious identity. Large number of ethnic groups insists on their being separate and distinct from rest of India. Decades of government efforts to contain and manage the ethnic conflicts have not succeeded so far. On the contrary, incidents of pure terrorist attacks by the splinter insurgent groups have increased. Incidents of attacks on the police and security forces have increased in the last ten years or so. Any effort at peace dialogue does not bear results because there are too many splinter groups and factions. North-East states share international borders. Insurgent groups find safe havens in neighbouring countries viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar; and this complicates the task for Indian security forces. In short, security challenges in the North-East are heterogeneous and intractable.

#### **9.5.4 Khalistan Militancy in Punjab**

The northern state of Punjab experienced Sikh militancy during 1978-1993 for the demand of a separate state of Khalistan. A group of armed militants emerged under the leadership of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale enjoying considerable support in the Sikh community in Punjab and abroad. Pakistan had a hand in inflaming the insurgency. However, despite resort to acts of terrorism, the state continued to look at the Khalistani movement more as a law and order problem until 1984. The response of the Indian state came eventually in the form of Operation Blue Star which inflamed violence across the state of Punjab. This was followed by the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards and outbreak of anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and several parts of India. Khalistani terrorism intensified after 1984. A decisive police action, called Operation Black Thunder, launched in 1988 brought an end to the Khalistan insurgency in India. There have been sporadic incidents of violence and terrorism thereafter. Some pro-Khalistan elements remain active abroad within the Sikh diaspora. Like with the militant groups in J&K, media continues to report the support by the Pakistani intelligence agencies to these diasporic Khalistani elements.

#### **9.5.5 Naxalite Movement**

Should Naxalite movement be declared a terrorist movement? There is no easy answer. Violence and terrorism indulged by Naxalite group is rooted in the rural and tribal distress and their sense of long exploitation and oppression by a heavy-handed state. Naxalite movement emerged in the 1970s in West Bengal among rural landless peasants who for generation faced the exploitation and oppression at the hands of the class of landlords. The movement drew inspiration from the writings of Mao Zedong and the 1949 revolution in China which had started from the rural areas. Thus, it is one movement that is based on class and not identity; and it seeks to bring out a new and just social order in place of the existing Indian state. The belief at official level is that development in the areas under Naxal influence shall resolve the problem of Naxalism. But neither development has taken place nor any serious CT action has been launched against

the Naxal violence. As a result, the movement continues to grow and is now spread over nearly 185 of the 602 total districts in India. Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are the most affected states. The movement has also marked its presence in urban areas among factory workers and section of the academia. In recent years, it has increasingly been targeting security personnel and civilian infrastructure for terrorist attacks and destruction. Economic liberalization has among other things also contributed to expansion of illegal mining, quarrying and deforestation; all these have contributed to further strengthening of the Naxal movement. Continued marginalization and exclusion of the tribals, the Dalits, the landless and other rural poor explain the longevity of the movement.

#### Check Your Progress Exercise 4

**Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Explain the many dimensions and shades of violent movements in India and their use of terrorism. Why the state response remains constrained?

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### 9.6 LET US SUM UP

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Non-traditional security has a broadened definition of security: it covers not only the security of the state but also of the communities. As a perspective to study IR, NTS perspective highlights nature and sources of new types of threats to security. NTS threats always there but admittedly have exacerbated in the post-Cold War era. Be that as it may, NTS threats are often transnational and cross-border in their potency and magnitude. They cannot obviously be met by a single sovereign state. NTS threats demand regional and even global response. This calls for a change in the behaviour of state and greater movement towards regional governance norms and mechanisms.

NTS threats were always there; but they were not considered as security threats. What really makes them significant threats are now the scale, speed and ability to transmit fast of these threats.

Terrorism is a major non-traditional security threat. One reason why it is difficult to tackle it is that the threat remains elusive. Also, it is not easy to conceptualise terrorism. Analysts nevertheless have found some core elements in terrorism which distinguishes it from revolutionary movements and insurgencies. Terrorism works to build fear in the mind of the populace in general and deliberately seeks to target the innocent civilians. Lack of coordination among sovereign states and the fact that states continue to shift their position depending on what is in their national interest are factors as to why international terrorism continues to pose threat to international peace and security. A good case in this regard is the trajectory of American war on terrorism.

Terrorism is a non-traditional security threat that has afflicted India since its independence. The case study of India indicates that terrorism is an intractable issue. It is embedded in domestic politics, identity politics and demands for separation. State response in the form of counter terrorism (CT) and counter insurgency (COIN) measures have been ad hoc, inconsistent and often constrained by domestic political and electoral calculations.

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## 9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Your answer should include following.
  - A discussion of the meaning and content of non-traditional security threats.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Your answer should include following.
  - Changing dynamics of state sovereignty in the context of NTS threats.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

- 1) Your answer should include following.
  - Identify the core elements of terrorism.
  - Discuss GWOT.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 4**

- 1) Your answer should include following.
  - Explain violent political movements and their use of terrorism.

