
UNIT 13 SECURITY CONCERNS

Structure

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Defining Security

13.3 India's Traditional Security Concerns

13.3.1 Bilateral Issues with Neighbouring Countries

13.4 Non-Traditional Challenges

13.4.1 Terrorism and Extremism

13.4.2 Energy Security

13.4.3 Cyber Security

13.5 Let Us Sum Up

13.6 Some Useful References

13.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

13.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, you will be reading about India's security concerns. Security is broad and contested a concept; and nowadays almost anything and everything can be studied from security perspective.

After reading this Unit, you would be able to:

- Understand the concept of security;
- Explain the changing nature of security in the age of globalization;
- Analyze India's security concerns in the context of globalization;
- Describe traditional challenges confronting India's security; and
- Non-traditional security threats facing India.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

India faces various security challenges in the contemporary globalised world. Newer areas of conflict and contestation are emerging making the security threats and challenges multidimensional and multifaceted in this age of globalization. Although after seven decades of its independence India does not face any existential threat to its security however, in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world the security concerns have multiplied, become intense and are of global in nature.

It is important to understand the broad historical context in which the current security concerns confronting India needs to be evaluated. During the early years of India's independence, under the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership, various efforts were made to build closer partnerships with the countries of Asia and Africa. The Conference of the Asian Relations organized in New Delhi in 1949 and the Bandung Conference in 1955 were some of the crucial initiatives undertaken on the idea of forging the Afro-Asian unity. At the same time India in an attempt to avoid binaries of Cold War adopted an independent policy of 'Non-alignment' to keep away from both the Western and the Socialist bloc. The country's foreign policy was focused on maintaining strategic autonomy keeping distance from bloc politics. India's Non-alignment and its own economic policy of import substitution and quest for self sufficiency resulted into a more idealistic foreign policy.

However, the end of Cold War changed the entire scenario. The unipolar world was now witnessing the forces of globalization, liberalization and resurgence of idea of regionalism. India launched its economic liberalization programme in 1991, in an attempt to be integrated into liberal international economic order. Flow of Western capital and technology, turnaround in India's relations with the US, India's entry into ASEAN Regional Forum were the major shifts from India's earlier position on Non-alignment. The launch of the 'Look East' policy was a watershed event in the history of India's integration with the world.

Therefore, India gradually moved from cautious isolationism to more active engagement with regional multilateral institutions in the post-Cold War period. In recent years, with the modern armed forces and rising economic growth, India has emerged as one of the major Asian giants with quest for great power status, resulting in significant shifts in India's strategic policies. At the same time, significant changes in the world's political and economic scenario since the early 1990s have resulted into a more integrated and interconnected world, which has also redefined the idea of security and security challenges.

13.2 DEFINING SECURITY

The concept of security is always changing and expanding in some meaningful ways. The concept has become broad and anything and everything can be covered under it. Paul Williams rightly says that the concept of security “saturates the contemporary societies all around the world”; and this makes it a fascinating and important topic of discussion. Security is an omnipresent concept for the policy makers, yet there is no unanimously accepted definition of the term. The United Nations, Department for Disarmament Affairs in report for 1986 defines security as “a condition in which states consider that there is no danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion, so that they are able to pursue freely their own development and progress”.

The debate on the meaning of security is the reflection of new conditions of global politics engendered by escalating globalization. In the aftermath of the Cold War, many competing visions of new geopolitics are being articulated and the conventional representations and understandings of the concept of security are being subjected to an interdisciplinary scrutiny by peace researchers, international relations scholars and the occasional defence-strategic studies expert. There is a growing acknowledgment that security should be understood as a subjective, elastic and essentially contested concept and, therefore, studied in a manner that at least acknowledges socio-economic and environmental components alongside political and military ones.

In the traditional view of security, the main instrument is the military, and the only security referent is the state. However, in the post-Cold War era, the concept of security as the absence of existential threats to the state emerging from another state has come under serious criticism. A new discipline of ‘security studies’, has emerged which identifies it as an all-encompassing concept, unlike conventional approach. Earlier the threats were due to acts of violence by state actors, and the disputes used to involve recognised, sovereign, independent countries. However, the emergence of the non-state actors has changed the scenario; today more earnest issues at hand are non-military in nature such as climate change, natural disasters, infectious diseases, food shortages, irregular migration, drug trafficking, smuggling of persons and such other transnational crimes. The events of September 11, 2001, and November 26, 2008, and subsequent perceptions of terrorist threats have resulted in a reappraisal of the meaning of security. It is still about protecting the security and well-being of a nation’s citizens but instead of overt threats from military sources, the threats are veiled and perhaps even ‘unthinkable’. These new challenges are being labeled as ‘non-traditional security’ (NTS) challenges and are changing the way the idea of security is understood. That said; however, it should be recognized that traditional threats from inter-state conflicts though diminished relatively in significance but have not disappeared completely

After much debate on security issues or threat agendas, the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenge, and Changes (2004), identified six major areas of security challenges:

“economic and social threats, inter-state conflict, internal conflicts, nuclear, chemical, biological weapons, terrorism and transnational organized crimes”. Therefore, aim of the state should be to ensure comprehensive and cooperative security at individual as well as national, regional and international level through bilateral and multilateral efforts against the common dangers but at the same time national security remains most significant concern for the states.

Similarly to evaluate India’s security concerns as well it is important to analyze the issue from both the angle of traditional concerns and non-traditional concerns.

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.

1) In the light of the changing dimension of security, discuss India’s security concerns.

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13.3 INDIA’S TRADITIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

Over the past seven decades since independence India’s foreign policy has travelled from ‘idealism’ to ‘pragmatism’. India being a heterogeneous nation, one of the main challenges for the country has been to manage that diversity and assimilation of diverse ethnic, religious cultural and regional identities with the national identity. These differences have also resulted into social polarization and fragmentation and identity politics. Therefore, the foremost domestic challenge for the state in India has been to maintain unity and values of inclusion in a diverse society. At the same time many of India’s regional and global security concerns are linked with its domestic security problems.

In the realm of foreign policy the focus is often on external challenges to the country’s security. India’s geographical location makes India surrounded with unstable and dysfunctional states, creating a challenging regional security environment. The entire Indo-Pacific region, in which India is centrally located, is undergoing an unprecedented transformation in its security outlook with complex and at times competitive interests of regional and global powers. As world economic and

political centre of gravity shifts towards the Indo-Pacific region, the region is becoming an area of power-politics among number of regional and extra regional players. Under such circumstances India faces significant security concerns given the policies and actions of some of the important players in the region.

13.3.1 Bilateral Issues with Neighbouring Countries

China: One of the crucial issues in India's foreign policy has always been its relationship with its northern neighbor China. The rise of China and her quest for dominance in Asia and in the world has put forward a new set of questions and complications not just for India but also challenging the Western supremacy in the world. China initiated economic reforms much before India and has been experiencing rapid economic growth since then. The successive economic growth over the years has fuelled the country's defence budget, making it a formidable military power. China's economic and military rise and its power projection capabilities seems to be challenging the regional and global balance of power.

As the world witnesses the rise of two Asia giants, China and India, simultaneously it will create certain complication. Earlier, their domain of competition was continental but now the competition has shifted to maritime sphere. India and China's great power aspirations and their quest for security have compelled the two powers what Robert Kaplan says, "to redirect their gaze from land to seas". Both are emerging as significant naval powers in the Indo-Pacific region with sustained economic growth which is highly dependent on the continued, uninterrupted supply of energy products, raw materials and finished products for markets elsewhere transported mainly by the sea routes in Indian Ocean and the contiguous waters. Therefore, both the countries also have a stake in continued regional peace and stability.

China-India relations have some chapters of bitter history, the 1962 war and continued border issues, the Doklam standoff being the most recent one in 2017 when the 73 day standoff in the tri-boundary region in Himalayas where the Bhutan-China-India borders meet, created tension between the two countries. Both the countries have complex and at times competitive interests in their race for wealth, energy and influence. They are increasingly becoming involved in competition in Africa in search of resources, oil and gas in Central Asia and in their ambition of great power status.

Over the years there has been a lot of noise about China's earlier contested 'strings of pearls' strategy aimed at encirclement of India. Now China has made its intentions publicly clear with its Belt and Road initiative (BRI) which includes development of massive maritime and land based connectivity infrastructure in the region, reviving the ancient 'silk road' concept. New Delhi has expressed displeasure over the China's BRI, particularly given India's reservations over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Given the concerns, India had refused to attend the Belt Road Forum in Beijing

in 2017.

China's activities in neighboring waters in recent years have been worrying for India. The outward maritime orientations of China in the Indian Ocean region are generating apprehensions in Indian strategic circles about her real intentions. China has funded a series of support facilities in friendly countries along with the Ocean's northern seaboard in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and smaller island including Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles. Particularly the Gwadar port, on the southwest coast of Pakistan has attracted a lot of attention due to its strategic location, at about 70 kilometers from the Iranian border and 400 kilometers east of the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil supply route. China has also set up its first official overseas base in the Djibouti. Though China has never acknowledged it and has explained that these infrastructures are for purely commercial purpose. But all of this is unnerving India, engendering a classic security dilemma between the two Asian giants because China's naval capabilities have direct bearing on the area which is strategically important to India. Whatever China's vision, together with its expansive military budget, its growing footprint across the globe has created concerns among the neighbours. Ironically, this distrust between the two countries is harboured alongside healthy economic and trade relations between the two.

Pakistan: Another country with which India has history of bitter relations is Pakistan. Since the partition and the creation of two nations in 1947, India-Pakistan relationship has been rocky. The two countries have been involved in four wars and numerous border clashes and skirmishes. Some analysts go to the extent of saying that both the nations are always in a perpetual state of war.

Kashmir has been the bedrock issue between both the nations, particularly, with rising discontent and a **volatile situation in Kashmir time and again**. Cross border terrorism and ceasefire violations from the Pakistani side have always been major irritants. **Terrorism**, particularly targeting India which is bred on Pakistani soil is yet another major issue which has mired the bilateral relationship. India has accused Pakistan of adding fuel to the disturbances and glorifying terrorists by declaring them, martyrs.

India has always adopted the policy of peaceful engagement with Pakistan on all fronts. India has emphasized for dialogue and confidence building on all outstanding issues including economic, cultural and people-to-people contact. On the economic front, India has pushed for enhanced trade and commercial engagement and granted Pakistan Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status. However, Pakistan has directly or indirectly held such economic and cultural engagements hostage to the Kashmir issue. Doubts regarding the Pakistan's sincerity in seeking a solution were reinforced by

its repeated sabotage of peace initiatives. This did not merely occur in the aftermath of Vajpayee's Lahore bus diplomacy in the form of Kargil, but also happened after Modi's late December 2015 visit to Pakistan in the form of the Pathankot attack in early January 2016. India has found it difficult to restart the dialogue because of acts supported by a nexus between state agencies and non-state actors. The Mumbai attacks (2008), the case of beheading of Indian soldiers (2013) and the Pathankot and Uri attacks (2017) prove this point.

Indian's concern in the region is also to counter the threat posed by joint Sino-Pak activities in the Indian Ocean region, given the historical animosity between India and Pakistan, and closer relationship between Pakistan and China. In an event of a conflict, the possibilities of Sino-Pakistan alliance could be detrimental to India. Deep sea port of Gwadar in Pakistan does provide China with a 'listening post' from where it can 'monitor US naval activity in the Persian Gulf, Indian activity in the Arabian Sea, and future US-Indian maritime cooperation activities in the Indian Ocean'. Though Pakistan's naval capabilities alone do not pose any challenge to India, the combination of the Chinese and Pakistani naval forces can indeed be formidable for India to counter.

In recent years, to deal with challenges from Pakistan, India has been taking retaliatory actions against those elements and locations along the Line of Control (LoC) that are complicit in perpetrating cross border terrorism. The surgical strikes 2016 were an example of this approach. India has also made an attempt to expose Pakistan's complicity in employing terrorism as a state policy at various multilateral platforms like ASEAN, BRICS and UN. The BRICS 2017 declaration specifically named Pakistan-based terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) as terrorist groups of concern. Therefore, the relationship with Pakistan has always been one of the major concerns in India's security and strategic policy calculus.

Apart from the bilateral relationships the regional geopolitics and interplay among the different players like China, Japan, Pakistan, US, Russia and relationships with other neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia are analysed keenly given considerations in India's strategic policy formation.

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) Discuss major traditional security challenges facing India in the present scenario.

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13.4 NON-TRADITIONAI SECURITY CHALLENGES

The process of globalization and technological revolution on the one hand brought a revolution in the world economic and technical progress. However, very same processes that have brought with them so many benefits have also exposed our collective vulnerability. The benefits of globalization have been uneven and new challenges have been thrown up like growing inequity and inequality across and within nations, volatility in the financial market and environmental degradation, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and groups of radicals, extremists, fundamentalists, hackers, pirates and terrorists have sought to exploit new environment to gain asymmetrical advantage. Such transnational challenges from non-state actors have become even more significant in the contemporary times.

13.4.1 Terrorism and Extremism

A 2006 report of India’s Defence Ministry had noted that “India is closely monitoring the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as well as increasing incidents of terrorism including state sponsored and political violence with its attendant repercussions on the security of India”. India has been at the receiving end of terrorists attacks for a long now. Cross border terrorism has been a major security concern for India for a long time. India has faced deadly terrorist attacks in the past including the 1993 in Bombay, 2001 attack on Indian Parliament, 2008 Mumbai attacks to mention a few in a series of bloody terrorist incidents throughout major cities of the country. India has continuously criticized Pakistan’s role as a haven for a variety of militant groups and sponsoring cross-border terrorism particularly in Jammu and Kashmir. However, India’s criticism and international pressure has not deterred Pakistan’s continued patronage of Lashkar-i-Tayyiba and other militant groups operating in Kashmir. Afghanistan-Pakistan region, along with Central Asia and northern Africa, continues to remain a hot bed for terrorism. Al-Qaeda, Indian Mujahidin (IM), Lashkar-i-Tayyiba, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islam (HuJI) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Haqqani network and the ISIS, are major terrorist organizations in the region. India also has been confronted with the challenge of possible links between domestic insurgents and extremist groups such as SIMI,

their like-minded elements in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan.

It is important for the country to develop a robust counter-terrorism response mechanism. The major initiative after the Mumbai attacks has been the creation of a new National Investigation Agency (NIA), empowered to investigate cases of terrorism and organized crime and streamline the existing mechanism. Multi Agency Centre (MAC) was created at Delhi, for streamlining intelligence efforts to combat terrorism in 2002, re-operationalized with effect from 2009, in the aftermath of 2008 Mumbai attacks. MAC was converted eventually into National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), to share information. India also sought to deepen counter-terrorism cooperation and information sharing in maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance with friendly countries. India has also continuously deployed for such activities at various regional and global multilateral platforms. In the field of terrorism and extremism a major challenge is to deal with the nexus of state and non-state actors.

Terrorism as a challenge is also linked to other non-traditional threats like piracy, drug, arms and human trafficking. As often groups committing these crimes operate in concert with each other. Drug trafficking results in money laundering, the funds from the sale of drugs are used to support gun-running and terrorist activities. Added to these is the transnational security concern of human smuggling with its manifold effects, from fuelling terrorism to illegal immigration, resulting in socio-political instability. Border protection is a major issue in the maritime domain as maritime borders can be more porous than land and air borders

13.4.2 Energy Security

The economic development of a state is closely linked to its trade and energy supply. India's fragile energy security is under severe strain from its rising dependence on imported oil, regulatory uncertainty and opaque natural gas pricing policies, small pool of skilled manpower and poorly developed upstream infrastructure and dependence on fossil fuels as the dominant source of energy in the near future. Coal, oil and natural gas are the most important sources of primary energy in India. Inadequate domestic supplies of these hydrocarbons are forcing the country to increase its import. In precise terms, energy security means that we should be able to meet the country's growing needs of non-renewable petroleum products. India's oil consumption is expected to rise to 245 million tonnes annually by 2020 and our import dependency will rise to nearly 85 per cent. **India aims to supply 25 per cent of electricity from nuclear power by 2050.** For that imported uranium is required. This would also reduce India's dependence on greenhouse gas emitting hydrocarbons, as much of India's electricity generation depends on environmentally unsustainable coal. Coal is in abundance; and India will continue to generate electricity from coal-based power plants – environmental objections notwithstanding – simply because it is the most cost effective way of producing electricity. At

present, the contribution of nuclear power to India's energy sector still remains very low, hovers around three percent of the total. So, developing nuclear energy could be one solution to the energy needs of India.

Energy security is a growing concern in India given the increasing energy requirement of the developing economy. Since most trade including oil and natural gas of the South Asian states including India, is seaborne, sea lanes form the lifeline of these countries. As the international energy market is dependent on reliable transport mostly sea based, even the temporary blockage of a choke point can lead to a substantial increase in total energy costs.

India's geographical location puts it at the crossroads of some of major trading routes in the international commerce, passing through the Indo-Pacific region. The Strait of Hormuz leading out of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Malacca linking the Indian and the Pacific Oceans are two of the world's most strategic choke points. A large volume of international long haul maritime cargo from the Persian Gulf, Africa and Europe transits through the Indian Ocean. The disruption of these sea lanes, even temporarily, can lead to substantial increases in energy costs. Imports to South Asia from West Asia utilize the Strait of Hormuz. Closure of the Strait – along with the rise in maritime traffic, the variety and intensity of threats including piracy, maritime terrorism and inter-state conflicts, which are all expected to show a proportional rise – may challenge energy security in the region.

High prices and a growing sense of supply scarcity have led to new tensions among the major oil importing countries in Asia and elsewhere due to concerns about access to global energy supplies. Within this context, some analysts suggest that 'resource wars', largely over energy, will be one of the defining characteristics of the twenty-first century. Supply chain dynamics are the key to energy. At the same time sustainable utilization of resources is also a need of hour.

With limited resources and limitless ambitions is the root cause of the problem. Security of energy has two aspects. We may well have to worry about the security of future oil resources in different parts of the globe, and we may also have to provide security to the long and vulnerable supply chains, stretching across the globe, to keep them safe from any interruption.

13.4.3 Cyber Security

India over the past year has seen a sharp increase in the incidence of data breach and cyber-attacks across sectors and company sizes. Cyberspace is the connected internet ecosystem. Cyber intrusions and attacks have increased dramatically over the last decade, exposing sensitive personal and business information, disrupting critical operations, and imposing high costs on the economy. Cyber security is protecting our cyber space from attack, damage, misuse and economic espionage. Cyber space has inherent vulnerabilities that cannot be removed. Nation states, non-state actors, and individuals are all capable of waging such attacks. It is again a transnational challenge facing the

global community.

India ranks third in terms of the highest number of internet users in the world after US and China. India secures a spot amongst the top 10 spam-sending countries in the world alongside US. India ranked third in 2018 in the list of countries where the highest number of cyber threats were detected and second in terms of targeted attacks in 2017, according to security software firm Symantec. The recent threats like ‘wannacry ransomware’ in 2017 or the facebook data breach which reportedly also affected millions of Indian users. Banking systems, surveillance systems, industrial control systems and medical industry are the most probable affected sectors. As artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning gathers pace, and starts to impact more and more industries, it’s sure to play a bigger role in cyber security. Currently, the Information Act, 2000 is the primary law for dealing with cybercrime and digital commerce in the country. India is at number 23 of the UN Global Cyber Security Index (GCI) 2017. Cyber security is one of most recent new age security concern. In the present digital age, the Indian Government has been taking serious steps to prevent cybercrimes and build a safe and secure cyber network in the country.

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) Evaluate major non-traditional security challenges facing India in the 21st Century.

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13.5 LET US SUM UP

Therefore, above mentioned are some of the major challenges facing India in the 21st Century globalised world. The region surrounding India is becoming increasingly contested strategic space with the growing interests of regional and extra-regional players. At the same time threats from non-military sources and non-state actors are becoming sinister in recent times.

Rapidly changing regional balance of power is creating a tricky geopolitical environment, resulting in new set of competition and contestations in the region. India remains fully committed to maintaining peace and stability in the region and global context through effective diplomacy including confidence building measures, dialogue, bilateral, multilateral engagements and credible military deterrence. India needs to focus on long term strategy to deal with security concerns in a fluid global security environment. There is a need to recognise and deal with security challenges at national, regional and global level by adopting a multi-pronged strategy.

13.6 SOME USEFUL RESFEENCES

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13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) Your answer should be based on Section 13.2.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Your answer should be based on Section 13.3.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) Your answer should be based on Section 13.4.

