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P6/b(6)

Subject: Trip Report - Key Aspects of the India Foundation CT Conference in Jaipur, India from March 18-21

[LYNCH India CT Conf Trip Report \(March 2015\).pdf](#)

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Attached, please find my short summary of some of the key aspects I observed at the India Foundation – hosted Counterterrorism Conference in Jaipur India held last week from March 18-21. I attended as a panel participant and had the opportunity to remain for the entire conference in Jaipur.

As you will see in this report, I found the Conference to be an excellent window into evolving security and counterterrorism policy deliberations ongoing in the government of Prime Minister Modi.

As already mentioned to several of you, I will be happy to schedule a sit-down with you in coming weeks to discuss more of the details from this conference not provided in detail on this summary trip report.

Best,

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Indian Counter-Terrorism Conference 2015; Jaipur, India

March 26, 2015

By Thomas F. Lynch III

Executive Summary

From March 18-21, 2015, the India Foundation (IF) hosted a Counter-Terrorism Conference at the Marriott Hotel in Jaipur, India. The event was sponsored by the Chief Minister of the Indian State of Rajasthan, Ms. Vaundhara Raje, and was co-hosted by the Sardar Patel University of Policy, Security and Criminal Justice, Jaipur.

I was invited by IF organizers to speak on a March 21 conference panel on the implications of the Islamic State of Syria and al Sham (ISIS) for al Qaeda, global jihad and jihad in South Asia. That paper, reformatted for inclusion in the final conference report, will be circulated separately.

One of the largest, if not the largest, private conference ever held in India on the topic of counter-terrorism (CT), this IF event featured presentations by four senior Indian government officials and dozens of international terrorism experts – researchers, academics and practitioners – who gave speeches and conducted panel plenary sessions in the three day event.

The conference was also noteworthy in that it provided a venue for many members of the recently elected BJP government of Prime Minister Modi to speak on counterterrorism topics in an open forum, providing detailed insights about the perspectives and approaches to this perennial security challenge being taken in the first year of the Modi government. Conference speeches were made by the Indian National Security Advisor, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister of State for Home

Affairs (Security) and the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

International counterterrorism experts from a dozen countries, including the United States, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Canada, France, Italy, Bangladesh, Nepal, Germany and Afghanistan, participated in sixteen panels over the three days of conference.

This trip report will focus on the major speeches & presentations by senior serving Indian cabinet ministers and others in the Indian government. These offered insight into the evolving dynamics of Indian security and counter-terrorism policy under the new government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Presentations by these government figures established several overarching Indian CT themes:

- *Prime Minister Narendra Modi is actively looking for a “new approach” to counter-terrorism for India.*
- *For India, international counter-terrorism policies have produced too few results to justify the exorbitant costs:*
 - *Trillions of \$US spent on counter-terrorism programs across the world;*
 - *Yet, terrorism’s impact is wider and more violent than it was back in 2001.*
- *A new Indian counter-terrorism model/paradigm must explicitly address state sponsored terrorism in a robust way.*
- *Unlike its predecessors, the Modi government welcomes strategy and policy input from private Indian think tanks.*

Opening Keynote Speech: Indian National Security Advisor

On the evening of Wednesday, March 18, India National Security Advisor (I-NSA) to Prime Minister Modi, gave the conference opening keynote. Introduced by former Indian Army Chief of Staff and India Foundation Board Member, General V.P. Malik, I-NSA Ajit Doval gave a strong opening set of remarks focused upon his assessment of the global war on terrorism – as fought since President Bush’s declaration of that war on September 21, 2001. His presentation took place before a packed audience of some 200 delegates with a very large India press corps covering.

Mr. Doval brought to his presentation a perspective developed during a half year as Prime Modi’s National Security Advisor and a thirty year career in India’s Intelligence Bureau (IB), including the last ten as IB director.

Doval’s thoughtful and thought provoking keynote anchored on his assessment of the last 13 years of the global war on terrorism and thoughts on what more must be done in the coming years. His perspective was important for his voice is the first among those advising Prime Minister Modi in the ongoing process of revising India’s national security strategy – the first for this 2014-elected government after ten years in opposition status.

I-NSA Doval stated that while there had been some notable achievements during the past 13 years of a global war on terrorism – including those of enhanced intelligence sharing and commitment to collaboration among many national police and customs officials – that, on balance, the struggle had produced too few positives for the costs incurred. Doval referred to recent studies in the US and elsewhere that have pegged costs for the global war on terrorism to have cost America at some \$1.7 trillion dollars in direct military, security assistance and veterans affairs costs and the entire world about \$7.8 trillion. And yet, Doval observed, the reach and the intensity of terrorism – particularly that

associated with radical Islamist groups – has become worse than witnessed in early September 2001.

I-NSA Doval asserted that his experience suggested that the main problems with the strategy over these past years were threefold: (1) there was no universally accepted definition of terrorism; (2) certain government “geopolitical perspectives” limited the depth and value of intelligence sharing; and, most importantly, (3) there has been a failure to directly confront state sponsors of terrorism.

Doval’s discussion of both the challenges of “geopolitical perspectives” and state sponsors of terrorism were clearly aimed at Pakistan.

Doval provided the audience with clear hints as to what he’s thinking of recommending in terms of a new Indian CT focus and likely international initiative. He said that the way ahead for improved CT required three points of attention: (1) the international community must clearly name state sponsors of terrorism and confront them directly; (2) there should be a UN-agreed definition of terrorism that obligated governments to act against groups, organizations and states providing direct or indirect assistance to terrorists with clear sanctions; and, (3) efforts must be taken to do CT in a more efficient manner.

Doval’s comments about Pakistan were not surprising – Indian policymakers and security officials have consistently railed against Pakistan perfidy in the global war on terrorism and pointed fingers at Islamabad for safeguarding a rogues’ gallery of Islamic terrorist groups. What was new from Doval was the direct and explicit language he used in singling-out Pakistan – a marked contrast to the more elliptical language used by Indian governments over the past decade to call-out Pakistan without using its name directly.

Inaugural Keynote Speech: Indian Home Minister

On the morning of Thursday, March 19, Indian Home Secretary, Rajnath Singh made the conference inaugural speech to a packed conference

hall of more than 200 delegates. If possible, there were more Indian press in attendance than at the address by I-NSA Doval the previous evening.

Minster Singh came to his appointment as Indian Home Minister from years as the Hindu National Party Chief Minister of the province of Uttar Pradesh (UP). UP is a province that has a large Muslim population and a longstanding history requiring the delicate management of inter-community tensions between Hindus and Muslims in a manner to inhibit communal rioting and other forms of violence. In 2014, UP again had the highest number of communal violence incidents (129) and people killed (25) of any province in India.

Interior Minister Singh began his remarks with some comments about ISIS, noting that its international appeal was concerning as its focus on the “brutality of youth” underscored a rejection of the democratic principles and human dignity that the state of India was known for. He expressed relief that, to this point at least, there had only been a handful of Indian youth who had succumbed to the appeal to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The Minister credited this to the strength of the Indian core family and the manner in which Indian Muslims are incorporated into the mainstream of the national fabric.

Minister Singh stated that he had a great concern about the destructive power of “new electronic media.” He lamented the growing linkages between cybercrime and the terrorist world. He also observed that the “understanding and management of media from outside India” was a large and growing concern.

Highlighting a conference-wide theme, the Interior Minister called-out Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) for its state sponsorship of terrorism. He appealed for better cross-border cooperation to fight trans-border terrorism – cooperation between intelligence, law enforcement and security agencies.

Minister Singh finished his remarks by echoing one of the key themes of the conference: he needed and welcomed private Indian think tank inputs on how to best combat terrorism.

Presentation on CT Intelligence Sharing and Reform: Chairman of India Joint Intelligence Committee

The Chairman of India’s Joint Intelligence Committee, RN Ravi, was a feature afternoon panelist on March 19. Ravi contributed to a panel discussing intelligence sharing and reform, offering some very illuminating commentary during his presentation and subsequent answers to questions.

Unsurprisingly, Chairman Ravi’s formal remarks advanced the premise that intelligence sharing is a critical element for proper counter-terrorism actions. He stated that, “counter-terrorism is the business of pre-emption...,” placing this as the first element for intelligence agency focus.

Chairman Ravi said that India has 24 total entities that collect intelligence relevant to countering terrorism, and that his Joint Intelligence Committee had grown up over the past decade working to assure that these agencies shared their information in a robust and timely manner. He indicated that while intra-India counter-terrorism intelligence sharing had places to improve, in general it now has a strong set of protocols and linkages that allow for effective identification and action against major emerging threats.

On the matter of international sharing of intelligence for counter-terrorism, Chairman Ravi had strongly positive comments about recent Indian collaboration with three neighboring countries: Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. He stated that effective sharing protocols had been established with these nations in recent years and that a good and positive process of intelligence sharing was ongoing. He also noted that bi-lateral Indian intelligence sharing with a wide array of international governments took place during preparations for the 2010 Commonwealth Games in

New Delhi, and that a safe and drama-free games came about as a result.

Chairman Ravi then stated that many challenges to consistent and effective international intelligence sharing for counter-terrorism remained. He listed three major factors inhibiting better global counter-terrorism intelligence sharing:

- *Geopolitical differences.* Chairman Ravi observed that democratic governments take a different approach toward sharing than authoritarian governments – thus inhibiting many forms of sharing between, for example, India and China. Ravi indicated that the same thing was true when it came to efforts at coordination and sharing between Islamic states and non-Islamic ones, where differences in cultural imperatives hindered full and complete exchange.
- *Worry of asset compromise.* Ravi acknowledged that all intelligence agencies fear too much sharing for that might compromise sources and methods.
- *State sponsorship of terrorism.* Ravi made this as a general point, but there was no doubt that he meant it to be mainly leveled at Pakistan – implying that India's major counter-terrorism intelligence deficiency was because there was no bilateral cooperation with the state sponsor of the major groups planning and executing terrorism against India.

Chairman Ravi ended his remarks with a review of the conditions that cause terrorism from his perspective. He listed three: individual and/or group alienation from its surrounding society; an acute sense of injustice; and “Devine manipulation” by an outside agent to respond to the alienation and injustice with violence.

Ravi also welcomed private Indian security think tank inputs into the intelligence collection and sharing processes to best counter terrorism.

Presentations on Indian CPI-Maoist Insurgency: Joint Secretary for Internal Security & Senior Advisor to Ministry of Home Affairs

During an afternoon panel on March 19 that focused on the use of terrorism by Indian left-wing extremist groups, the Indian Joint Secretary for Internal Security and later the Senior Advisor in the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs made presentations on the status of the left-wing, Naxalite (Maoist), movement in India.

Joint Secretary M.A Ganapathy argued that the Maoist movement in India was now, “down but not out.” He observed that the worst years of the Maoist insurgency for India were in 2009-10 when insurgency deaths reached a peak of over 1,000 killed, and violence was present across nine (9) Indian provinces and in 56 Indian districts. By 2014, these numbers had been reduced to around 100 killed and insurgency violence present in just 24 Indian districts.

Ganapathy attributed ongoing government success against the Maoist insurgents to a combination of improved policies and corresponding Maoist failures.

Ganapathy argued that the central government of India should be credited with several successful initiatives beginning in 2010. First, the government took steps to increase the costs to Maoist insurgent group operations – financial and physical costs. Second, the central government deployed an additional 66 paramilitary security battalions (Central Police & Security Forces – CPSF) into the field where the insurgency had been winning against small and poorly trained local police. Third, the government built 444 new police stations in affected areas and regenerated the policing capability in those areas. Fourth, the government established a civil development program in the worst affected areas. Finally, government security forces worked more effectively in combined-action environment where economic development and human rights were established in the communities

most vulnerable to Naxalite recruiting and propaganda.

Joint Secretary Ganapathy observed that these five factors interacted with two organizational failures by the Maoists themselves. First, the Maoists failed to generate a message of systematic economic exploitation to the degree necessary for serious attention in Indian urban areas – urban areas where the gulf between rich and poor is great and growing every year. Second, the Maoists have lost the “mindspace” in India. The Maoist ideology of class conflict has limited appeal outside of very primitive and tribal areas in India, and most Indian youth have moved onto other causes and other areas of activism in the wider Indian economy.

Ganapathy concluded with his assessment that over the next 3-5 years, the Naxalite movement would be made smaller and pushed into limited areas where its influence and the impact of its violence would become negligible issues for the nation.

Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Home Affairs, K. Vijay Kumar, a former commander of Indian internal security forces, shared many of Joint Secretary Ganapathy’s conclusions. Kumar stated that Maoist gains before 2010 had often come largely because local governments and security officials mis-assessed and mishandled the problems of the disgruntled Indian minority groups in rural areas. In his opinion, once the central government got serious with a dual program of increased paramilitary security presence and a wider number of local economic development programs, the Naxalites began to wane.

Senior Advisor Kumar observed that where once the Naxalite problem was seriously affecting 9 states of India, by 2014 80% of Naxalite insurgent activities affected only three (3) Indian states. Kumar stated that the ongoing Indian efforts to counter the Naxalites would soon begin focusing on 30 key districts in these 3 states, enabling more concentrated efforts matching gradually applied paramilitary enforcement with legal reforms and development activities.

Both Ganapathy and Kumar acknowledged that complete defeat of the Naxalites remained several years away. But, they highlighted that Indian central government commitment to economic development in the main insurgency regions had clear promise to reduce the preconditions that had led to such a lengthy and durable Naxalite insurgency, one that has waxed and waned in India since 1967.

Valedictory Presentation by Indian Home Minister for Security Affairs

On the afternoon of March 21, Indian Home Minister for Security Affairs Kirin Rijuju, made the final, valedictory speech for the conference.

Minister Rijuju began by thanking the conference organizers and promising that his office would welcome the reports and recommendations from the conference as part of its review of Indian counter-terrorism strategy.

Home State Minister Rijuju observed that he is challenged daily with major internal security matters including those of terrorism, insurgency, and large scale crime. Minister Rijuju noted that in the past two days alone, paramilitary units from his office had dealt with the violent attack against a police station in Jammu & Kashmir and in response to an insurgent shadow government that had developed in the northeast India state of Arunachal Pradesh. These and other serious security matters he noted must be addressed as a serious matter and with domestic and international cooperation.

Minister Rijuju stated that he believed no international “fringe element” could be ignored, and all must be understood for their potential to threaten India and her interests – domestically as well as internationally. The state security minister observed that a more complex world was developing a more complex set of Indian national security challenges – and that these must be dealt with in a new and comprehensive fashion. Minister Rijuju thanked all participants for their role in shaping that more appropriate and effective future Indian counter-terrorism response.

A Word on Featured International Speakers

Conference organizers from the India Foundation (IF) – prominently affiliated with the Hindu Nationalist Party of the current national government and the government of the province of Rajasthan – provided speakers from a variety of points of view. Yet there was some not insignificant selection bias evident in the foreign speaker contingent.



Several international participants took a very polemic and intolerant perspective on Pakistan's role in international terrorism and on American culpability for global Islamic terrorist group actions. Among this handful of speakers, a Syrian expatriate journalist now living in India argued that the United States was directly responsible for the genesis of ISIS, planning for its future by "...training ISIS leadership to conduct jihad in US-run Iraqi prisons." Another speaker – an expatriate Pakistani Muslim with a Canadian passport and now living in India -- spent his entire solo presentation "proving" that America and Saudi Arabia had together planned the entire jihadist movement that inflicted "hundreds of thousands of deaths" upon all other Muslim states.

One of the featured international speakers, former Afghanistan Intelligence Agency Director, Amrullah Saleh, made a presentation that focused entirely on Pakistan perfidy in support of the Afghan Taliban and affiliated global terrorists. Needless to say, this excoriation of Pakistan was very well received by the Indian audience.

Another stand-alone, feature speaker presentation was made by American Daniel Pipes, President of the Middle East Forum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A longstanding and controversial critic of Islam as a religion of violence and intolerance (see, for example, his March 9, 2015 *Washington Times* OpEd titled, "Why Politicians Pretend Islam has no Role in Violence"), Pipes'

presentation at the conference was very mild in comparison to many of his past performances in the US and around the world. Nonetheless, his remarks did make it clear that Pipes shared the views of many Indian nationalists who feel that the promulgation of intolerance and violence from Muslim sects in the Gulf Arab States had generated a great degree of the terrorism afflicting India and the entire world over the past several decades.

The selection of these kinds of contentious international speakers in a format that did not allow for contending points of view to be simultaneously aired or thoughtfully contrasted was a notably weak point in an otherwise very robust and engaging counter-terrorism conference. It will be interesting to see to what extent these kinds of polemic viewpoints influence the ongoing revision of Indian counter-terrorism policy.

Other Points of Interest from the Conference

The India Foundation (IF) will produce a compendium of speaker remarks in coming months which will be made publicly available.

IF also will produce a conference summary report by this summer with policy recommendations for the future counter-terrorism strategy in India and provide this to the Indian Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence and the National Security Advisor – with the expectation it will be used to inform India's updated counter-terrorism strategy.

IF aims to make this kind of a counter-terrorism forum involving senior Indian government ministers and international experts a bi-annual event.

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