

Standing Committee Report Summary

Border Security: Capacity Building and Institutions

- The Standing Committee on Home Affairs (Chairperson: Mr. P. Chidambaram) submitted a report on “Border Security: Capacity Building and Institutions” on April 11, 2016.
- **Border outposts:** The Committee noted various issues with border infrastructure, such as outposts, fencing and floodlighting. It found that the proposal to construct 509 outposts along the India-Bangladesh and India-Pakistan borders had been revised and reduced to 422 outposts in 2016. It recommended that this revision be re-considered because constructing 509 outposts would allow for inter-border outpost distance to be reduced to 3.5 km. It also expressed concern regarding non-achievement of the new target along the India-Bangladesh border (97 outposts had been completed out of the target of 326 by the end of 2016).
- **Fencing:** The Committee noted that the pace of border fencing along the India-Bangladesh border was extremely slow (21 km of fencing was completed in 17 months since July 2015). It stated that at this pace government will not be able to seal the border by March 2019, as per its target.
- The Committee observed that the fencing in the Thar Desert region had proved to be ineffective because of the shifting sand dunes. It asked for a technical expert committee to be set up to examine all solutions, such as the fencing used along the US-Mexico border.
- **Road connectivity:** The Committee noted that some border areas had poor road connectivity and road projects were being delayed. This includes areas in Jammu, Punjab, and along the India-China and Nepal borders. It stated that the Border Roads Organisation was ill-equipped to implement these projects, and recommended that a joint venture with a private company be set up to carry out such construction.
- **Border guarding forces:** The Committee observed that the Assam Rifles was not a dedicated border guarding force for the India-Myanmar border. It recommended that the government finalise a dedicated force for this border. The Committee also found that due to shortage of personnel, jawans across border guarding forces perform 16-18 hours of duty in a day. It recommended that this system be changed, such that jawans perform two shifts of 4 hours each with a gap of 8 to 10 hours in between.
- **Coastal security:** The Committee noted that phase II of the Coastal Security Scheme had not been completed by March 2016 as per the target. It recommended that it be completed at the earliest. Under the scheme, various coastal states are to be outfitted with marine police stations, jetties, boats, vehicles, etc. Further, it expressed displeasure regarding non-implementation of its recommendations from the 177th Report on the scheme.
- **Counter-terrorism:** The Committee observed that there is no single unified authority to coordinate the operations of National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau, Multi-Agency Centre and National Security Guard. It noted that a notification had been issued for setting up of the National Centre for Counter Terrorism (NCTC) in 2012, but it had been kept in abeyance because of federalism-related concerns expressed by states. It recommended that the notification be re-issued to revive the NCTC as the nodal counter-terrorism agency. The Committee also noted that more than a year has passed since the Pathankot terror attack, but the investigation had not been completed by NIA. It recommended that the investigation be completed at the earliest.
- **Intelligence:** The Committee observed that while implementation of the NATGRID project was approved in November 2013, it was still in its nascent stage. It noted that though the project is to be operational by September 2018, there will only be minimal data sharing and basic analytics by that date. It also stated that the infrastructure for the project was not in place, there was underutilisation of funds, and there were vacancies in positions of technical consultants and subject-matter experts.
- The Committee also highlighted some issues with regard to the Multi-Agency Centre, which facilitates sharing of intelligence across central agencies and states. It noted that there is a low contribution of state agencies in the overall inputs received, and recommended that the bottlenecks be assessed.
- **Fake currency notes:** The Committee expressed concern regarding new denomination fake currency notes being recovered from the border areas. It observed that no measures had been taken to replace the detection machines available with the border guarding forces to make them compatible with the new denomination notes. It asked the government to formulate a strategy to disrupt smuggling of fake notes through land and coastal borders.

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