CHAPTER ONE

THE CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE (CRPF)

This chapter seeks to examine the evolution and development of the CRPF as an important instrument of internal security management. The first part of the chapter looks into the origins of the Force against the background of the existing political situation in the country. The second part deals with the role and function of the CRPF and various legal powers/obligations made available to it. The third part of the chapter describes the organizational structure of the CRPF. The fourth section analyses changes that took place in the Force, both in terms of strength and functions and the factors responsible for these changes. The fifth part examines the performance of the CRPF in its various roles. Finally, some broad conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the study of various aspects of the CRPF and its relationship with the government's overall policy of internal security management.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the oldest of all the paramilitary forces at the disposal of the Union government to assist the civilian authorities in the States in dealing with internal security problems. The Force was created during British rule as the Crown Representative's Police to assist the Princely States in the
maintenance of internal order. After independence, the central government decided to retain the force but to give it a new name. At that time the fluid political situation existing in India warranted a strong role for the central government. Therefore, even though internal policing was left to the State governments under the Constitution, the Central government had the right to intervene in the interests of national security. Over the years the nature and extent of the internal threats that India faced underwent both qualitative and quantitative change. With that, not only did the CRPF grow in strength, but also new dimensions were added to its role. Today, it has become one of the most important instruments in the management of internal security.

I. Origin

The origin of the Central Reserve Police Force can be traced back to the creation of the Crown Representative's Police in 1939. The original CRP was a specialized force raised by the colonial state to assist various Princely States in the maintenance of law and order. This was a period when strong currents of nationalism were spreading to different parts of the country. In the Princely States, too, the opposition to the rulers was mounting. These rulers were
puppets in the hands of the colonial rulers for all practical purposes.\(^1\) The All India Congress Committee (AICC) which was leading the national movement in various parts of the country provided ideological and material support to the movements in the Princely States. The Madras Resolution of the All India Congress Committee (1927) gave impetus to the Prajamandal movement in the Princely States which was emerging as the most organized opposition to colonial rule in an indirect way there. In 1927, the establishment of All India States People Conference brought on surface the popular demand for responsible government and civil liberties in Indian States.\(^2\) Under the Subsidiary Alliance System the British government was honour bound to help the Princely States, where it exercised control through a Crown Representative.\(^3\) The British government could not afford to take internal disturbances lightly because for them serious crime was an implicit defiance of state authority and a possible prelude to rebellion. Political resistance was either a crime

\(^1\) All over the country, there were about 600 principalities which did not form part of British India. They were under the suzerainty of the Crown unlike the provinces which had been annexed by the British power and were governed by the Crown according to Statutes of Parliament and enactment of Indian Legislature.


\(^3\) Ibid.
or the likely occasion for it. Use of force was an internal instrument of British policy to deal with opposition. In the earlier days of British rule, the regular armed forces were used to curb internal disturbances. After the mutiny of 1857, however, the British government realized the dangers involved in heavy reliance on the army for internal policing. Thus, a system of unified civil police was created in India, and through the police the British government countered successive challenges to colonial control. Thus, the evolution and development of the police force was in response to growing challenge to colonial rule. As opposition to British rule grew in strength and diversity, so were the police developed to counter it. The creation of the Crown Representative Police was amongst the responses of the colonial state to growing challenges to its authority. A specialized, self-sufficient police force organized and trained on military lines was first raised on 27 October 1939.

Initially, a battalion strength was sanctioned with one Commandant, seven superior officers, thirty subordinate officers, one hundred head constables and 870 constables. Most of the initial recruitment to the force was from the ranks of ex-servicemen from


the British Infantry Machine Gun Company, the disbanded personnel from 4th Punjab Regiment, 2nd Mina Corps from Erinpuna and Deoli areas and from the open market in Punjab. The battalion had four service companies besides the headquarter elements for training and administration and two tear-smoke platoons.⁶ According to a specific provision, the members of the Crown Representative’s Police were protected from the laws of the Princely States for any acts committed while on duty. The Police Advisor to the Resident was made the Inspector General of Police for this Force.⁷ From 1939 to 1947, the Crown Representative’s Police established itself as a professional, well organized, well trained and disciplined force at the disposal of the British government to meet challenges from a variety of sources: such as internal rebellion, dacoity, communal violence, guarding important installations, and so on. Its performance during this period as a reserve force influenced, in a major way, the government of India view of the utility of such a force in free India as well.

In 1941, the CRPF guarded the German and Italian detenus at Deoli and provided detachments to Charkhan State, Mhow and Indore. In 1942, three companies of the CRPF were sent to Khairpur

---


State and Sind to control the fanatic Hurs who had killed its police chief and challenged the authority of the State. In 1943, a contingent of the Force was sent to Baroda to control dacoity. In 1945, the CRPF was sent to Kishangarh on an anti-dacoity campaign in Rajputana. The force was also deployed in Rew, Pataudi, Dujana, Datia, Charkhori and Koti States in 1946 and Lohara Ratlam and Vivari in 1947. In 1946-47, the CRPF was deployed in as many as 15 States.8

The strength of the Force also increased during this period. At the time of independence, the sanctioned strength of the Force was 1746 with headquarters at Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh). Its detachments were functioning at various places in Rajasthan, Vindhya Pradesh, Madhyabharat, Kutch, Saurashtra, Bhopal and Mount Abu.

The Force was Retained After Independence

As a part of the political settlement of the transfer of power, the Force was passed on to the central government. With independence came partition, and the worst kind of communal violence in different parts of the country. Consequently, the demand on this force increased heavily. Since its strength was not sufficient to meet the

---

8 For early history of the CRPF see B.B. Misra, History of CRP (Ajmer, 1961).
growing demand, its size was further augmented. As V.P. Menon says, "It was the only effective Force which the State Ministry had at its disposal. It was very well trained and but for the discipline, efficiency and devotion to duty and officers and men we would not have been able to maintain order particularly in small States in the border areas during the crucial period following transfer of power." 

After independence, there were some apprehensions that the CRPF would be disbanded as it was regarded as a colonial legacy. One of the early proposals was to hand over the CRP to various States. The CRP was maintained by the political department from the revenues of the government of India. The intention was not that this Force should be handed over to successor government but it should be distributed piecemeal among various States or groups of States. Also, the very ideological basis for the use of force for internal disturbances was bound to change in the new democratic dispensation. Since the CRP was seen as the coercive apparatus of a the repressive colonial state, it had no place in the new political set up. However, several factors influenced the policy makers of newly independent India to continue with this Force. First, it so happened that the CRPF furnished a handpicked guard at the Viceregal lodge.

---


10 Ibid.
This was sufficiently smart and reliable to attract the attention of Lord Louis Mountbatten. He advised Sardar Patel to retain the Force.\footnote{B.B. Misra, "Central Reserve Police: Reminiscences on the Golden Jubilee" in B.L. Bohra and M.P. Nathanael, n.7, p.31.}

Secondly, the CRPF played an important role during the amalgamation of the Princely States into the Indian Union during the early days of independence. It was used to discipline the rebellious Princely States of Junagarh and the small principality of Kathiawad which had resisted joining the Indian Union. It was also entrusted with the task of capturing small States like Manamadar, Bantwa, Sardargarh and Mangrol, thus serving as an important instrument of carrying out the great task of the integration of small States.\footnote{M.P. Singh, n.7, p.20.}

Thirdly, the compelling need of centripetalism convinced the Constitution makers to concede the idea of a strong state. The Constitution, though federal in its nature, gave more powers to the Centre which was considered necessary keeping in view the political turmoil in different parts of the country and given the idea of centralized development.\footnote{Kuldeep Mathur, "The State and the Use of Coercive Power in India", \textit{Asian Survey}, Vol.XXII, No.4, April 1992, p.343.}

A fourth reason for keeping the CRP after independence was that Sardar Patel was personally convinced of the utility of the Force.
and visualized an important role for it in independent India. Sardar Patel, the then Minister of Home Affairs, justified the need to have a reserve force at the disposal of the central government while introducing the Bill in the Constituent Assembly to convert the Crown Representative's Police into the Central Reserve Police Force. He said,

"Ours is a vast country where consolidation has taken place at electric rapidity. So unless we are very watchful we may find to our cost difficulties arising for which we may have to pay heavily. Therefore, we have taken care to organize our services, our police force and all the requirements that are considered necessary for keeping law and order in the whole land so that progress may be as effective and as rapid as possible."\(^\text{14}\)

Elaborating on the role of the central government in assisting various States governments, Patel maintained, "when this state of things (disturbance of law and order) arose demands came from several States that police force was not sufficient and in some cases not effective and, therefore, they needed help. We found it very difficult to offer help because our own resources were not adequate".\(^\text{15}\) Patel was convinced that the problems in different parts of the country were not temporary outbursts of some disenchanted people but were the manifestation of deeper ideological conflicts. In the early days of independence, the central government could ill-

\(^{14}\) M.P. Singh, n. 7, p. 17.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
afford to ignore those problematic tie areas for to do so would be to hamper the nation-building process and other priorities. So he visualized not only the need for a central force but also the diverse role it was to play.

Patel put forth his views on these matters candidly:

"We are passing through a period of transition. In this period we have made so many changes, raised so many forces, upset so many things of the old order — abolition of zamindari, amalgamation of state, removal of old institutions and many other similar things. The present situation is such that we have to be very watchful and careful. Then we have on borders due to partition several raids being conducted by dacoits from the other side or by the forces from the other side. So, we have to keep a watch. We have also on other borders, revolutionary changes going on and certain young elements who consider that this is the time for creating a revolution and change the order existing in the country. In the industrial centres also there are certain forces which believe in creating trouble, for they think that the more unrest they create, the better prospect for their organization. In all circumstances, a central, well organized and a disciplined force is a boon."  

Thus, the Central Reserve Police Force as one of the armed forces of the Union under the Constitution came into being in 1949 with the passing of the Central Reserve Police Force Act by the Parliament. The Governor General gave his assent to the Bill on 28 December 1949. The Act was made applicable with retrospective effect from 15 August 1947. The Force was presented colours on behalf of the President of India on 19 March 1950. It was placed

---

16 Anjali Nirmal, n.6, p.66.
under the Inspector General Police, Delhi for administration and superintendence.

II. Role

The CRPF is an armed reserve of the Central government which comes under Union list under Schedule VII, entry 2 of list 1 of Article 246 of the Constitution. Though the organization is called Central Reserve Police Force, a member of the Force is appointed under the CRPF Act, 1949, not under the Police Act, 1861. The latter Act invests the persons who on appointment are issued a certificate under Section 8 of the Act with all powers, functions and privileges of a police officer. Therefore, the CRPF is not a police force within the meaning of entry 2 of list 1. It is an armed force of the Union meant to be deployed in States or Union Territories, only in aid of civil power for the purpose of restoring and preserving public order. Section 16 (1) of the CRP Act, 1949 provides that “the Central government may, by general or special order confer or impose upon any member of the force, powers or duties conferred or imposed on a police officer of any class or grade by any law for the time being in

---

17 The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution prepared under Article 246 deals with respective autonomy of Union and State. List I of VII Schedule contains the subjects on which Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction to legislate. List II contains subjects on which the State legislature has exclusive jurisdiction Entry II of List II provides for Police being exclusively within the competence of State legislature.
force."\textsuperscript{18} CRP Rules, 1955 framed under Section 18 of the CRP Act 1949, regulate inter alia the powers and duties of members of the Force.

The primary role of the CRPF is to assist the civil administration of the State or Union Territories in the task of restoration of peace and maintenance of law and order.\textsuperscript{19} Civil authorities in any State or Union Territory can ask for Central assistance, if they are convinced that a situation exists where the local law and order enforcement machinery is not properly equipped to handle the situation. On getting such a request, the Government of India, in the Ministry of Home Affairs, issues appropriate orders for the deployment of the CRPF in the concerned State/Union territory. The CRPF can also be deployed as a preventive measure. Rule 25 of the CRPF Rules says, "A member of the CRPF may be employed in any part of the country for the restoration and maintenance of law and order or any other purpose as directed by the Central government."\textsuperscript{20} Active duty for such a member means the duty to restore and preserve order in any local area in the event of

\textsuperscript{18} "CRP Act, Act No.LXVI of 1949" published in the \textit{Gazette of India Extraordinary} (Delhi: Government of India, 1950).

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

any disturbance there.\textsuperscript{21} It is the duty of every such member to obey and execute the orders and warrants lawfully issued to him by any competent authority to detect and bring offences to justice and apprehend all persons whom he is legally authorized to apprehend.\textsuperscript{22}

It is important to note that a member of the CRPF has only those powers which are necessary to assist the State police and not other powers, for example, the power to conduct investigations of a crime, summon a person for that purpose and forward a report on the investigation to a magistrate. Although the duty to detect and bring offenders to justice applies to both police officers and members of the CRPF, the powers of the latter are much fewer and are more restricted than those of a police officer. The commander of a CRPF unit, during the period of its deployment in a State, functions under the general control and direction of the State civil authorities concerned. He is informed by them of specific tasks to be performed by the Force under his charge. But once the task has been allotted, the commander of the CRPF unit is responsible for determining the manner in which the task will be performed and for the distribution and deployment of the men under his command. He continues to be accountable to his superiors in the CRPF for the due completion of

\textsuperscript{21} CRP Act, 1949, n.18.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
tasks assigned to him. The CRPF obtains information about local intelligence from the State police. In the locality or the area where the CRPF unit is deployed and carrying out its assigned task, it does not in anyway infringe on the jurisdiction of the local civil authorities including that of the State police. The CRPF personnel may arrest or hand over the offenders to the State police. It is not responsible for the registration of offences or investigation of cases.

The CRPF can also be used for protection of Public Sector Undertakings or government companies under the Companies Act and private industries connected with defence production. The CRPF played this role before the creation of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which was created specifically for this purpose.

Another role of the CRPF is to be deployed under the operational control of the army for counterinsurgency and antiterrorist operations. In such a situation, the command structure is normally headed by the army but in some cases where the area or sphere of operations is different, the two forces operate under different commands under the civilian authority.

The CRPF units are also frequently called upon to aid the public and civil authorities in dealing with natural calamities such as floods, earthquakes, fires, droughts, accidents, and so on. The CRPF was also used for border security before the creation of the Border
Security Force (BSF) and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). It is also utilized for guarding prisoners of war and sometimes other prisons also. CRPF personnel have been used escort arms, ammunition and explosives. Finally, during the general elections the CRPF is invariably used as a strike reserve force.

Legal Powers/Obligations

Certain legal powers under various sections of the Criminal Procedure Code Act (Cr. PC) (Act V of 1898) have been extended to the members of the CRPF when they are deployed in aid of civilian authorities.23 In contrast to all other Central forces, the CRPF has been given certain police powers. A member of the force has the power of a police officer to arrest, in certain circumstances, without warrant, search a place where the persons to be arrested may have entered, pursue such a person, search him, seize offensive weapons and seize property connected with the commission of an offence. A member of the Force has also the responsibility and necessary power of a police officer to take preventive action, such as, arrest a person to prevent the commission of a cognizable offence and prevent damage to public property. A member of the force not lower than a Sub-Inspector has the power of a police officer to command an

23 CRP Act, 1949, n.18.
unlawful assembly to disperse and if the assembly does not disperse to disperse, it by use of force and, if necessary, to arrest and confine persons forming the assembly.24

The following sections of the Cr. PC Act 1974 have been extended to the CRPF:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections of Cr. PC</th>
<th>Broad nature of power/duty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41(1)</td>
<td>Arrest without warrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Procedure of arrest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Search of place entered by persons sought to be arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Pursuit of offenders into other jurisdiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Person arrested not to be subjected to unnecessary restraint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51(1)</td>
<td>Search of arrested person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Powers to seize offensive weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Examination of an accused by a medical practitioner on the request of the police officer concerned. This power can be exercised only by a member of the Force above the rank of a sub-inspector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Search inspection (while executing a search warrant) of a place which is searched. This power can be exercised only by a member of the Force above the rank of a sub-inspector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Power to seize property which is alleged or suspected to have been stolen or which creates suspicion of the commission of an offence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Dispersal of unlawful assembly by way of civil force. This power can be exercised only by a member of the Force above the rank of a sub-inspector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prevention of cognizable offences
Communication to senior officer of information received on design to commit cognizable offences.
Arrest to prevent the commission of cognizable offences
Prevention of injury to public property.

Immunities

To protect the members of the force against prosecution for acts done by him in pursuance of his duties certain safeguards have been provided in section 132 of the Cr. PC. It provides that no prosecution of a member of an Armed Force shall occur in the case of

a) Armed Force personnel of the Union without the consent of the Central government, and

b) Others without the consent of the State government. It further provides that if a person (i) acts in good faith, or (ii) does any act in obedience to any order which he was bound to obey, he shall not be deemed to have committed any offence.26

Thus, no duties have been imposed on the CRPF which would make it accountable to the judiciary or the State level executive authorites. The State police is supposed to answer questions which

---

might arise due to excesses of the CRPF in a court of law since the former is accountable to the judiciary but the latter cannot be prosecuted without the permission of the Union government.

Otherwise also, the sections of the Cr. PC extended to the CRPF and other paramilitary forces to provide them legal cover leaves considerable discretionary powers in the hands of the Force. For example, certain powers like assisting without a warrant, breaking open or searching a house without warrant could well be misused. Also, jurisdictional clashes are bound to occur between the CRPF and the local police since the powers and duties extended to the CRPF, when under deployment, are available to the local police during normal times. This creates problems and difficulties in coordination between the CRPF and local police force. The situation becomes peculiar when the State government under Section 20(5) of the Cr. PC decides to confer, under any law in force at the time, on a Commissioner of police all or any of the powers of an Executive Magistrate in relation to a metropolitan area. This implies that a Police Commissioner or his subordinate so empowered in the exercise of the magisterial powers can summon an officer of the CRPF of the Union in accordance with Section 130 of Cr. PC. This could create an awkward situation.26

26 Ibid.
III. Organization

The CRPF, like other paramilitary forces, functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Internal Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal agency where all major policy decisions relating to the Force, like expansion, deployment, budgetary allocations and so on, are taken. This arrangement is in tune with the principle of civilian supremacy over the Force which gives the political leadership the authority to assess the threat to internal security and use force according to that assessment. Apart from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the actual management and control of the CRPF rests with the Directorate General which is located in New Delhi and is headed by the Director General who is from the Indian Police Service. The Director General, assisted by the Directorate, is in overall charge of the Force. Apart from controlling the force, he also gives inputs to the Ministry of Home Affairs in policy matters. There his role is only advisory.27

The upper echelon of the force i.e. the Director General, Deputy Directors, Inspector Generals, Deputy Inspector Generals are from the Indian Police Service. They join the Force on deputation and go back to their respective cadres after successful completion of their

27 Interview conducted on 26 November 1999 with a senior personnel of the CRPF at Delhi.
deputations. The direct recruitment to the Force is done at the Assistant Commandant, Sub-inspector and Junior levels. The recruitment at the Assistant Commandant level, which is a gazetted officer post equivalent to Sub Divisional Police Officer or Assistant Commissioner of Police, is done through an all India competition conducted by the Staff Selection Commission. The recruitment at the Sub-Inspector level is conducted by the Staff Selection Commission while the recruitment at the junior level is organized by the Directorate itself. All the recruitment to the CRPF is national and reflects the all India character of the Force.

The organization of the CRPF is a five tier structure – Ministry of Home Affairs, Directorate General, Sectors, Rangers, Group Centres and Battalions. A battalion is further subdivided into the company and platoon level.

The Minister of Home Affairs assisted by the Home Secretary and other Secretaries looking after internal security and policing, is the highest official authorized to take all policy related decisions.

The Directorate General of the CRPF is located in New Delhi. It is headed by the Director General (DG), who is normally a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer. The functional command of the Force is vested in the DG. The Directorate General has several wing headed by senior police officers of the rank of Inspector General (IG).
They are: the Additional Director General (ADG), the IG (Headquarters), the IG (Operations), the IG (P&T), the IG (Special Duty). The ADG (North Western Zone), the Director, Internal Security Academy, Mount Abu and the Financial Advisor.

For the purpose of field command, the Force has been divided into 11 Sectors including two Operational Sectors. Each Sector is under the command of an Inspector General.

The sectors are split into 28 Ranges including six Operational Ranges. They are under the command of a Deputy Inspector General (DIG). On an average, a Range DIG has to look after four to eight battalions and one to two Group Centres.

There are 30 Group Centres. They are created to tide over a lot of functional and infrastructural problems caused by sudden expansion of the force and its deployment on varied roles. The old system of static headquarters and mobile detachments were replaced by Group Centres for better logistics, housekeeping and operational efficiency. Each Group Centre houses 3 to 4 battalions.

There are 137 battalions, each under a Commandant. A regular battalion consists of four Service Companies, or more as sanctioned by the central government, and one Headquarter Company. A Service Company comprises of three Platoons and some administrative staffs.
The strength of a Platoon is 36. It is commanded by a Sub-Inspector. There are three Sections in a platoon. Each Section is headed by a Head Constable. The strength of a Section is twelve.

The Headquarter company is composed of six Platoons. They are: Administrative, Quarter Master Branch, Educational, Transport, Training and Tear Smoke platoon.

The following are the weapons and vehicle authorization of a CRP battalion:

- 303 rifles: 704
- Grenade firing rifles: 19
- Pistols: 94
- 7.62 mm self loading rifles (SLR): 20
- Light machine guns: 2
- Stenguns: 55
- Binoculars: 22
- 2" mortars: 7

In sensitive areas, battalions have been issued 7.62 mm self-loading rifles instead of the older .303.28

Training

From 1939 to 1956, the training of the CRPF was conducted at the Battalion Headquarters under the Adjutants. This was supplemented by army in the Infantry School (Mhow), and the

28 The description of Organizational Structure is based on the organizational chart provided by Deputy Director (Administration), CRPF. Also see Anjali Nirmal, n.6, pp.77-90.
Education Centre (Panchwadi), undertaken by selected Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs), Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and gazetted officers from time to time. The wireless branch, similarly, used to get its operators trained by the Directors of Coordination and Police Wireless until 1956. Provision was also made for weapon training cadres and especially a “refresher” of the JCO Board comprising independent members from different battalions to hold mid-term and final tests.29

With the Central Training College established in 1960, all these courses were sought to be conducted on a uniform basis. At present, there are three Central Training Colleges, viz., Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh), Avadi (Tamilnadu) and Nanded (Maharashtra). These training institutions organize basic in-service and promotional courses for officers and other ranks of the State Police Forces, Customs and Excise, and Cabinet Secretariat. There are four Recruitment Training Centres, viz., Neemuch (Madhya Pradesh), Avadi (Tamilnadu), Pallipuram (Kerala) and Srinagar (J&K). They organize basic and follow-up training.30 The CRPF has its own Internal Security Academy at Mount Abu (Rajasthan) to provide basic and in-service training to not only the directly appointed gazetted

29 Anjali Nirmal, n.6, p.101.
officers of the CRPF but also to officers from other police forces in the
country and abroad. A Counterinsurgency and Anti-terrorist
(CI&AT) training school was set up at Dayapur, Silchar (Assam) in
September 1995 to train CRPF personnel in these areas.

Communication

For the smooth functioning of a force like the CRPF which is
widely dispersed and highly mobile, a state of the art communications
system is essential. To achieve this, the Force has installed micro
processor based Automatic Message Switching Systems and Burst
Error Control Systems of Teleprinters at its nodal signal centres.
Apart from this, the state-of-the-art wireless sets with Surface
Mounted Device Technology (SMD) have been acquired. The force
has also acquired Mobile Satellite Telephones (IMMARSAT-M) which
are deployed in inhospitable areas. To impart training in the latest
developments in the field of communications, the Central Training
College (Telecom) CRPF, Ranchi (Bihar) has been equipped with
state-of-the-art training aids. The institute also imparts technical
training to the personnel of other Central and State police
organizations.

51 Ibid.
IV. Changes in the CRPF

The journey from 1947 to 1997-98 tells us the story of the phenomenal growth of a Central force, which initially was conceived as a reserve strike force to be used in extreme cases and which became the most important instrument of violence at the disposal of the Central government to deal with internal security problems. At the time of independence, its strength was one battalion. The second battalion was raised in 1948 and two more were raised in 1956 to guard the international borders of the country. Three more battalions were sanctioned in March 1957.32 Eight more battalions, two each in 1957, 1959 and 1960 and one each in 1961 and early 1962, were raised for the north-eastern borders.33 The Central Supply Agency and Central Training College were established as ancillary units in 1958 and 1960 respectively.34 By 1962, the CRPF had 14 battalions grouped under two Deputy Inspector Generals of Police (DIGs) under the command of the Joint Inspector General of Police for Delhi and the CRPF. The post of Inspector General of Police exclusively for the CRPF was created in 1963. By the end of 1965, three more battalions were raised. One signal battalion was also created by pooling

32 M.P. Singh, n.7, p.19.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p.20.
together signal platoons which earlier formed part of an executive battalion.\textsuperscript{38} During the years from 1966 to 1969 as many as 37 executive battalions were added to the Force by merger of 28 Indian Reserve battalions and raising nine new ones.\textsuperscript{38} Indian Reserve battalions were maintained by different States at the expense of the Central government. In 1968, a major transformation in the force structure took place – the headquarters of the Force were upgraded with one Director General as head and with three Deputy Directors and senior Wireless Advisors as staff officers. For the field command, the Force was divided into two sectors, each under an Inspector General.\textsuperscript{37} Sectors were further split into ranges, each under a Deputy Inspector General. To streamline training, one Deputy Director (Training) with four assistants were sanctioned. Two more signal battalions were sanctioned, and a central weapon store was also created. The idea of a Group Centre was also introduced in 1968.\textsuperscript{38} Eighteen Group Centres were sanctioned at different places throughout the country, each controlled by a Commandant and assisted by a hierarchy of subordinate officials to which were attached

\textsuperscript{36} Anjali Nirmal, n.6, pp.66-67.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
3 or 4 battalions. It was planned that each Group Centre should be almost an independent unit with all amenities like family quarters, hospitals, schools, welfare centres, and so on. The battalions located at the Centres could be sent out on duty. The Force was further expanded by raising eight more battalions in 1971, taking the strength to 60.\textsuperscript{39} In 1977, two battalions were disbanded in implementation of one of the points embodied in the election manifesto of the Janta Party.\textsuperscript{40} However, the Force soon expanded further, adding 8 more battalions and three peace-keeping elements in 1980-81.\textsuperscript{41} Five battalions and three more peace-keeping elements were sanctioned in 1983.\textsuperscript{42} Another 12 battalions, including the first ever Mahila (woman) paramilitary battalion, were sanctioned in 1985.\textsuperscript{43}

The CRPF is the only paramilitary force in India to have a separate Mahila battalion. The idea of a woman's battalion was put forward after the gherao of the Chief Secretary of Mizoram by a group of agitating women, a dharna by women in the oil factories in Assam,}

\textsuperscript{39} Ministry of Home Affairs, \textit{Annual Report}, 1971-72, p.23.

\textsuperscript{40} K.P. Mishra, "Paramilitary Forces in India", \textit{Armed Forces and Society}, Vol.6, No.3, Spring 1980, p.377.

\textsuperscript{41} Ministry of Home Affairs, \textit{Annual Report}, 1981-82, p.29.


\textsuperscript{43} Ministry of Home Affairs, \textit{Annual Report}, 1985-86.
and the participation of women in anti-reservation stirs in Gujarat. In May 1985, the central government gave approval for the formation of a woman’s battalion. It decided to deploy the Mahila battalion of the CRPF for the following duties:\textsuperscript{46}

1) to tackle agitations involving women agitators,
2) to carry out searching and frisking of women when required,
3) to do route-lining and security of women’s enclosures during 'public meetings,
4) to perform law and order duties during fairs and festivals.

In 1985, the proposal for commando training for directly appointed CRPF personnel was cleared by the Ministry of Home Affairs. In 1988, ten more battalions were added to the strength of the Force. Besides the battalion, many ancillary and supporting units like signal battalions, a Recruitment Training Centre, an Arms Workshop and one Group Centre were also sanctioned.

During 1990s, there was a massive growth both in terms of number of battalions and the role of CRPF units. In 1989, the strength was 93 battalions which rose to 103 battalions in 1991-92. Twenty more battalions were added in 1992-93. During the same year, some battalions of the CRPF were converted into a Rapid Action

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{46} Anjali Nirmal, n.6, p.100.
Force (RAF) for dealing with riot and riot-like situations. In 1996-97, the number of battalions rose to 135. Two more battalions were raised in 1997-98. In 1997-98, the strength of the Force was 137 battalions.

With its headquarters in the Directorate General in New Delhi, the CRPF has one zone headed by an Additional Director General, and eleven sectors, including two operational sectors, headed by Inspector Generals, twenty eight ranges including 6 operational ranges headed by Deputy Directors General, 30 Group centres, 8 training institutions, and 3 Base hospitals.46

The Rapid Action Force

During the mid-1980s and early 1990s India witnessed a series of communal riots that were the most devastating since independence. The Force at the disposal of State governments was not always effective. Due to the controversial role the State police played during many communal riots, the minority community lost faith in it, particularly in the Provincial Armed Constabulary in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar Military Police (B.M.P.) in Bihar.47 Though the

46 Central Reserve Police Force, a booklet prepared by the Directorate General, CRPF, New Delhi, 1997.

deployment of paramilitary forces and army proved effective most of the time, there was a need for a specialist force with a secular outlook, professionally trained to handle delicate situations and deployed in sensitive areas in almost “zero response time”.

The initiative to create the Rapid Action Force (RAF) was taken by the then Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. The RAF came into existence on 7 October 1992 by converting ten CRPF battalions into RAF battalions. The organizational structure of the RAF is different to that of the standard CRPF battalion. The smallest functional unit of the Force is the riot control team comprising riot control elements. The team is commanded by an Inspector. Four riot control teams make a platoon commanded by an Assistant Commandant. Two platoons make a company commanded by a Deputy Commandant. Thus each battalion of the RAF has 32 riot control teams. One platoon of each battalion of the RAF comprises women officers and personnel. The RAF battalions are equipped with shock batons, rubber truncheons, plastic pellets and rubber bullets, stun grenades, and the highly effective and specialist riot control vehicle called the VAJRA. A posting to the RAF battalions is

---

46 *The Patriot* (New Delhi), 7 October 1992.

made after a psychological test to assess the mental attitude of the personnel. The average age of the constabulary is 20-27 years.

To carry out duties efficiently and impartially during communal riots requires special training. So apart from routine training, each member of the Force is made to pass through specialist courses in subjects like Human Rights, First Aid, Rescue and Relief, Disaster Management, construction of low cost house, and so on. Senior officers are given orientation training in contemporary social realities by IGNOU. To attain absolute coordination with public and local authorities, force personnel are exposed to familiarization exercises in all sensitive and hypersensitive districts in India. During these exercises, useful information is collected so that the Force is able to perform its duties during an emergency more effectively and efficiently.

Though the RAF is essentially to be utilized to tackle only communal riots and riot-like situations, with the increase in serious caste conflicts, the Force has been used to deal with caste riots also, in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Bihar. It also assists State administration in carrying out rescue and relief operations in case of natural and man-made disasters.

---

80 Ibid., p.8.
Table No. 1

Growth of the CRPF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Battalions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: CRPF, A booklet published by Directorate General CRPF, 1997.)

Table No. 2

Growth of Manpower in the CRPF since 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>107095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>108329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>120979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>121206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>131260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>159091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>158907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>158693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>165334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>165408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>166196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>167384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>167322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Annual Report, 1996-97, p.29.)
Table No.3
Expenditure on the CRPF since 1985-86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rs. (in lakh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>19281.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>22549.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>26089.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>30888.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>42269.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>43398.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>58547.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>69964.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>75373.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>88090.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>93347.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>112102.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>124914.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Over the last fifty years, the CRPF has not only grown in size alone. Slowly and steadily new dimensions were added to its role, and the force, which was conceived primarily as a reserve force at the disposal of the Central government to be used in extreme cases, came to be gradually associated with a variety of law and order problems throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Dependence on the central forces began in the early years after independence. Jammu and Kashmir remained a trouble spot. Then there were insurgencies in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur in which the State police were overwhelmed. The language riots in south India, Punjab disturbances, and the Naxalite problem, all can be cited as the main reason for the massive growth of the force during
1960s. In many communal riots, the police lost public confidence owing to the ineffectiveness or partisanship of the Force. Therefore, central forces had to be used extensively. During the 1980s, the separatist movements in Punjab demanded heavy attention from the Centre and from the late 1980s onwards the situation in Jammu and Kashmir deteriorated. Thus, the growing threat to the Indian state can be cited as the main factor behind the phenomenal growth of the CRPF. However, there are other factors also responsible such as the changing nature of Indian federalism, the centralizing tendency of the Indian state, viewing social and political problems from a security perspective, and the decline in the modernization and training of the State police apparatus.

The usual explanation that the Ministry of Home Affairs gives for the growth of the force is that while the maintenance of law and order is primarily the responsibility of State governments, the Union has the authority as well as responsibility to intervene when the State government is unable or unwilling to discharge its responsibility. This is clear from the reading of Article 355 of the Constitution.61

61 Article 355 of the Constitution reads, "It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provision of the Constitution." Constitution of India (Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, 1991), p.100.
Why has the Union government assumed so much responsibility when there is sufficient armed force in every State to look after law and order situations? What is meant by the term law and order or public order? And what are the ways to determine that a situation exists which warrants assistance from central forces? Answers to these questions may throw some light on the expansion of the CRPF.

The word 'law and order' and 'public order' appears nowhere in the Constitution and its entirety and ambit can only be understood by various court judgements and opinions. Justice Hidaytullah, in Arun Ghosh Vs. State of Bengal, observed that the true test of determining whether acts are connected with public order or with law and order are their potentiality to disturb the even tempo of life in a community of a particular locality.\(^2\) It is the degree of disturbance which indicates differentiation. In another case, Ram Manohar Lohia Vs. State of Bihar, Justice Hidaytullah argued that one had to imagine three concentric circles, and law and order represents the largest circle within which is the next circle representing public order and the smallest circle representing the security of the state.\(^3\) Thus law


\(^3\) Ibid., p.39.
and order means disorder of less gravity than those affecting public order which is disorder of less gravity than those affecting the security of the state. Thus, the maintenance of law and order means the preservation of disorder of comparatively lesser gravity and of local significance. Expressing their opinion on a similar issue, Justice S.C. Aggawal and Justice S.M. Ahmed of the Supreme Court in a criminal writ petition observed that the expressions 'law and order' and 'public order' are distinctive in magnitude. They observed that the expression law and order refers to the contravention of law which affects order while public order refers to the even tempo of life of the community taking the country as a whole or even a specific locality as the referent. Therefore, it is the length, magnitude and intensity of terror wave unleashed by a particular eruption of disorder that helps distinguish it as an act affecting public order rather than law and order. Hidaytullah further maintained that central paramilitary forces are meant to be deployed only when the length, magnitude and intensity of the particular act of disorder is such that it affects the community at large and national security. Since national security is the responsibility of the Centre, it has every right to intervene on that count.

---

64 Ibid.
There is no clear-cut mechanism to determine that a particular act of disturbance has reached a stage where it threatens national security. Largely it depends on the discretion of the civilian authority and the perspective from which it approaches the problem. Since data on specific procedures or decisions relating to the deployment of the CRPF are not available, we can only draw some broad inferences. First, the reliance on the CRPF has increased over the years. The tremendous growth of the CRPF over the years is indicative of this. Secondly, the popular perception that the local police do not have the training, infrastructure, equipment or manpower for the various roles confronting them has been reinforced. Over the years, the excessive dependence on Central forces has resulted in a neglect of the local police and their preparedness to counter emerging challenges. Also, the local police have become politicized and less sensitive in dealing with communal riots and public disorders. Therefore, the State governments find it useful to requisition the CRPF rather than deploy their own Armed Police. But the ever increasing strength of the CRPF has raised fears in certain quarters about the demoralizing effects it may have on local police. A large number of CRPF units have been deployed in various parts of the country without any simultaneous effort to boost the morale of the

---

local police.\textsuperscript{86} T.N. Chaturvedi, the former Home Secretary, contends that "The trend needs to be reversed as law and order is a state subject, and deployment of the CRPF only creates an inferiority complex in the State police and makes it less responsive to ground realities."\textsuperscript{87} Chaturvedi does not think that the Central forces are thrust into policing situation because of the failure of the State police in dealing with challenging situations in sensitive parts of the country. According to him, the State police fails to perform up to par because of the lack of attention paid to its training. Modernizing and strengthening of the State police force, rather than increasing the role of paramilitary forces, is what is required. However effective the paramilitary forces, they offer no permanent solution. It is only the local police that can provide the kind of intelligence that can restore a situation to normalcy.\textsuperscript{88} The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations also argued that internal disturbances which are not of an usually serious nature (serious disturbances are those extending over large areas of a State and for prolonged periods) can be dealt with by the majority of states on their own if they augment, modernize and properly train their respective armed forces. The Commission further suggested that each State government, in consultation with the Union

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{The Indian Express} (New Delhi), 5 June 1977.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{The Hindu} (Madras), 27 March 1993.
government, should work out long-term and short-term arrangements to strengthen its armed police to make each state largely self-reliant, so that the assistance of the Union armed forces will be necessary only in case of very severe disturbances. Thus, it appears that the growth and diversification in the role of the CRPF needs to be linked with the overall performance and morale of the State police and the latter needs to be trained to deal with routine law and order problems.

Another reason put forward to justify the growth of the CRPF is that there has been both qualitative and quantitative change in the nature of threats that the Indian state faces from internal sources. Insurgency and terrorism are threats only a professional, well-trained and well-equipped army can counter. Since the army should not be used for internal security operations, there should be a specialist force like the CRPF for that purpose because counterinsurgency and anti-terrorist operations require a different kind of training, temperament and doctrine than normal policing. The excessive use of the army can create more problems than it solves. History has shown that in many Third World countries excessive use of the army for the maintenance of internal security has

---

tended to increase the power and influence of the military in domestic affairs and this has led to military takeovers.\textsuperscript{60} While in India there appears to be no threat of a coup, there has been a tendency to seek military solutions to what are basically political questions calling for political accommodation. Such solutions will not only create negative images of the army in the public’s eyes but will also produce a breakdown in military-civilian trust. Moreover, the armed services are not equipped or trained to deal with problems of internal law and order. As Lt. General M.L. Thapan notes, “A fundamental principle of war is concentration of men and material at the right place at the right time.” Internal security duty on the other hand requires “dispersion and use of minimum force since our own countrymen are involved.”\textsuperscript{61} Lt. General A.M. Vohra comments, “because that army has not mingled with crowd as police are required to, the army’s ability to sense and deal with internal riots is severely


Another reason for the expansion and role of the CRPF can be seen in the centralizing tendency of the Indian state since the late 1960s. In 1973-74, the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament expressed its concern over large scale increase in the CRPF and other paramilitary forces despite the existence of the large forces of the State government for precisely the same job. During the Emergency (1974-77), the very rationale of such a large force was questioned and there were demands within and outside the Parliament that these forces should be abolished. It is to be noted that before Indira Gandhi took over as Prime Minister, the Central government's expenditure on its paramilitary forces was less than Rs.50 crores a year which during the emergency rose to Rs.300 crores a year. After the Janata party came to power in 1977, it formed a Committee of three senior bureaucrats, viz. Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary and Finance Secretary, to review the strength of various paramilitary forces. 

63 Public Account Committee (1973-74), Hundred and Thirty Third Report (Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1980).
reduction in the strength of the CRPF. Consequently, two of its battalions were disbanded by March 1978 and further reductions were planned. But the decision was reversed within months. The Central government made it known that among its obligations laid down in the Constitution was the maintenance of national unity which involved dealing with unrest and insurgency situations. All in all, the view was that the CRPF had a role to play. In the 1980s, when Indira Gandhi came back to power, the earlier approach to the CRPF resumed and, once again, it was seen as an important instrument of force. No serious review was undertaken during her regime to reduce or control the growth of the CRPF. Since the mid-1980s, many troubled States in the country like Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and the North East and communal violence and caste violence increased the role and utility of the CRPF.

Thus, it is very difficult to interpret the growth of the CRPF in terms of an integrated approach to deal with internal security problems. At best, the growth of the force appears to be based on an ad hoc approach to manage emerging security challenges. Ironically, the growth of the CRPF not only affected adversely the efficiency of

66 The Hindu (Madras), 2 June 1977.
the local police but also increased the power of the central government.

V. Performance

The CRPF was created with a limited purpose to provide assistance to the State governments in the maintenance of law and order. Originally, the Force was meant to be deployed only in emergency, as the maintenance of internal order is the responsibility of the State governments. Over the years, however, the CRPF has emerged as an indispensable instrument of internal security management since its inception, particularly after the 1970s the Force grew in strength at a phenomenal rate and its deployment became more frequent. At present, the CRPF is a versatile, multidimensional Force capable of dealing with a wide range of problems. On the one hand, the Force assists civilian authorities in States in dealing with problems like communal riots, violent agitation, Naxalite problem, dacoity so on. On the other hand, the CRPF works with army in a warlike conditions in countersurgency and anti-terrorist operations. The CRPF’s ability to work both in police and army like operations has made it a multipurpose Force. The salient features of the Force are mobility and adaptability. The CRPF is a highly mobile Force which can be deployed in any part of the country within a short notice. The CRPF’s impartial and all India
character has rendered a certain level of acceptability of the Force particularly among minorities.\textsuperscript{67} Acknowledging the importance of the CRPF, the then Prime Minister Narsimha Rao said in 1996, "This Force of one lakh sixty thousand represents the will of the government to uphold the unity and integrity of the country and to maintain secular character of society."\textsuperscript{68}

The performance of the CRPF can broadly be classified into two categories: maintenance of public order, where the Force assists the State police and counteremergency and antiterrorist operations where the CRPF has to deal with highly motivated and trained opponents.

**Maintenance of Public Order**

Immediately after independence, the force was sent to the Chambal area in Madhyabharat where it ended the reign of the dreaded Debi Singh Gang. In early 1954-55, seven companies of the CRPF assisted the anti-dacoit operations organized by four states namely, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhyabharat and Madhya

\textsuperscript{67} Kuldeep Mathur, n.13, pp.348-54.

\textsuperscript{68} M.B. Kaushal, "Central Reserve Police Force: Peacekeepers of the Nation" in Dr. S. Subramanian, ed., \textit{50 Years of India's Independence} (Delhi: Manas Pub., 1997), p.276.
Pradesh and ended the terror of Mansingh. In 1954, the companies of the CRPF were rushed to Nabha and Bhatinda in Punjab to quell the activities of dacoits. The CRPF was extensively deployed in the anti-Hindi agitations and Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. The force helped civilian authorities to tackle the threat posed by the Maharashtra Morcha in April 1956.

In the late 1970s, there was turmoil in the otherwise tranquil Brahmaputra valley. The movement against the Assam government on the foreign nationals issue assumed serious proportions and spread far and wide encompassing the entire state of Assam. The CRPF had to be inducted not only to maintain law and order but to keep lines of communication free from disruption. The ability of the force was again put to test during the Assam elections in 1983.

In the northern belt of West Bengal, the Gorkha agitation for a separate Gorkhaland turned violent in the 1980s. Several companies of the CRPF were sent to the adjoining areas to deal with the violence.

The all India railway strike was organized from 8 to 28 May 1974. It involved the vast majority of railway workers and included

---

69 B.B. Misra, n.11, p.32.
70 Ibid.
71 B.M. Mullick, "In Memorium" in B.L. Vohra and M.P. Nathanael, ed., n.7, p.2.
all railway lines, important railway installations and the main centres of labour resistance. With the help of the CRPF, the rolling stocks, especially coal and fuel wagons were routed without interference.\textsuperscript{72}

The CRPF have been frequently deployed in Naxalite affected areas also. The Naxalite problem emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s when a powerful leftist movement, based on Mao Tse Tung's ideology of a revolutionary agrarian movement with the ultimate aim of socialism, spread in parts of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Later on, parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar also became victims of Naxalite violence. This upsurge was not a simple law and order problem, because it enjoyed the support of a sizeable section of population on the issue of land redistribution. There are around thirty Naxalite groups operating, with the Maoist Coordination Centre (MCC) and People's War Group (PWG) being the most powerful. The latter is active in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra where almost twelve Naxalite groups are operating. The usual strategy that these groups employ is that of guerrilla warfare. Since they enjoy considerable support in their areas of operation, it becomes very difficult for law enforcement agencies to evolve a counter-strategy.

\textsuperscript{72} M.P. Singh, n.7, p.18.
The CRPF played an important role in assisting the State police in curbing Naxalite violence. The West Bengal government sought the help of the CRPF in early 1970s. The movement was crushed, and their leader Charu Majumdar was arrested in 1973. In Andhra Pradesh, the CRPF was initially deployed in 1994 to the tune of eight companies which later rose to thirty eight companies in 1996. The bulk of the CRPF is deployed in Telangana region.\(^73\). The tasks the CRPF perform in Naxalite-affected areas is counter-guerrilla warfare, combing operations, apprehending the top leadership and instilling a sense of security in the local population. However, its success is limited there, for various reasons. First, since it is alien to the locality, it finds it difficult to operate in hostile terrain. Secondly, it does not get local intelligence inputs. Local intelligence is available to the local police. If the police is not deployed, it does not update its intelligence inputs. The CRPF then operates with outdated intelligence inputs which affect their performance adversely.\(^74\) Thirdly, the local law enforcing agencies sometimes avoid cooperation with the CRPF because they are concerned about their own security. A local policeman is invariably a part of the same society in which the Naxalites operate. Therefore, he fears attack on himself or his family.


\(^{74}\) Interview conducted in Delhi on 13 December 1999 with A.K. Roy, Ex-Director General of Police, Bihar.
On the other hand, a CRPF personnel is anonymous, and if he is deployed it is usually in strength, of never less than a platoon, whereas the policemen work in ones and twos. At the ground level, this kind of situation often leaves the CRPF personnel baffled. Finally, a problem like Naxalism is not merely a law and order problem. Here, the use of force must be part of an overall policy of the government to address the root cause of the problem, by ensuring adequate socio-economic development. The Central government has taken initiatives in this regard. It has asked the State concerned to prepare, on a priority basis, a detailed analysis of the problem standing in the way of accelerated socio-economic development in concerned areas. It has also provided for better equipment and special training to State forces. In addition, it has requested State governments to draw up schemes of social development in close cooperation with the Planning Commission.

Perhaps the most laudable performance of the CRPF has been during communal riots. Here, the inability of local authorities to anticipate and prevent violence and the ineffectiveness and partisan role played by the local police have made the CRPF inseparable from

75 G.P. Bhatnagar, n.52, p.30.

Due to its all India composition and impartial approach, the CRPF has always been in great demand in riot prone areas. In some of the sensitive communal pockets like Moradabad, Aligarh, Ayodhya and Hyderabad, the CRPF detachments have been stationed almost on a permanent basis.

There is no doubt that the performance of the CRPF in the maintenance of law and order has been a great success. This is borne out by the fact that since its inception the demands on the Force have been increasing, and consequently it has grown phenomenally not only in terms of strength but in terms of role as well. It has become an indispensable tool in the hands of the Central government. Presently, the growing demands on the CRPF have made the force overstretched and overdeployed which have reduced its effectiveness and deterrent impact. It has become a tendency on the part of States to ask for assistance from the Central government to deal with even minor law and order problems. To meet the demands, more battalions are being raised and existing battalions are being expanded. Civilian authorities tend to overlook the emerging threat to public order if there are political implications. Sometimes they even stop the local police from enforcing law and order. And if the


78 Interview, n.71.
situation gets out of hand, the Centre has to step in to help the States. Now hardly any State can deal with serious unrest with its own resources. 70

Another factor that has a bearing on the performance of the CRPF is that the various legal provisions leave the role of the CRPF vis-à-vis other agencies undefined. The multiplicity of agencies operating under parallel command structures lead to confusing situations with contradictory orders being passed by State authorities resulting in a drastic reduction of the efficiency of the forces involved. 80 Furthermore, the responsibility of the Centre vis-à-vis the State government and vice-versa when the CRPF is deployed remains unclear. This contradiction was perhaps made evident at Ayodhya on 6 December 1992, when huge contingents of the CRPF were rendered ineffective.

Use of the CRPF has political undercurrents also. In a federal political setup, the excessive deployment of force is often seen as part the centralizing tendency of the Indian state. It leads to mistrust between Central and State governments. Amit Prakash, in his study of CRPF deployments in Uttar Pradesh, contends, “The deployment of

---

70 Ibid.
80 Amit Prakash. Internal Security and Use of Force: The Deployment of
the CRPF has been in a pattern which indicates that the police deployment has been made to suit the political needs. Admittedly, situational demand in an instance of collective violence is an important factor. However, the pattern in which the CRPF deployments have been made, combined with the political climate of Uttar Pradesh vis-à-vis the Union government, also indicates a highly political role being played by those deployments.\(^81\) Commenting on the relationship between Central and State governments vis-à-vis the CRPF deployment, Amit Prakash maintains that when different parties are in power in the Centre and State respectively, the CRPF was used only when it served a political purpose of the ruling party at the Centre. When same political parties are in power both the Centre and State, the Union government resorted to the CRPF deployment only as a last resort. Since political homogeneity ensured for the Central government that it faced no political threat, enough political space was left for the State government to attempt or political solutions of conflict.\(^82\)

Counterinsurgency, Border Security and Anti-terrorist Operations

Soon after independence, contingents of the CRPF were sent to the newly created international border between India and Pakistan

\(^81\) Ibid.

\(^82\) Ibid.
along the Kutch, Bhuj, Rajasthan and Sind borders. When tension mounted along the Jammu and Kashmir borders, the Force was inducted there.

In 1956, in the Chhabat island of Kutch, the Force assisted the army in recapturing the island against very stiff resistance put up by the Pakistan army. In 1957, CRPF contingents were sent to the Ladakh region of the Indo-Tibetan border. The Chinese army ambushed a CRPF patrol at Hotspring, killing ten men and taking several officers and men as prisoners on 21 October 1956. This day is now observed by policemen all over the country as "police commemoration day". During the 1962 India-China war, the Force assisted the Indian army in the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA). Eight CRPF personnel belonging to the 9th battalion were killed in Chayang Taje in Kameng district of NEFA. During the Rana of Kutch crisis in 1965, four companies of the CRPF defended two posts, Sardar Post and Tak Post, against Pakistani forces causing them to retreat, leaving many dead and injured behind. In the 1965 and 1971 wars as well, the Force assisted the army both on the eastern and western borders. During the liberation of Bangladesh, two companies of the CRPF marched to Bangladesh along with the

83 M.P. Singh, n.7, p.18.
84 B.B. Mishra, n.11, p.32.
army in combing operations. Subsequently, the force guarded several thousand Pakistani prisoners of war.85

The CRPF also played an important role in counterinsurgency operations in the North East. In 1957, when Phizo, the Naga insurgent leader, raised the banner of revolt and adopted guerrilla tactics the CRPF battalions were rushed to quell the disturbances.86 For over eleven years, the CRPF fought the insurgency. In 1956, CRPF battalions were also rushed to Mizoram to fight against insurgency. In 1956, the CRPF battalions were used in Mizoram where insurgency had taken a heavy toll. In the late 1970s, when extremist elements challenged the Indian state in Tripura and Manipur, the CRPF was deployed again. Since then, the CRPF has been deployed in Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura on a semi-permanent basis, assisting army and civilian authorities in counterinsurgency operations.87 In North East, about 8,000 insurgents have been apprehended while 131 were killed during the period 1988-97. The Force also recovered 1910 arms and 18,393 round of ammunitions from insurgents. The CRPF  

85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
lost 215 Force personnel and 383 wounded.\textsuperscript{68}

The CRPF played a very important role in combating terrorism in Punjab. During the mid 1980s approximately 45\% of the total strength of the CRPF was deployed in Punjab. After the enactment of the Armed Forces (Punjab and Chandigarh) Special Powers Act, 1983, the CRPF assisted the army and civilian authorities in operation ‘Blue Star’ and ‘Blue Thunder’ as well as round the clock patrolling all over the State and establishing ambushes along the highways. Initially, in 1981, 50 companies were inducted and this figure gradually went up to a peak figure of 336 companies, i.e. about 56 battalions in the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{69} During that period, apart from the CRPF, the BSF and the ITBP were also pressed into service. The multiplicity of forces under different commands caused misunderstanding, lack of communication and rivalry among different forces in counterinsurgency operations thus affecting the efficiency of different agencies. To overcome this, a special scheme was introduced in Punjab under which specific districts were assigned to a particular force. For example, Gurdaspur was assigned to the BSF and Amritsar to the CRPF. This division worked and

\textsuperscript{68} M.B. Kaushal, n.68, p.279.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
produced results. The CRPF killed 2,551 terrorists and apprehended 12,977 during the period 1983 and 1995. As many as 5,694 sophisticated arms and 2,06,012 rounds of ammunition were recovered. Some 192 Force personnel sacrificed their lives and 500 were injured while fighting the terrorism in Punjab.

The CRPF was also deployed in Sri Lanka as a part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). The IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka following an accord signed by the Sri Lankan President Julius Jayawardane and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in order to find a permanent solution to the outstanding problems arising out of the demand for a separate state by Tamil militant groups especially the LTTE. Initially, the Indian Army had to perform a dual role. The first was to keep a watch on the LTTE and the second was to do routine policing. The 58th battalion of the CRPF was sent to Sri Lanka to help the IPKF in the maintenance of law and order, to carry out essential policing duties including joint police investigations along with Sri Lankan police, to protect and maintain essential services and to train the cadres of Tamil militant groups and local youths recruited to the new Sri Lankan police force meant for the northern

---

90 Interview conducted in Delhi with a senior CRPF officials on 8 October 1997.

91 M.B. Kaushal, n.68, p.279.
and eastern provinces.\textsuperscript{92}

The 58\textsuperscript{th} battalion was deployed under various army formations from Jaffna to Vavuniya. On 10 October 1987, four CRPF personnel were killed and eight were seriously injured as a result of an ambush by the LTTE. On 14 October 1987, the 35\textsuperscript{th} battalion was sent to Sri Lanka, which was deployed in the Jaffna sector and the 58\textsuperscript{th} battalion was shifted to the Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Vavuniya sectors on 21 December 1987. The Mahila battalion was also deployed in various parts of Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{93}

The operations against the LTTE in Sri Lanka were an experience for the CRPF. First, strategically they faced a new situation because it was a war situation and, moreover, a war with explosives. Secondly, they were unfamiliar with the geography, local population and ground-level realities. This affected the Force's movements, intelligence networks and rapport with the local population. Thirdly, the LTTE personnel were a highly motivated with total disregard for their own lives. To take on such a highly-trained force required strong motivation. Fourthly, since the various companies or even platoons were attached to different army

\textsuperscript{92} P.V. Subba Rao, "Role of CRPF in IPKF" in B.L. Vohra and M.P. Nathanael, ed., n.10, p.56.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
formations it resulted in poor coordination within the CRPF battalions and with the army personnel. Also the wide dispersal of troops had an adverse impact on the command and control structure. Finally, the force did not have adequate infrastructure and training in the identifying and handling of explosives.\textsuperscript{94}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The CRPF has become an indispensable instrument in the hands of the Union government in the management of internal security problems. The increasing number of incidents of internal disturbances coupled with frequent deployment of the CRPF indicates that there is a heavy dependence on the CRPF in law and order situations. This also indicates the increasing role of the Union government in local problems. Numerous problems are created as a result because the maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the States and the increasing interference of the Central government is bound to have implications for Centre-State relationship. The terms 'law and order', 'public order' and 'internal security' are open to different interpretations, and it is difficult to assess a particular incident in terms of its overall impact on national security. Often, local problems develop into bigger crises if they are not properly addressed at the initial stage. Therefore, the local law

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
enforcement agencies should be trained and equipped suitably to deal with problems at the earlier stage, and the CRPF should be deployed if a particular problem has developed into a bigger crisis and the local authorities are not able to handle that.

The excessive dependence on the CRPF has adversely affected the State police in terms of training, morale and preparedness to deal with emerging challenges. This trend needs to be reversed. The State police apparatus should be suitably equipped, trained and modernized keeping in view the growing challenges to internal security. The CRPF should be deployed only in extreme cases.