Persisting dangers of Maoists

What is the issue?

\nDescribed by Ex-PM Dr. Manmohan Singh as “India’s biggest internal security threat”, the recent attack by the Maoists is a sign of their waning strength, although perhaps not the flicker of a dying flame.

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What is the course of action taken by the government?

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- The response of the Indian state has been twofold.
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- It attempts to provide **basic services to win back the Adivasis**, and simultaneously, it **seeks military conquest of the Maoists.**
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- Its battle strategy includes emptying out the river that gives the Maoists sustenance: the people living in those areas.
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- Mass incarcerations (Chhattisgarh has the highest capacity utilization of prisons in India), fake encounters, and large-scale recruitment into the police forces constitute the strategic line of the state.
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- This state of affairs benefits the Indian state as the focus on the “law and order problem” allows it to avoid questions arising about the foundations of its development model.
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- Companies find it easier to pay off politicians and bureaucrats to secure their projects **rather than genuinely winning the hearts of people,** something.
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- The Maoists also gain as they get a steady stream of recruits from people fleeing the excesses of the government.
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What is the present state of Maoists?

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- The insurgents have been **losing power for several years.**
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- People have begun to fear them as much as they fear the Indian state.
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- Social services have begun to reach many areas.
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- The charms of modern society and education are exerting a pull on the youth, including members of the Maoist cadre.
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- The **elimination of many top leaders** and the inability to offer a compelling alternate vision has led to ideological bankruptcy of the rank and file.
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- In their current weakened state, the Maoists seem to have abandoned whatever principles they espouse.
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- However, the ongoing excesses on the Adivasis and, the inexorable urge of the Indian state to **accelerate mineral extraction** mean that Maoists may continue to serve as a refuge for some more time.
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- Like ordinary people, NGOs, lawyers and journalists are caught in the cross-fire between the government and the Maoists.
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- The government finds it convenient to classify them as over-ground organizations of the Maoists and repress them.
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- In this manner, the state turns the threat posed by the Maoists against the cause they claim to be struggling for.
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- While many NGOs have condemned the Sukma incident, there is a compelling need for NGO's to carry out a consistent and concerted communication campaign to counter the government's strategy of labelling them "Maoist sympathizers".
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What could be done?

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- Our mining sector is a den of corruption and illegality.
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- The average daily employment of labour in mining decreased from 549,000

people in 2004-05 to 512,000 people in 2013-14, despite a fourfold increase in the value of production.
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- Most development projects were accompanied by violence, not just those in Maoist areas but also outside it.
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- There exists a much needed **rethink on development**, including the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, and the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
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- A healthy contestation over the pace of extraction and distribution of natural wealth will be great for the country as well as the countryside.
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Source: Live Mint

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