



## Foreign Linkage of Insurgent's Groups in the North East India: A study on National Social Council of Nagaland and United Liberation Front of Assam

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Article History	Abstract
Received: 06 June 2023 Revised: 05 Sept 2023 Accepted: 05 Nov 2023	<p><i>This study looks at the complex networks of foreign assistance, drug and weapon smuggling, and insurgency activity in Northeast India, especially in the states of Assam and Nagaland. It draws attention to the important role that outside parties, such as intelligence services and nearby nations, play in maintaining these illicit activities. Examined are China's ties to Pakistan and its role in backing rebel organizations in the area. Illustrative instances include the division within the Naga movement, smuggling routes, and the recent arm seizures in Bangladesh. To improve security and stability in Northeast India, addressing these issues calls for regional collaboration, intelligence sharing, and initiatives to stop the trafficking in illegal weapons and drugs.</i></p>
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	<b>Keywords:</b> <i>Insurgency, Arms Smuggling, Northeast India</i>

### 1. Introduction

The people of Northeast India are facing a sense of division due to a variety of factors including differences in culture and resource distribution among various ethnic groups, migration and scarcity of land, historical animosities, and discriminatory policies of both the colonial and post-independence central and state governments. These factors have contributed to a feeling of separatism among the people in the region. Other factors like greed for power, money and resources among the local elite too have motivated organized violence in this region. Further, dominant ethnic groups in these states have had control over political power and economic resources and thus, have for decades, exploited the minority ethnic groups. Moreover, the conflicting ideas of Indian nationalism and ethnic sub nationalism have contributed significantly to the violence in North East India (Brahmachari 2019). The most prominent ethnic issues in North-East India are the demand for a greater autonomy or independence by various ethnic groups. The main reason behind this demand is the feeling of neglect and marginalization by the central government, which is often seen as being dominated by the majority ethnic group of the country. Many ethnic groups in the region feel that their culture and identity are being eroded by the dominant culture of the rest of India.

The northeast states of India have been widely recognized for their weak economy, underdevelopment, ethnicity, political immaturity and insurgency. The insurgency factor has come up as a threat to India's national security. India's north-east is where south and southeast Asia meet (Upadhyay, 2006). In the most volatile areas of the world Northeast India has been a very significant area of them. In recent times almost more than 100 rebel groups have been occupying in this region (Upadhyay, 2009). The insurgent movements are partly the result of historical factors that have their roots in British colonial policies and partly the result of a lack of strategic vision and good governance post-independence. Nagaland was the first state where armed groups seeking secession surfaced in the 1950s. Mizoram followed this in the 1960s, Manipur in the 1970s, Assam and Tripura in the 1980s and parts of Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya in the 1990s. A striking feature about these groups is that they are invariably drawn along tribal and ethnic lines. In the very recent times, the insurgency in northeast India involves multiple armed factors operating in this region. There are a number of demands of different factions in northeast India some favor a separate state while others seek regional autonomy, some groups demand complete independence, others wanted religious law. As per reports of Union Home Ministry, Government of India the militant activity in the Northeast is on the decline, with Tripura and Mizoram emerging as the most peaceful states in the region (Times of India, 2018)

However, the security situation in the North Eastern States has improved substantially since 2014. The year 2020 recorded the lowest insurgency incidents and casualties among the civilians and security forces during the last two decades. Compared to 2014, there has been 74% reduction in insurgency incidents in 2021. Similarly, in this period, Security Forces casualties have come down by 60% and Civilian deaths by 89%. In 2021, a total of 209 insurgency related incidents were registered in NE region in which 23 civilians and 8 SF personnel lost their lives. Counter Insurgency Operations led to neutralization of 40 insurgents, arrest of 686 insurgents and recovery of 367 weapons in the region. A total of 1,473 cadres of insurgent outfits of NE States surrendered with 471 arms and joined the mainstream of the society (MHA Annual Report, 2021).

### **Genesis of ULFA and their mobilization of insurgent's activities:**

The organization came into existence in the beginning of Assam Movement in 1979-85 (Bhushan,2007). The dominant militant outfit ULFA, which has become synonymous with terrorism in Assam, took shape on 7<sup>th</sup>, April 1979 at the deserted Rong Ghor premises in Sibasagar where a handful of youth assembled and pledged to liberate Assam from the rule of Delhi (Hazarika,1994). On that day most of the prominent members were presented which was Rajiv Konwar known as Aurobindo Rajkhowa, Golap Baruah also called Anup Chetia, Smairan Gogoi known as Pradip Gogoi and Paresh Baruah. Basically, ULFA glean its respiration from Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), which was basically a semi militant organization. Most of ULFA founders were from AJYCP. The Front determined to wage armed struggle to liberate Assam from the exploitation of India (Sinha, 2007). Basically, the main object of ULFA was to driving away the penetrate who came from Bangladesh to Assam. But there were many more objects behind the organization which are 61 simply hurting the Assamese people for a long while. Basically, the unemployment in youth neglect of Assam by Central Govt. protection and preservation of Assamese culture etc (Bhushan, 2007).

Basically, the movement was organized run by ASU and AGSP on the democratic and non-violence principles. On that time the youths were not satisfied with that movement so they had a revolutionary thinking they basically wanted to armed struggle. That's why the ULFA organization formed. In the beginning of the organization most of the members of AASU and Assam Communal Youth Students Parishad. They have taken active participation in Assam movement. Some of them were Suren Dihingiya and Bheemkant Badgodai. But afterwards they went underground. But some other members like Paresh Baruah, Anup Chetia Jaganath Gogoi, Naren Doka alias Hirokkyoti Mahanta and Siddharth Phukan have captured the organization (Bhushan, 2007).

### **Undivided ULFA's Leadership**

The ULFA had clearly partitioned political and military wing. Paresh Barua headed the 'military wing' as the outfit's 'commander-in-chief'. Arabinda Rajkhowa was the head of the 'political wing' (United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) – Terrorist Group of Assam).

### **Military Wing**

Paresh Baruah was the 'commander in chief' & Raju Baruah the 'Deputy-Commander-inChief'. Raju Baruah, who was in the custody of Assam Police since December 2009, was released on bail on November 26, 2010.

### **Political Wing**

Arabinda Rajkhowa was the Chairman 'of ULFA', Pradip Gogoi was the 'Vice Chairman', Anup Chetia was the 'General Secretary', 'foreign secretary' Sashadhar Choudhury, Chitraban Hazarika was the 'finance secretary', Mithinga Daimary was the 'Central Publicity Secretary' and Bolin Das was the 'Assistant Secretary', Pranati Deka was the 'Cultural Secretary'.

### **Split in ULFA**

Paresh Baruah's supporters are not among the most powerful officials. A declaration condemning violent conflict and urging peace negotiations with the government was signed by Munim Nobis, the person who had first connected the ULFA to Bangladesh, Sunil Nath, and Kalpajyoti Neog. A pro- and an anti-peace talks camp has emerged inside the ULFA. The pro-talks group abandoned its demand for Swadhinn Asom (independent) in favour of Swadhikar(autonomy ). Most of them were throw out from the organization. Many of them underground. The underground persons have given soft loans and cash grants for beginning a new life. Some of them recruited in Police. Some of them bought tea began. These surrendered or underground persons derisively called SULFA. The ULFA has been transformed in to an Organized insurgency of Assam began in the year of 1983 with the guardianship of NSCN,

which is a powerful outfit operating in the Northeast. Basically NSCN gave training to the first Batch of the ULFA activities in 1984 September month. Like that KLA has also been providing support to all the undergrounds in the Northeast (Kotwal, 2008). ULFA and other militants groups from the Northeast maintain links with the militants of Kashmir and Punjab. It also in touch with many other organizations engaged in struggles in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and other states of India. The ULFA chairman attended the annual session of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Population in Geneva in 1997. In the same year, a four-member delegation of the ULFA including the chairman Arbinda Rajkhowa, general secretary Anup Chetia and the foreign secretary Sasha Choudhary went to Geneva and tried to enter the Unrepresented Nations People's Organization (UNPO). But the permanent representative of India in the United Nations Smt. Arundhuti Ghosh objected to the presence of the ULFA leaders in the meeting and raised the issue of the killing of social worker Sanjoy Ghosh by the ULFA. Finding themselves in a tight corner, the ULFA leaders were forced to leave Geneva. Its attempt to enter the Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization was blocked by the Government of India. But Smt. Arundhuti Ghosh, the permanent representative of India to the UN, protested to the ULFA leaders' attendance at the conference and brought up the matter of the ULFA's murder of social worker Sanjoy Ghosh. The ULFA leaders were compelled to depart Geneva after finding themselves in a precarious situation. The Government of India prevented its effort to join the Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization (Rai,2010) 65 Apart from independent movement of Assam ULFA also engaged in some social agenda which influence some local people to involve in drug and prostitution rings. ULFA also punished government officials, and they extorted money from them by blackmailing such as the government school teacher who taken home tuition and also get money from government, the government doctors who engaged with private medical institutions. ULFA also, has involved in Assamese cultural and social life. In April 1990, on the eve of the Assamese Bihu festival, ULFA said not playing or singing Hindi song and disco music. Those actions reflected ULFAs self-perception as a custodian of the interest of the Assamese nationality in the pattern of more mainstream organization such as the All Assam Students Union of Assam Sahitya Sabha (Baruah,2005).

### **Genesis of Insurgency in Nagaland**

Naga is the major insurgency and also called the mother of all Insurgency of North East India (cline, 2016). Naga comprises basically 17 major tribes and also 20 sub tribes. Some of them are Ao, Angami, Sema, Lotha, Tangkhul, Konyak, Rengma and Mao. Each tribe and sub tribe speaks a different language, though each of these belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group of languages (Rai, 2010). Nagas are basically lives in both Northeast India and in Myanmar. Originally animist, the majority of them are Christian, basically Baptist (cline, 2016). The 'Naga' is one of the ethnic tribe In North-East India which divided in many tribes and subtribes who are spread in the present state of Nagaland, North-east, Manipur, North Cachhar, the Mikir Hills, Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Nowgong district of Assam, Tirap and Changlang District of Arunachal Pradesh and Somra Tracts and close to North Western part of Myanmar. They are alleged to have stayed isolated inside their small geographic borders from times they were unaware of and to have never been ruled by the outside world (Sen, 2007).

### **The formation of Naga club**

The Naga club formed in the year of 1918. The members of this club were basically government employee also some Naga who returned from France after the World war I. During the visit of 19 of Sir John Simon in the year 1929 the Naga people submitted a memorandum regarding demanding of exclusion from the scope of constitutional reforms and they need themselves as kept under direct British Administration. After the Japanese invasion of Burma among the Nagas the political nature became change because they have known that after someday India will be a Free Nation, one thing is very important that in that time there was not demand for an immediate separation from India (Sinha, 2007).

### **The Formation of Naga National Council (NNC)**

The Naga tribe is the first ethnic group who raised the Banner of revolt against the Indian Government on 14th August 1947 under NNC leader Angami Zapu Phizo. In the year of 1948 Zapu Phizo was arrested and with his wingman. After that when he released in the year of 1949 then he became President of NNC in 1950 (Bareh, 2001). Naga unrest began soon after the end of World War II and the formation of independent India. The original leader and inspiration of the movement was Angami Zapu Phizo, who had served with the pro-Japanese Indian National Army during the war. The basis of this Naga Liberation Movement started since the British succeeded in establishing the region as a distinct region from India, it should be treated as sovereign state after India attained independence (Cline, 2016). After the war in the year 1946 Charles Paswey established the (NHDTC) Naga Hills District Tirbe Council to together all the Naga in one platform. Later it transformed to NNC (Sinha, 2007). Most important

thing is that NNC used the Term 'National' to indicating the intensity of Naga people. NNC composed with 29 members. Main objective of NNC was to unity all Naga and also inclusion of their hills within the Province of Assam in a Free India, lastly to safeguard the interest of the Nagas (Kotwal, 2000). The Naga National Council (NNC) publicly declared its intention to establish a sovereign Naga state. In May 1951, the Council conducted a 'referendum' claiming that 99% of the Naga people supported independence for Nagaland. However, the Indian government has never accepted this claim. The NNC boycotted the general elections in 1952 and initiated a violent secessionist movement. Naga insurgents launched attacks on various villages and police outposts. On March 22, 1956, NNC leader Phizo established an underground government known as the Naga Federal Government (NFG) and formed the Naga Federal Army (NFA). In response, the Central Government of India deployed the military to suppress the insurgency in what was then the Naga Hills District of the State of Assam. To address the situation, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 was enacted (Bareh, 2001). The NNC element in Burma began branding the mainstream NNC as traitors. After some internal power struggles within the breakaway 67 group, in 1980 it announced the formation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), under the leadership of Isak Swu as chairman and Muivah as the general secretary. Naga Insurgency basically blows after the Indo-Pak war in 1971. On that time the insurgent lost their bases at East Pakistan. In the time of national emergency in India imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975 government gave a free hand to the security forces to clear away from their jungle camps. Mostly 1214 people surrendered. In order to create a Naga nation of their own, the Naga insurgents organized the Nagas against the Indian State. They had such confidence in their capacity to create their own Nagas and Indians who expressed skepticism about the feasibility and desirability of a sovereign Nagaland were considered by the independent state as their opponents or traitors to the cause. The Indian Constitution's provision for autonomous district councils as well as statehood within the Indian Union failed to appease the Naga rebels. They turned down Indira Gandhi's offer to provide Nagaland a status akin to Bhutan and ignored Suisa's suggestion (Ao, 2002). Due to the militant leaders of the Naga ethnic group's unwavering stance on the question of sovereignty, all previous peace endeavors failed to bring about a lasting peace (H.Srikantha & C.J Thomas, 2005). However, not all Nagas shared the militant leaders' emphasis on the concept of sovereignty. A portion of Nagas supported the NPC, which released its 16-point plan and negotiated for Nagaland to become a province of the Indian Union with the Indian state. Since Nagaland's creation, a large number of Nagas have actively engaged in elections and chosen to serve to the state legislature and the Indian parliament. An Elite that is somewhat pro-Indian and acknowledges India's sovereignty over the Nagas has emerged as a result of the region's administrative, political, and economic integration with India. Although these supporters no longer demand on political independence, they may nevertheless aim for more autonomy. There were moderates, even within the NNC, who were open to some degree of autonomy inside the Indian Union but opposed using violent measures to achieve their goals. But by labeling them as traitors, the radicals inside the NNC silenced the moderate voices and occasionally physically eliminated them. T. Sakhrie was brutally assassinated in 1956 because he opposed the use of force that was encouraged by leaders like Phizo (H.Srikantha & C.J Thomas, 2005). After that most of underground militant groups because of Indian Government pressure signed An Agreement held in that time at Shillong which was signed on November 11, 1975 between the Governor of Nagaland L. P Singh representing Indian 68 government and the Nagaland's underground leadership by Biseto Medom Keyho, Pukrove Nakhro, I. Temjenba and z. Ramyo (Shinha, 2007).

### **The NSCN**

In order to further their aim of an independent Nagaland, the hard-line supporters of the treaty abandoned NNC and founded NSCN. The NSCN's campaign compelled even the NNC's highest-ranking officials to denounce the Shillong Accord and declare that the fight for Naga independence had not been discontinued. Due to rumors that Th. Muivah planned to hand over the NSCN to India, there was such a strong concern over giving up sovereignty that the organization split into two parts. The militants appear to be stuck by their own stated goals to the point that they fear criticism from both their allies and detractors should they consider or veer from their current course of action (H.Srikantha & C.J Thomas, 2005). The Main aims of NSCN included the following Unquestionable sovereignty over every inch of Nagaland

1. Dictatorship of the people Through NSCN.
2. Socialist Government to ensure fair equality to all people
3. Nagaland for Christ

4. No illusion of saving Nagaland by peaceful means

5. Self-reliance.

In the year of 1988 the NSCN formally split into two factions, the Konyak Nagas under Khaplang and Khole Konyak formed NSCN (K) and the Thangkhol Nagas under Isak and Muivah formed NSCN (IM). Which led to a bloody fight between the two groups. Since the split in 1988, NSCN (IM) has significantly recovered and increased its influence in areas of Assam where the Naga minority resides. The title —Nagaland has been changed to —Nagalim to include the regions they assert under the notion of Greater Nagaland, and they have also created a government-in-exile called as the Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland. Like that NSCN (K) areas of Influence are in parts of Mokokchung districts and Tuensang. It also has a government-in-exile and its headquarters is located in Myanmar (Sinha, 2007).

### **Foreign Assistance to the Insurgency groups such as ULFA (Assam) and NSCN (Nagaland)**

Typically, an insurgency needs significant outside supporting to be effective. Actually, in order to accomplish their mission, insurgent organizations typically need outside help. History has shown that an insurrection cannot be supported just by the resources found inside the borders of one specific state. Insurgent organizations would cross the border to connect with other insurgent organizations and foreign persons in order to achieve their objectives. Insurgents must seek support from friendly nations, other insurgent groups, private entities in other states, and international organizations in order to strengthen their political and military capacities while they engage in a protracted conflict with government forces that possess superior arsenals.

Bard O'Neill has mentioned four types of external support viz. moral support, political support, material support, and sanctuary. The external help usually comes from close but unfriendly countries to the host country who takes advantage of the situation, in an attempt to settle its own score. Which are as

### **Political and Moral Support**

According to Neill, in general the moral support consists of private and public statements which indicate sympathy to the insurgent groups. By morally they support to use of violence, protesting or criticizing governments for restricting political rights, by drawing comparisons between the rebels and heroic movements in the past, the insurgents' reputation may be improved etc. It is very difficult to make a precise distinction between moral and political support. For example, the first was Soviet support for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1970s.

### **Material support**

Material support consists of tangible resources either used on behalf of insurgents or given to them directly which basically includes the nonmilitary end, like financing, basic necessities e.g. food, clothing, medicine, shelter and political, ideological, and administrative training. Money serves many purposes, especially funding the acquisition of military supplies, paying the salaries of full- and part-time members of an insurgent movement, and covering expenses associated with sustaining a political apparatus, especially its representatives abroad.

### **Sanctuary**

Sanctuary also plays a vital role in insurgency movement. It is used as bases for training, arms stockpiling, operational planning and providing safe havens for leaders and facilities for rest and recuperation. The Vietnam conflict represented one of two situations in which sanctuaries are particularly important. Which are like when two groups are having guerrilla attacks that time, they need bases and also when government takes counter-insurgency operation then they need sanctuary bases (Neill, 2013). The level of moral and material support from external powers is a critical factor in determining the success of any insurgency. In the case of insurgency groups in Northeast India, they have sought sanctuaries or support from various neighboring countries. These groups have found support in Bhutan and China to the north, Bangladesh to the south, and Myanmar to the east. China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other countries have provided both moral and material support to these insurgent groups (Sinha, 2007). In these countries, they get facilities for training and can also procure arms and ammunition. Involvement of intelligence agencies and the regular flow of funds from the smugglers of narcotics from the Golden Triangle are a cause of concern (Sharma, 2014).

### **Pakistan's Support to Naga Rebels**

The Naga Insurgency is considered as a Godsend for Pakistan. This made the relation between India and Pakistan very adversarial (Sinha, 2007). The insurgent groups started developing their international

linkages immediately after the independence in 1947. The Nagas were the first to raise the banner of insurgency (Sharma, 2014). The Pakistan support basically started after Phzio escape to East Pakistan. Pakistan created a cooperation cell for coordination with Naga rebels. In the year between 1962 and 1968 the many naga groups crossed East Pakistan with the commander of Underground Naga leader Kaito Sema, and during their returned in march, 1963 through the hill of Myanmar with lots of arms and ammunition the next gang crossed in the October, 1963 and returned in 1964 with 30,000 Indian currency and military hardware (Sinha, 2007). Pakistan's ISI has been involved in instigating violence and terrorism by detailing through some steps which are as

(a) Promoting indiscriminate violence by supporting local militant outfits, (b) keep creating new militant outfits on ethnic and communal lines (c) Supply of explosives and sophisticated arms, (d) promoting communal frenzy between the Hindus and the Muslims, natives and 71 outsiders by inflammatory propaganda and (e) Promoting militancy among local Muslim youths, especially in Assam and Manipur (Dev, 2009). Dhaka promised light machine guns, stenguns, mortars, and rocket launchers to the Nagas. The Indian intelligence reported that camps were built at Rang Mati and Ram Khiang forest (Chaube, 2012). Pakistan became major sanctuary of Naga separatist and also the main source of supply of arms and ammunition. In the training and military camps hosted by Ayub Khan and he also gave training a very sophisticated manner to Naga Separatist (Mukharjee, 2007). The same aggressive burning role was performed by Pakistani radio broadcasts and newspaper propaganda. It said that the Naga people had never been a part of India, not even under the rule of the British, and that Nagaland had been taken over by force merely for the purpose of forcing the Nagas to submit, be subdued, and be suppressed. A hostile attack against India was launched by Pakistani radio on August 23, 1967. The Nagas and Mizos were provided with the means to get in touch with foreign embassies in Dhaka, were given unrestricted access to port facilities, and with the use of these resources, Pakistan permitted them to send delegations to visit other nations via Pakistan to further their objectives (Nibedon, 1982). The ISI was always ready to help their friends in North-East India procure weapons. In Thailand, after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia from the 1980s onwards, light weapons and light machine guns awaited prospective buyers, so new supply opportunities opened up. Thus in 1991 the ISI provided weapons from Thailand to a group of 240 NSCN members (Scroll.in, 2016). Through the IIGs, Pakistan's ISI intelligence service attempted to encircle the whole North-East region. The ULFA had their initial contact with the ISI in 1990 via the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka. The encounter with ISI was a turning moment in the history of the organization. In the 1990s, the ISI played a significant role in providing logistic assistance, such as advanced training on urban guerrilla warfare, handling high-tech weapons, and creating improvised explosive devices (IEDs), as the insurgent mode began to gradually evolve into the terrorist mode (Sharma, 2014).

### **China's Support to Naga Rebels**

Basically Naga insurgency got support from Chinese from early 1970s. China's reasons for aiding the Naga Insurgency with Pakistan converged. With India, they both had a hostile relationship (Sinha, 2007). Among the countries China is one who continuously supporting or providing material and moral support to Nagas. The Capital of China Beijing has been supporting, advising, and arming major insurgent outfits of Northeast India because its chaotic relations with India. Since the 1950s, Beijing is thought to have provided financial and ideological support to North-Eastern separatist organizations, especially the Nagas. It's thought that Beijing is giving the Naga separatists weapons, instruction, and other kinds of material support. Beijing may even have given them technology support in the form of radio services to help the Naga problem get worldwide attention. The 1962 conflict between India and China had given Naga separatists more hope (Singh & Sandhu, 2014). Basically, the Naga were in a search of a big power support because which can help to increase the bargaining capacity with the Government of India. Naga has chosen China because it has a pugnacious relation with India. The Naga leaders requested to the Chinese government that they needed their help for liberation from India (Yonuo, 1974). In the year of 1968, Beijing promised to establish a liberation government in Naga territory, China also on that time guarantee to provide arms training and advisors to facilitate the communication link between Naga and Chinese officials. On that period Two hundred trained Nagas returned from China in Jotsoma village near Kohima who for the first time used automatic rifles machine guns (Singh & Sandhu, 2014). In the year 2009, The NSCN(IM) co-founder Isak Chishi Swu, who has died in 2016 had made a trip to Beijing. In December 2009 Anthony Shimray had stated that, The NSCN (IM) had been offered the purchase of surface to air missiles by Chinese agents working for Chinese intelligent agencies. The price was stated at USD 1 million, which the NSCN(IM) could not rise, as a result of which the deal did not go through due to shortage of funds (European Foundation for South Asian Studies, 2020) In 2010, it was discovered after the arrest and questioning of Anthony

Shimray, a top NSCN (IM) militant, that two Chinese arms businesses had agreed to receive USD 1 million in exchange for providing weapons to insurgents in northeast India through ships from China's port city of Dalian. In October 2010, they planned to go through North Myanmar's land corridor to get to India from Dalian (Gupta, 2020).

### **Foreign nations Support to ULFA**

The United Liberation Front of Assam the terrorist group of Assam has obtained arms from Chinese Army (Singh, 2008). China's aid to separatist outfits in the Northeast has been covert, and has gone through many phases over the past 70 years. Between 1990 and 2010, when more than a hundred separate rebel organizations are said to have been operating in the area, the Northeast saw its darkest period. China provided active support to separatist groups in the Northeast for about 15 years, starting when a group of the Naga National Council 73 arrived in Yunnan, a province in the country's southwest (Bhattacharyya,2020 [www.thequint.com](http://www.thequint.com)). If look to the link between Pakistan and ULFA Munim Nobis was the main person who was former member of Assam people Liberation Army (APLA). APLA formed at Tezpur at the same time as ULFA (Sinha, 2007). Munim Nobis tried to Connect with Pakistan ISI but it was failed for the first time after that Nobis tried to connect the ULFA with ISI with a representative team when some of senior ULFA leaders flew to Karachi sometime in 1990 from where they were taken to Islamabad and then to Peshawar. In that time the team got training in strategy, tactics, counter intelligence and use of weapons (Sinha, 2007). After that, with the guidance of Paresch Baruah ULFA leaders visited for the next time, basically on that time they were taken to Darrah in North west Frontier Province which is world's one of the biggest illegal arms bazaar. In the month of March 1994, according to information shared in the Assam Assembly, it was revealed that ULFA militants had received training with the assistance of ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence). ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) had established contact with the Bangladesh field intelligence unit located in Dhaka. As a result, ULFA was allowed to set up training camps in Bangladesh, specifically in the Mymen Singh district at Bhemugach, Nilfarman, and Dhami, as well as in Maulvi Bazar area (Hazarika, 1995). According to Subir Bhaumik, Bangladesh has provided shelter to the rebels of the North East from 1978, three years after India started arming the Shanti Bahini to fight in chitagong Hill tracts (Bhaumik,2019). Pakistan is attempting to revive the insurgency in the Northeast with the assistance of its longtime ally, China, despite having been repeatedly routed by the Indian Armed Forces on the battlefield and having lost Kashmir with the repeal of Article 370. A terrorist organization that seeks to sever Assam's ties to India, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), was reportedly actively being funded by Pakistani officials in Dhaka, according to a report from November. In 2011, two officials of a Chinese intelligence agency stayed for a week at ULFA's camp in Mynamar's Taga, and they interacted with leaders from other groups (Bhattacharya, 2020). After that ULFA's Paresch Baruah was already living in Yunan, which was not possible without the Knowledge of Higher authorities in China (Pathak, 2021). Even the previous government of Bangladesh, headed by Islamic nationalist Khaleda Zia, openly backed and provided asylum for the members of the Northeast insurgent organization. 74 The ULFA chief-maintained contact with the Pakistani High Commissioner in Dhaka. The Pakistani High Commission, which is based in Bangladesh, maintains its anti-India operations despite the fact that the assistance at the government level was removed under the current Hasina administration. As control over the valley has already been lost, the ISI and Chinese intelligence services are attempting to create a scenario in Northeast that is similar to Kashmir. Terrorist organizations like the ULFA are growing more powerful every day because to the active financing and backing from Pakistan and China (Bhattacharya,2020). It has been stated that ULFA top leaders has close link with ISI, DGFI and some Islamic organizations. It is known that without their proper support the groups cannot based their camps in Bangladesh. Reports says that Mrinal Hazarika Former chief ULFA's 28th battalion who had come over ground deserting the organization along with 150 other cadres. Reports knows from hazarika that ULFA has several camps offices and shelter places in Bangladesh, including some in cities he claimed All these has been running with the consent of the official agencies of that country (Hindustan Times, 2009). By permitting the free flow of guns from its borders, Bangladesh has been assisting the insurgency in the Northeast. Arms trafficking is one of the primary reasons for deteriorating bilateral ties and harming the whole region, extending from Southeast Asia to China and Sri Lanka, in addition to training grounds and covert backing (depending on the government in power in Dhaka) for militant 199 groups. (Kumer,2003). Cox Bazar in Bangladesh has emerged as a major port for supply of illegal arms and ammunition to the insurgent group of North East India. According to Arabinda Rajkhowa, the ULFA used Bangladesh as a corridor to smuggle firearms into Assam. Rajkhowa again told that from Bangladesh, the ULFA made contact with arms dealers in Cambodia and Thailand. Bangladesh also served as a place for currency conversion and flowing finances out of country. As a result of harbouring insurgents, Bangladesh has been flooded with small

arms specially the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Das, 2019). Most of the arms and ammunition were reportedly of Korean, Italian, Chinese and American made (Pattanaik, 2013). The Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts have emerged as a large weapons —supermarket for arms trafficking for North East India insurgent groups. It is not far from Yunan, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia. Arms have been brought from Indochina, through Thailand (Ranong and Phuket provinces) and Myanmar (Arakan and Tenasserim coasts) and then flooding India's northeast (Das, 2019). 75 According to Bishnoi the Naga rebel group NSCN-K was providing all the help to other North-east insurgent groups to set up bases in the remote, hardly accessible hilly terrain in Myanmar. Estimated two thousand three hundred forty six North East India insurgents from different groups were taking shelter in Myanmar areas. Out of these NSCN-K has the highest number of one thousand cadres in Myanmar, NSCN-IM has eighty to hundred cadres, ULFA (Independent) led by Paresh Baruah has two hundred fourteen cadres, NDFB (Songbijit faction) has one hundred sixty men, United National Liberation Front (UNLF) has two hundred twenty nine cadres, People's Liberation Army (PLA) has two hundred fifty six, Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) has forty to fifty cadres, Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO) has ten to fifteen cadres, National Liberation Front of Tripura has fifteen to twenty cadres (Das,2019).The ULFA(I) self-styled c-in-c Paresh Baruah allegedly resided somewhere close to the Myanmar-China border and was responsible for obtaining and transporting weapons produced in China, according to senior police officers with extensive experience dealing with counter-insurgency operations in Assam. The presence of several militants from North East India in Myanmar has been made possible by the NSCN-K (The Shillong Times, 2017). The north-eastern insurgents also have indulged in smuggling of drugs from Myanmar. The Myanmar government has failed to check the drug trade. Instead, the Myanmar government has close links with drug trader. While outfits like the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) of Manipur have an anti-substance abuse policy, groups like the NSCN have freely indulged in such trade (Routray, 2011). Additionally, the ISI has educated ULFA terrorists in the use of high-tech weaponry and explosives, counterintelligence, and deception. Paresh Baruah and other ULFA commanders were able to travel to Singapore, Thailand, and other nations thanks to Pakistan, who also opened a route for the movement of money and weapons. In the Sylhet and Cox's Bazaar regions, a number of Madrassas (seminaries) and mosques supported by the ISI were being utilized to store and distribute weapons that the ULFA had purchased from Thailand and Myanmar. The generosity of the ISI allowed the ULFA to purchase weapons in Cambodia using hard cash that was sent through Nepal. Additionally, the ISI introduced the ULFA to LTTE transporters who agreed to bring weapons from Southeast Asia into Myanmar in exchange for payment. With the creation of the Indo-Burmese Revolutionary Front (IBRF) in 1989, the collaboration between numerous terrorist organizations operating in India's Northeast and foreign organizations became official. The NSCN-K, ULFA, United Liberation Front of Bodoland, Kuki National Front (KNF), and Chin National Front (Myanmar) were 76 the original members of the IBRF. According to reports, Paresh Baruah paid the Kachins a sizeable quantity of money in exchange for the first significant shipment of weaponry from Thailand. The insurgent Karen National Union, which in 1993 was said to have supplied the ULFA with AK-56 rifles, machine guns, rocket-propelled cannons, and anti-tank weapons via the Cambodian arms market, had its base in Manerplaw in southern Myanmar, close to the Thai border. Themba Song, the wife of the killed Manipuri rebel, and an arms dealer were both recognized by the organization's cadres as being of ethnic Kachin descent. It is well known that the ULFA and Naga terrorist organizations received firearms from the Communist Party of Burma, mostly M10 rifles supplied in China. According to detained ULFA members, Baruah once engaged in —a personal operation involving the smuggling of heroin into Assam that was obtained in Myanmar. The ULFA terrorists also entered China via Bhutan, where they made contact with the Chinese Army, according to ULFA cadres who had surrendered. A weapons shipment was handed to the group during a meeting the group made with a Chinese ship on the high seas in March 1995 as a result of these encounters (United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) - Terrorist Group of Assam, n.d.b). The ULFA has 15000 hard core cadres getting support from ISI. In between November 1990 to march 1991 the Army seized total 1208 weapons of assorted types of LMGs, Stenguns, AK Rifles, pistols, revolvers, shot guns and also 8762 rounds of ammunition (Ghose,2000).

### **Arms and Drugs smuggling in North-east India**

For overturn the carrier of the youth and the India's economy the external forces are enormously involved in the narcotics trafficking, another face of its proxy war against India. India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) had informed the Border security Force (BSF), intelligence agencies and state Government North-East that the ISI backed traffickers had dumped tones of narcotics, along the international border to push into India. It is important that the Narcotics things verily harm national



security with its economic status (Singh, 2008). According to Indian officials, the majority of weapons smuggled into India come from China and are distributed over the Myanmar border to the northeastern regions (Bhalla, 2015). After the split in the underground Naga movement in 1980 over the Shillong Accord (1975), the NSCN emerged as the most powerful insurgent group in the North-East. It has collected a formidable arsenal of small arms including AK rifles and rocket propelled grenades (Sinha, 2007). Some of the arms are taken to CHT from where the smuggler enters the North-east via Mizoram (Sentinal, 1997). 77 Bhattacharaya claims that members of the Chinese army have long backed organizations like the NSCN-IM and the NSCN-K by giving those weapons. This is a result of the fifty-year-old border conflicts that have existed between China and India (Bhattacharaya,2015). NSCNIM's weapons are smuggled from the Thai-Cambodian border. Reports indicate that Pakistani embassy officials in Thailand provide assistance to the NSCN-IM and other North-Eastern insurgent groups in procuring weapons (SAPT,n.d ).Most of the weapons smuggled into India in the 20th century were used by the ULFA. Alongside the ULFA, there were other militant organizations engaged in violent conflict with the Indian government, such as the Nagaland Social Council-N (Goswamy,2013). The most recent arm shipment to be captured by Bangladeshi officials was headed to India in 2018 with the intention of being used by Indian rebel organizations. The fact that the coast guard was unable to detain the thieves transporting this shipment indicates that high-level corruption within Bangladesh's security structure took place in this particular case (Chowdhury, 2018).

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper highlight the vital issue of insurgency in the Northeast India and highlight the fact how over a period of time different neighbouring states have gave shelter and aid to this insurgent group. This paper makes a comparative study and detail analysis-of the insurgent groups of Assam ULFA and Nagaland's Naga National Council(NNC) and also makes analysis of ULFA's different wings such as political and military and also describes the different defected groups within the ULFA insurgent group.

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