

UNDERSTANDING THE LINKAGES AMONG INSURGENTS IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST

By

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, around 20 Indian army soldiers lost their lives in an ambush ostensibly carried out by Nagaland Socialist Council of India (Khaplang) which pulled out of the ceasefire in March this year. It is also believed that the insurgents of other outfits had also participated in this operation. Paresh Barua, the head of the breakaway faction of the United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent) has been instrumental in bringing together various militant groups in North East under the banner "United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia" comprising ULFA (I), National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit) under the helm of SS Khaplang, the chief of NSCN (K). Similar efforts by other groups such as the Maoists and People Liberation Army to form a grand coalition called "Strategic United Front" to unite likeminded groups have been observed. This grand strategic alliance among insurgent groups which has taken shape is not a recent phenomenon but has a genesis in the 1990s.

Major insurgencies like the Naga insurgency took shape in 1950s in India's North East region even before the birth of contemporary terror groups in India. Many other secessionist groups divided on ethnic lines emerged in the North Eastern states from 1980s, rendering the region most fragile creating a potential hazard to India's national security. Most of these movements in the North East enjoyed support from its ethnic population thus acting as a

platform to propagate their respective ethnic community's goals and objectives. While some groups have received support in the form of funds, training, shelter and political backing from other neighbouring states,¹ others have established support structures with other insurgent groups in the form of strategic alliances in the 1990s and 2000s.²

Scholars and experts alike have placed a great deal of importance in studying these linkages among the North Eastern insurgent groups. However, the focus has been to the extent of studying the alliances or linkages only as a fleeting review rather than studying the dynamism and transitions occurring over a period of time. Research on various transitions in the support structures between insurgent groups could pave the way for understanding the key pivots which underpins the relations, thus negating the limitations of a static analysis. Mapping the transitions would be an ideal mechanism to study the evolving inter-organisational linkages among insurgent movements in India's North East.

Studies focused on transitions in Insurgent linkages over a period of time, are limited and not exhaustive in the Indian context. While, there is an appreciable work of literature on linkages among terror networks internationally, most of them pertain to studying intra-organisational linkages in foreign terror groups especially Al Qaeda post 9/11 attacks. This research will fill this void by attempting to map, visualize and depict the linkages both theoretically as well in the form of illustrations depicting networks. This paper would study about linkages between groups (inter) rather than inside them (intra). This paper would attempt to bring out the following,

- 1) Characteristics of such linkages between insurgent groups.
- 2) Transition and evolution of such linkages over a period of time (1995-till date).
- 3) Key players – Main recipients and providers of assistance.

This paper will attempt to perform an analysis using open source data from 1990 to till date, supported by primary source data. However, a caveat has to be stated that not all open source reports have been cited but only some

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reports which bring out symbolic representation of the relations. In order to capture and map the transitions that have taken place in the inter-organisational linkages, study would progress in two different stages - the first one from 1990-2000, the second from 2001-2015.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INSURGENT GROUPS IN THE NORTH EAST

Before we embark upon understanding the inter-organisational linkages among insurgent groups in North East, it is imperative to understand the background of the various insurgency movements in that region. However, for the sake of simplicity, only important and key groups will be dealt briefly and the rest will be studied as and when it necessitates a citation.

Assam hosted most of these insurgent groups. The most powerful and prominent among them are the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA). NDFB was started as Bodo Security Force (BDSF), under the leadership of Ranjan Daimary in 1986. In 1994, the BDSF renamed itself as the NDFB. The primary objective is to fight for a separate state for the Bodo people under Bodoland. NDFB however announced ceasefire in 2005 which split the organisation into NDFB pro-talk and NDFB anti-talk led by IK Songbijit known as NDFB (IKS). United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) was formed in 1979, by Bhimakanta Buragohain, Rajiv Rajkonwar alias Arabinda Rajkhowa, Golap Baruah alias Anup Chetia, Samiran Gogoi *alias* Pradip Gogoi, Bhadreshwar Gohain and Paresh Baruah at the Rang Ghar in Sibsagar to establish a “sovereign socialist Assam” through an armed struggle. However, ULFA initiated negotiations with the government which led to the formation of ULFA (Independent), an anti-talk faction led by its former military commander Paresh Barua (South Asia Terrorism Portal). Other groups such as Dima Halim Daogah (DHD)³, Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO)⁴, The Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF)⁵, and All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA)⁶ are also active in Assam.

The state of Manipur is also home to innumerable terrorists groups. The oldest and most prominent among them is People’s Liberation Army (PLA).

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The People's Liberation Army (PLA) was established in 1978 under the leadership of N. Bisheswar Singh with a primary objective to organise a revolutionary front covering the entire Northeast and unite all ethnic groups, including the *Meiteis*, *Nagas* and *Kukis*, to liberate Manipur. The People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) was formed under the leadership of R.K. Tulachandra in 1977 but its present chairman is Achamba with its main objective of expelling the outsiders from the State of Manipur. Other groups such as The Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)⁷, Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL)⁸ are also active in Manipur.

The oldest and the bloodiest insurgency in the North East have been waged by Naga groups from the late 1950s in the Indian state of Nagaland. Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed in 1980 by Isak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S.S. Khaplang after Naga National Council (NNC) signed an agreement with the Government of India, known as the "Shillong Accord". However, NSCN split into two factions, NSCN (IM) led by Isak and Muivah, and another faction led by Khaplang known as NSCN (K) in 1988. Since then, there have been constant internecine conflicts between these two factions. There have been attempts by the government of India and NSCN (IM) to initiate peace talks.

Given the above, the objectives of terror groups in the North East provide a broad continuum ranging from outright secessionism from India, to statehood within Indian constitution and to protect the local economic status from outside encroachment. However, the common thread among all these groups is to protect their own indigenous population be it *Nagas*, *Kukis*, *Bodos*, tribals etc. Regardless of their ideological ilk, these groups have attempted to reach out each other in order to negate the superior fighting abilities of the Indian army and to protect their limited access to resources. Thus, this phenomenon of collaboration or partnership was first observed in 1990s.

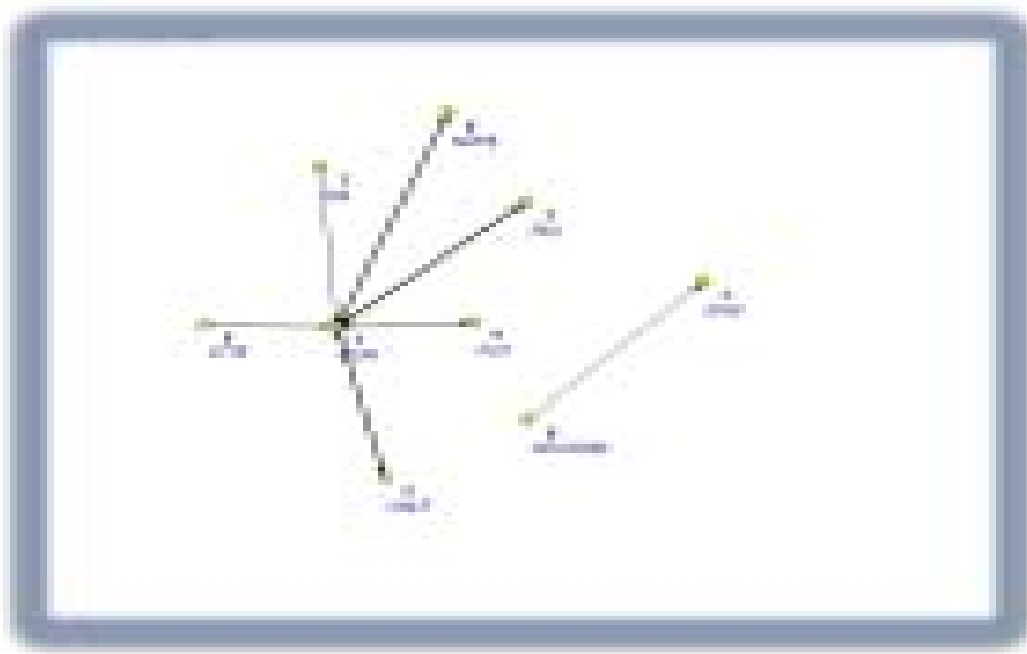
FIRST STAGE (1990-2000)

Though, linkages existed among groups even prior to this period, it assumed more prominence only after the 1990s. For instance, ULFA's was trained by

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other groups such as the NSCN between 1980s and 1990s (Kumar; 2001: 2223, Singh; 2008, 12).⁹ By virtue of their existence from the 1980s, groups like ULFA, PLA, NSCN (IM), NSCN (K), DHD, and NDFB assumed prominence and operated in this region. There is little mention about nature of links among groups during this period in most of the open source publications. ULFA has been observed to benefit the most from these linkages. ULFA has been known to be trained by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.¹⁰ A LTTE spokesperson named Dinesh visited ULFA camp at Lakhpathar during 1991. During 1993, ULFA's military chief procured around 2000 AK 56 rifles from Bangladesh which was shared with Manipur's PLA. It has also been observed that ULFA, PLA and NSCN (K) conducted joint operations against Myanmar Army several times. Some ULFA cadres were trained by Kachin Independent Army (KIA) in Myanmar in the late 1980s.¹¹ Meanwhile NSCN (IM) developed a working relationship with DHD to train and share camping facilities. The linkages have been depicted below as a graph (Figure: 1).

Figure 1: LINKAGES FROM 1990-2000¹²



The above can be summarized as below

- ULFA is the vital pivot in this structure, playing a gateway role. This gateway represents the connection which acts as an interface between two entirely different clusters. ULFA was acting as the gateway to other groups.
- ULFA also enjoys the most centrality position being the center of the entire network.
- ULFA has the most number of inward connectors (inward connectors 6) and outward connectors (outward connectors 4). Inward connectors represent a recipient. On the other hand, outward connector represents a provider of assistance. Hence, ULFA represents the largest provider as well as the recipient in the entire network.
- Groups such as LTTE and KIA have played a role in training ULFA cadres at the same time, accessing Indian mainland through ULFA.
- ULFA's relationship with other groups such as PLA and UNLF has been reciprocal in nature.
- The reciprocal nature of the linkages could point to a consolidation phase as the severe setback from counter insurgency operations by the Indian army called "Operation *Rhino*".

SECOND STAGE (2000-2015)

The second stage was punctuated by emergence of new groups like KYKL, KNLNF, and AANLA with rapid expansion of older ones like ULFA and NSCN factions. Splinter factions like DHD (J) also became a prominent player in Assam. ULFA had training ties with All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF),¹³ wherein ULFA cadres were periodically trained in arms and explosives handling.

New groups like KLNLF established ties with groups like PLA. In 2003, KLNLF cadres were put through a 6 months rigorous arms training at a PLA training camp located at Manipur/Myanmar border. Similarly, the first two batches of AANLA cadres were trained by Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA)¹⁴ in 2006.

Apart from ties which were a one way affair, ties with mutual benefits were established in the mid-2000s. For instance, in 2005 NSCN (IM) and DHD

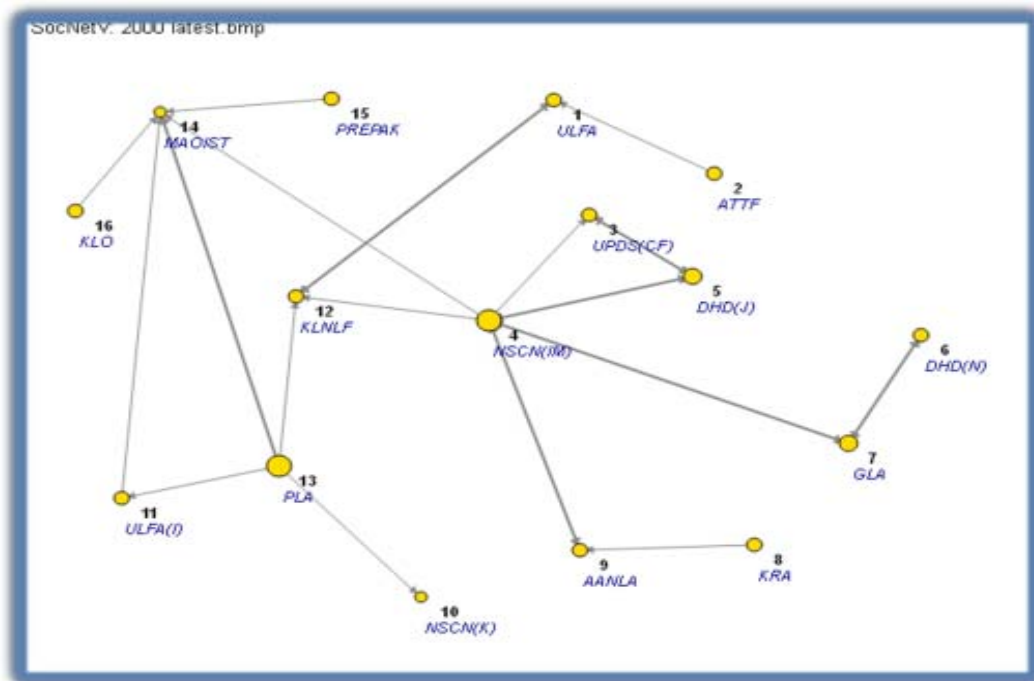
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(J) entered into an agreement wherein NSCN cadres can take shelter in North Cachar hills in Assam and DHD cadres can take shelter in Nagaland. Though, this agreement looks mutually beneficial, it was monetarily skewed in favour of NSCN (IM) as DHD (J) had to pay NSCN (IM), Rs.4 Crores annually for using this facility. Joint operations have also been conducted by DHD (J) and NSCN (IM) against their rival factions namely DHD (N) and UPDS (ceasefire). Similarly, ULFA also forged close ties with KLNLF for joint collections and operations in 2007. AANLA had a similar arrangement with NSCN (IM) where they would conduct joint operations and collections on 50/50 sharing basis in 2006-2007. Another group named Gorkha Liberation Army (GLA)¹⁵ had an arrangement with NSCN (IM) in 2006 for training, joint operations and even deputed its cadres in NSCN (IM) camps. The same NSCN (IM) camp also hosted and trained KLNLF, AANLA, and importantly cadres of groups observing ceasefire with the government like the UPDS (ceasefire)¹⁶ cadres. Such instances of groups observing ceasefire colluding with active terrorists groups are not in isolation. DHD (J) and UPDS ran a joint training camp in 2003. Likewise, in 2007, GLA had been trained by DHD (N), the pro talk faction of the DHD. Another fringe group named as Bodoland Royal Tigers Force (BRTF) in Assam also trained with DHD (N) group in 2007.

Late 2000s witnessed the disintegration of ULFA as a potent insurgent group. In December 2009, the Sheikh Hasina government, appreciative of India's concern arrested and handed over Arabinda Rajkhowa, the chairman of ULFA.¹⁷ This was preceded by arrest and handing over of two top leaders of ULFA, Sashadhar Choudhary (ULFA's foreign secretary) and Chitrabhan Hazarika couple of days earlier.¹⁸ Resigned to the destiny, ULFA under its chairman accepted to negotiate with the government and was subsequently released. However, this created a two way split, pro-talk faction led by Arabinda Rajkhowa and the anti-talk faction led by its military chief, Paresh Barua. This faction was later renamed as ULFA (Independent) which continued the armed struggle against the Indian state. Depleted with resources, cadres and funds, ULFA (I) started alliances with other groups fighting the Indian state.

ULFA (I) started to train under PLA in 2012.¹⁹ PLA has also trained other groups such as the Maoists and have supplied arms to NSCN (K) at a discounted price. PLA has trained, supplied weapons and even run joint training camps with the Maoists in the late 2000s. Along with the Maoists, PLA had formed the “Strategic United Front” which envisaged bringing other groups fighting the Indian state under a single umbrella.²⁰ The PLA has supplied sophisticated weapons to the Maoist in return for funds.²¹ According to another open source report, the Maoists have received weapons shipments from the NSCN (IM) and KLO in 2009-2010 and have relied on ULFA (I) for recruitment of its cadres in this region in 2012.²² Maoists also forged an alliance with PREPAK of Manipur for supply of weapons and train its cadres in 2010 (Singh, 2011). At the same time, Maoists have also contributed by training cadres from AANLA in 2008.²³ These linkages have been depicted below as graph (Figure: 2).

Figure 2: LINKAGES FROM 2001-2015²⁴



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The above can be summarized as below.

- There are three different clusters in the above network. PLA, NSCN (IM) and the Maoists cluster.
- Among them, NSCN (IM) (6 outward connectors) followed by PLA (4 outward connectors), are the main providers in the network. However, major portion of the linkages of NSCN (IM) with other groups are reciprocal in nature (3 inward connectors), where joint operations and collections are being undertaken. On the other hand, PLA does not have any inward connectors. This disparity could be due to the fact the NSCN (IM) could have been weakened due to splinters and also further to access other regions with the use of fringe groups.
- Absence of inward connections for PLA clearly points to the fact that they have started to monetize their assistance to other groups.
- Smaller groups such as DHD (J), AANLA and GLA all are beneficiaries in this network, wherein they have outward connections to other fringe groups. Most importantly, these groups are the primary carriers, ensuring transfer of knowledge and facilities from bigger groups to smaller groups.
- Maoists are the biggest recipients (inward connectors 5) in this network followed by KLNLF (inward connectors 3).
- Maoists are accessing the entire network through PLA and NSCN (IM) which act as a gateways.
- KLNLF is a key pivot in this entire network conjoining PLA and the NSCN (IM) clusters.
- Reciprocal linkages among groups appear to replace relations with a one way affair. For example, NSCN(IM) – DHD(J), NSCN(IM)-GLA, NSCN(IM)- AANLA.
- Ceasefire groups which were under suspension of operations were also indulging in training activities.
- Emergence of multiple clusters in this period compared to a solitary cluster in the previous period assumes significance as the network has expanded into a Meta network or “network of networks”.
- The type of relationship ranges from training to joint operations. However, numerous reciprocal or joint partnerships in operations, training etc., acts as a force multiplier. Notably joint collection efforts

(extortion) are to benefit from the unexploited population in areas controlled by the other partners in a network. This particular strand of relationship signifies the intent of the majority of the groups to be driven by an objective to establish perennial revenue sources.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In the first stage, only few linkages among the insurgent groups are visible in the North East punctuated by ULFA, PLA and NSCN factions. Among them, ULFA was the primary beneficiary during this phase. It is interesting to note that this theory of ULFA being a recipient of support is paradoxical to the fact that ULFA as an organisation was formed way back in 1979, questioning the actual need for these linkages. However, there is a strong possibility that the due to lack of infrastructure and resources, which were obliterated by “Operation *Rhino*” launched by the Indian army in the early 1990s, ULFA could have established links with other groups. For instance, 667 cadres were either arrested or surrendered in 1991 along with arrest of its vice chairman Pradip Gogoi and its general secretary Anup Chetia. (Assam Timeline 2011, South Asia Terrorism Portal). This sudden degeneration in infrastructure and manpower, forced ULFA to partner with other organisations in the region in order to augment their dwindling resources. Nature of the linkages mostly pertained to training which has been a one way affair during this phase. The other well established groups like NSCN (IM), NSCN (K) and PLA also had cross linkages among groups. Notably, there were two foreign terror groups namely LTTE and KIA who had links with ULFA at this time. Thus, ULFA acted as a gateway for other groups, wherein foreign groups had access to Indian groups through ULFA. A gateway role played by the ULFA has considerably enhanced its knowledge giving them access to *modus operandi* and tactics of other groups. This ensured that ULFA would be primary distributor of knowledge in the region to smaller emerging groups. This knowledge stored in the form of human repositories (trained ULFA cadres)²⁵ paved the way for ULFA to dominate the next stage of the insurgency from 2000.

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ULFA having acquired the requisite knowledge started to cascade the same to other groups which sprouted in the late 1990s. Thus, ULFA's position was elevated to a "knowledge imparter" level from a "knowledge gatherer" level.²⁶

Early 2000s witnessed degeneration of ULFA's capabilities triggered by "Operation all clear" (a Royal Bhutanese operation to evict Indian insurgent outfits in Bhutan) with a simultaneous creation of smaller fringe groups splintered from their parent entity. Initial stages for these groups proved to be challenging as they were handicapped, given their limited resources. To effectively compensate this lacunae, these smaller groups were constantly on the lookout for support from other bigger groups like ULFA, NSCN factions and PLA. Thus, bigger groups assumed the role of tutors to smaller groups. They in turn, monetized their services, earning revenue in the process. The older and the bigger insurgent groups started operating with a fluctuating notion, gradually moving away from secessionism to a commercialism. The supply side dynamics of these linkages catered to the insatiable demand created as more and more fringe groups like AANLA, KLNLF, and GLA started emerging.

Concomitantly, other groups such as DHD (N) and UPDS (ceasefire) also started offering their services for a fee. The uncertainty associated with the nature of ceasefire agreements with a conditional and limited time frame for cessation of hostilities (most of groups offered ceasefire for one year and later extended it year on year), is the primary reason for ceasefire groups colluding with active insurgent groups. Any unfavourable outcome from the negotiations could prove to be costly for the ceasefire groups, rendering them vulnerable in case of resumption of hostilities (if the talks breakdown). Hence, to offset this, groups like DHD (N), UPDS (ceasefire) augmented their resources by monetizing their services during the ceasefire hiatus. This theory is amply buttressed by the fact almost all the groups who have entered into negotiations have sought riders with respect to maintaining *status quo* of their authority over the areas they control.²⁷

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In both the stages, foreign agencies like Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the Chinese intelligence and Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) have played a key role in providing both tacit and active support. The first insurgent group to get foreign aid was the Naga insurgents who approached the Pakistanis as early as in 1950s and especially the Chinese in 1960s for training, and weapons.²⁸ As Kotwal,²⁹ writes about Chinese relationship with the Naga insurgents,

The Beijing leadership took batches of Naga youths to different places in China in order to give them training. But it was mainly in 1972 that Beijing stepped up its help to the Naga insurgents. Way back home, the insurgents came back with photos in which they posed with Chinese officials against the Great Wall of China, Tiannamen Square etc.,

Pakistan also had very strong relations with the Naga groups. Bhaumik states that Naga groups were trained by Pakistan's special services group Colonel SS Medhi who had also trained the Mujahids sent into Indian Kashmir as a part of the Operation Gibraltar in 1965.³⁰ The relationship between the Naga groups and Pakistan became entrenched as stated by Kotwal,

The exiled Naga leader Phizo in a thankful mood towards Pakistan said in London on May 08, 1963 that in case of a plebiscite, Nagas would also have the choice to join Pakistan.³¹

This is again confirmed by another researcher Prakash Singh, a distinguished police officer, in 2008. Singh has documented the number of Naga Home Guards (predecessor of the current Naga insurgents) trained by the Pakistani government.

The first big gang to Pakistan was led by Kaito Sema, commander in chief of the Naga Home Guards, in 1962. Kaito raced across the plains of North Cachar with about 200 men, eluding the unsuspecting police and the security

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forces. While the gang was being trained in Pakistan, Phizo visited that country to satisfy himself that they were being trained on the proper lines. Another formidable gang of about 500 Naga Army personnel went to Pakistan in October 1963 under the leadership of Dusoi Chakhesang. The gang took the longer but safer route through the Burmese Chin Hills. Yet another gang, about 300 strong, went to Pakistan under the leadership of Yeveto Sema. The biggest and the most successful expedition to Pakistan was led by Zuheto Sema in October 1964. It was about 1,000 strong and received training on the most modern lines in Pakistan. The gang returned to the Somra tract in Burma opposite the Pochury area of Nagaland in March 1965.³²

On the other hand, the nexus between ULFA and ISI in the 1990s heralded an important chapter in the proxy war phenomenon.³³ Saikia has meticulously documented the relations between ULFA, ISI and DGFJ which traces the progression in their association from 1990 to 2008. Saikia points out

The Vice Chairman of the ULFA, Pradeep Gogoi visits Dhaka in January 1991, and the contacts a ISI officer called Haque and signs an agreement for imparting training to ULFA cadres. He also meets another ISI officer, one Jalal.

Pradip Gogoi accompanies a six member group to Islamabad for training with the ISI in April 1991. The next batch headed by Hari Mohan Roy alias Rustabh Choudhury of the ULFA along with 10 other ULFA undergo training in camps organized by the ISI in Pakistan in 1993.

According to Saikia, the ULFA cadres were trained by the ISI in the use of Programmable Time Delay Device (PTDD) which has been used by the ULFA

for most of its terror attacks in Assam. In 2000, the Assam government informed the Assam state assembly of the growing nexus between ISI and ULFA. A Photocopy of a Pakistani passport of ULFA's commander in chief Paresh Barua issued in the fake name of Kamaruddin Zaman Khan obtained with the active connivance of Pakistani embassy official in Bangladesh was shown as a proof.³⁴ Bangladesh became ISI's staging post with an established support structures in place to train groups like ULFA. At one point of time in the early 2000s, there were around 127 training camps in Bangladesh alone at the behest of ISI.³⁵ However, not only has ULFA gained out of working relations with ISI in Bangladesh, but also benefitted immensely from relations with Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) in the later part of 2000s. Saikia writes

According a reliable source, a meeting was held on 25 June, 2007 in the Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) Head Quarters in Dhaka. The meeting (that was attended by representatives of the DGFI and the ULFA) took a decision, among others, that the ULFA must work not only with Bangladeshi terrorist groups like the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), but also mainstream Islamist organizations such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad. If the above information is correct, then the future would witness an entirely different sort of violence.

Given the above, these linkages have transformed the North East insurgent groups effectively into transnational movements driven by a principal agent relationship. The composition of these linkages is not necessarily influenced by ideological homogeneity of the groups as opposed to alliances among international terror groups which have mostly been driven by the ideology of the groups linked. For instance, the nature of linkages between Al Qaeda's with its homogeneous Islamic affiliates like Jemaah Islamiyah, Al Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) varied from end to end support like funding, training, logistics, joint operations and sheltering. On the other hand, heterogeneous alliances were confined only to

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weapons supply alone and in rare cases of training³⁶. However, the Indian scenario seems to indicate a deviant trend where regardless of ideological heterogeneity, groups provide end to end support (except funding).

Another important deviant trend observed among linkages is the entry of groups outside the geographical boundaries in the North East. For instance, the most important transition in the mid-2000s is the entry of the Maoists into this web. The Maoists though are not operationally connected to the North East, have been able to establish its foothold in this region. This has been possible as they have stepped in to fulfill the vacuum created by the departure of smaller groups who were unable to sustain militarily and dissolved their organisation, attempting to integrate politically.³⁷ This is one of the important factors as the Maoists can now be accessed by the foreign agencies like ISI through ULFA and Naga groups. This transitive nature of relationship and trans-nationalisation is the direct fallout of linkages among insurgent groups in the North East

The evolution of these networks from a single cluster to multiple clusters poses a serious threat to India's national security. The above analysis on transitions has helped identify hidden facts with respect to the linkages among terror groups. For instance, the role of fringe groups like KLNLF which has not been discussed prominently before has been brought out by studying the transitions. Similarly, the implications of Maoist's entry into this region on India's internal security which has not been adequately understood earlier can now be appreciated given its character.

Coalitions like the "The United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia" and "The Strategic United Front" is guaranteed to stretch the resources of the counter insurgency forces and the government. Particular interest would be of the objectives of "Strategic United Front" which would be upgraded in future to form a "Strong United Front" comprising all the groups from the North East, the Maoists and organisations from Jammu and Kashmir. This scenario presents a clear and present danger to the national security of India.

From a counter terrorism prism, studying these linkages could help in identifying key nodes and gateways which could be the basis or the foundation for a node removal activity. A node removal activity, complemented well by other counter terrorism approaches like political integration, policing, development and decapitation exercise, could potentially bring the entire “network of networks” down rendering it without providers as well as recipients of knowledge.

It is apparent that the motivations for these linkages are not based on ideology alone. Insurgent linkages in the North Eastern regions are riddled with ideological inconsistencies, sprouting of fringe groups, violation by ceasefire groups, and entry of outside groups, point to an increased skewness towards economic motivations rather than ideological factors. The very notion of insurgency is fluctuating which is no longer driven by ideologues but by helmsmen who are driven by avaricious desire for financial gains. Majority of these linkages points to the fact that insurgencies in India’s North East have become a lucrative business proposition shifting away their original ideological goals.

END NOTES

1. S.V.Raghavan and V.Balasubramaniyan (2013), “Terrorism in India-Cross Border Support Structures in India’s Neighbourhood”, *Agni-Studies in International Strategic Issues*, Vol. XIV, No. 3
2. Linkages among insurgents groups existed in the 1990s, however, it became more pronounced in the early 2000s.
See *Wasbir Hussain (2006)*, “Cross Border Links and *Strategic Alliances*”
Faultlines
And Wasbir Hussain (2014), *Peace Audit Northeast: The Naxal Spread and its Local Linkages*, *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*.
3. Though, the DHD formed in 1995 has split into DHD (N) led by its chairman Dilip Nunisa and DHD(J) led by its President Jewel Garlossa, both these factions have signed ceasefire agreements with the government in 2012.
4. KLO was formed in 1996 to carve out a separate state for Kamtapur from six districts in West Bengal and four districts of Assam led by Tamir Das.

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5. KLNLF was formed in 2004 by Pradip Terang, splintered from United Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) when they initiated peace talks with the government. Its primary objective is to fight for the Karbi people.
6. AANLA was formed in 2006 under David Tirkey with primary objective to fight for the rights of *Adivasi* people.
7. KCP is a communist outfit formed in 1980, seeking secession of Manipur from India.
8. KYKL was formed in 2002, after merging two warring entities of KYKL originally formed in 1994. Its primary objective is to rebuild the Manipuri society.
9. Sumita Kumar(2001), The contours of Assam Insurgency, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol XXIV no12, 2219- 2234 and Prakash Singh(2008), *The India's North East: The Frontier in Ferment*, JSOU, Florida
10. Bobby Sarangthem, United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)
<http://www.indianarmy.gov.in/Site/FormTemplete/frmTempSimpleWithTenPara.aspx?MnId=TVpTpKeRs+CZfd0h7NKfbw=&ParentID=BTtQq5lmGPcRC2CF3Vjp6w==&flag=nnDLsbdktOwcjVO2YqrgEw>
11. KIA is a rebel group in Myanmar formed in 1961 fighting for the rights of Kachin people.
12. Compiled by the researcher from various sources using SocNetV (SNA software). The linkages will be depicted in the form of connectors, where inward connectors denoting a recipient and an outward one denoting a provider. A single connector could denote multiple types of assistance between the recipient and the provider. Two way mutually sharing relations are denoted by thicker connectors and one way relations are depicted by thinner connectors. Data on the nature of the relations is not available to warrant a distinction.
13. ATTF is an insurgent group in Tripura formed in 1990, later revived in after the surrender of their cadres in 1994.
14. KRA was formed in 1999 with a primary objective of forming a separate state for the Kuki tribe.
15. GLA is a fringe insurgent group in Assam fighting for Gorkha rights.
16. The United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) was formed in 1999 but later entered in negotiations with the government in 2002. It is known as UPDS (ceasefire), the anti-talk faction is the KLNLF.

17. ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa held in Bangladesh, *The Times of India*, December 03, 2009
18. *Ibid*
19. ULFA hardliners Taking Bomb Lessons from PLA, *The Times of India*, September 16, 2012,
20. See Delhi Police Special Cell Press Release regarding arrest of Dilip Singh, self-styled Chief of External affairs of PLA, dated 07th October, 2011 and Pankaj Sharma, Maoists spills N-E beans, *The Telegraph India*, May 24, 2012, http://www.telegraphindia.com/1120524/jsp/frontpage/story_15525277.jsp#.U8Ue6pSSynA (accessed on 31/03/2016)
21. Pankaj Sharma, Maoists spills N-E beans,
22. Mithu Choudury, Maoist terror causes tremors in Northeast, government still sleeping, *North East News Portal* April 28, 2013.<http://northeastnewsportal.blogspot.in/2013/04/maoist-terror-causes-tremors-in.html> (accessed on 31/03/2016)
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24. Compiled by the researcher from various sources using SocNetV (SNA software). ULFA and ULFA (I) have both been depicted, as ULFA was active till 2009. However, ULFA (I) became active post this period, hence necessarily prompting an inclusion. Key providers are denoted as larger nodes, key recipients are denoted as smaller nodes,
25. Learning process in an organisation has four different stages – Knowledge acquisition, Knowledge distribution, Knowledge interpretation and organisational memory. ULFA acquired knowledge from its own experience as well as from other groups and started to distribute this knowledge among its members as well as other groups during the late 1990s.
26. Large legitimate organisations conduct regular training workshops for selective members, who could in-turn cascade the knowledge to other employees, known as “Train the Trainer” programs.
27. Groups in the North East have entered into suspension of operations agreement (SOA) which is an ad-hoc measure instead of permanent measures like laying down arms, thus creating an uncertainty to the peace process.

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28. See Subir Bhaumik (1996), *Insurgent Crossfire: North East India*, Lancer, New Delhi and Sushil Giri(2005), Insurgency in the North Eastern Region of India: Impact on Economy, *Indian Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol XXV - XXVI , 121-149
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