STUDY PROJECT

INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY: THE BANGLADESH EXPERIENCE IN REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE -- THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

BY

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of the country. CHT is bordered on three sides by India, having people of similar ethnicity. Beginning in 1947 (when British India became India and Pakistan), both the government and the tribal people have taken steps which ultimately led to the outburst of armed insurgency in 1975-76. Many steps have been taken as part of a counterinsurgency campaign--political reforms have been taken after first preparing the ground for many years. The insurgency is not yet quelled--apparently because of the external support to insurgents, raising the question about the center of gravity in such a conflict situation.

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INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY: THE BANGLADESH EXPERIENCE IN REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE-- THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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A situation of insurgency has ~~been~~ existed in the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) area of southeast Bangladesh for more than a decade now. The experience of Bangladesh and its security forces in relation to evaluating the insurgency and countering it by various socio-economic and political steps is peculiar in many respects, yet has much in common with situations elsewhere in the world. CHT is inhabited by tribal people who are ethnically different from the rest of the country. CHT is bordered on three sides by India, having people of similar ethnicity. Beginning in 1947 (when British India became India and Pakistan), both the government and the tribal people have taken steps which ultimately led to the outburst of armed insurgency in 1975-76. Many steps have been taken as part of a counterinsurgency campaign--political reforms have been taken after first preparing the ground for many years. The insurgency is not yet quelled--apparently because of ~~the~~ external support to insurgents, raising the question about the center of gravity in such a conflict situation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Insurgency and counterinsurgency happens to be the most difficult of the phenomena covered under Low Intensity Conflict (as called in U.S. literature) or Revolutionary and Counter Revolutionary Warfare (as called in British literature). These have been the most striking features of the post-Second World War era. The frequency[1] at which such low intensity conflict (LIC) situations have called for United States involvement or interference, led General Woerner to call it "high probability conflict" instead of LIC[2] in the context of Latin America. Whether it remains low in intensity or not, it is highly probable that many countries, especially free democratic countries of the world will continue to be faced with the threat of insurgency whether in their own country or abroad. This makes it necessary to understand the causes of such conflicts, the variety of responses which are needed in such conflicts, the center (or centers) of gravity and the friction of (not war but) policy formulation and execution of policies. Insurgencies threaten the security (or territorial integrity) of small countries such as Bangladesh and the nature and existence of the governments in power as in the Philippines or Honduras. Yet all such affected countries have different settings. There is no "prescripted medicine" to quell insurgencies,

but understanding the successful and unsuccessful aspects of various insurgencies and counterinsurgencies can help develop a set of guidelines or useful principles for government response. It is in the above context that this writer has attempted to study the insurgency and counterinsurgency situation of Bangladesh.

Scope. This paper will first briefly introduce the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) to the reader, from geographical and politico-historical point of view and then trace the causes that have given rise to armed insurgency in CHT. Since the neighboring northeastern provinces of India have already experienced or are experiencing insurgencies, a brief study of these will also be made to place the Bangladesh experience in regional perspective. In later chapters, the paper will study the salient steps taken by the government of Bangladesh over the years to meet the situation; an attempt will be made to relate these to some widely shared experiences or perceptions elsewhere in the world relating to counterinsurgency to highlight differences or significances.

Limitation. Exclusive studies on CHT, especially on the recent phenomenon, i.e., insurgency, are few. All such nonmilitary writers that have written or spoken tend to emphasize the aspects of national integration, ethnic conflict, etc.[3] This paper may be one of the very early ones focussing on aspects with a military view. This paper may suffer from an advantage or a drawback, in that the writer was personally involved[4] in the counterinsurgency campaign directly for more than two years recently; thus in many contexts relying more on personal knowledge

and perceptions than on the few written research sources available. Further, the information presented in this paper is ameliorated by the delicacy and sensitivity of the continuing situation in CHT. Lastly, the paper will not get involved in matters of tactical level, i.e., conduct of military operations by troops on the ground, but will centre on the national security and national strategic level, dealing with the military element of national power as it applies in a counterinsurgency (LIC) environment.

Aim. The aim of this paper is to study the environment and causes in which insurgency has grown in CHT of Bangladesh as well as to study the significant aspects of the Bangladesh government's effort to counter it, in the context of the region. Also, this study will refer to current teachings or doctrine for the purpose of drawing lessons.

ENDNOTES

1. "Since 1945, the United States has used force or threatened the use of force to protect its interests over 500 times, mostly in the third world. Virtually all of these have been LIC situations, many of them involving multi-year U.S. commitment," LTC William J. Olson, "Low Intensity Conflict: The Institutional Challenge" in Military Review, February 1989, p. 4.

2. GEN Fred F. Woerner, "The Strategic Imperatives," in Military Review, February 1989, p. 21.

3. For example:

(i) Syed Nazrul Islam, "The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh: Integrational Crisis Between Center and Periphery" in Asian Survey, December 1981, Vol. XXI, No. 12, p. 1211.

(ii) Syed Aziz-Al Ahsan and Bhumitra Chakma, "Problems of National Integration in Bangladesh" in Asian Survey, October 1989, Vol. XXIX, No. 10, p. 959.

(iii) Hyat Hussein, "Problems of National Integration in Bangladesh" in Bangladesh: History and Culture, Vol. 1, S. R. Chakravarety and Virendra Narain, ed., 1986, p. 197.

4. Between July 1987 and June 1989, the writer was successively the commander of an infantry brigade deployed in the districts of Rangamati and Khagrachari. He took part in five, leading four, of the six rounds of peace-talks held between the government of Bangladesh and the insurgents, to date.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCING THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)

Geography

As of now, CHT refers collectively to the three districts of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari. It lies to the extreme southeast of Bangladesh, immediately to the east of the district of Chittagong. Its total area is 5,138 square miles, one-tenth of Bangladesh. To its north and northwest lies the Indian province of Tripura; to the north and northeast lies the Indian province of Mizoram; to the south and southeast lies the Burmese province of Arakan; and to the west lies the Bangladesh plainland or lowland district of Chittagong (see maps at Appendix).

The terrain in CHT is part of the great hill-mass occupying parts of India, Burma and Bangladesh, being an offshoot of the Himalayan range. The hills inside Bangladesh rise up to a maximum of 4,000 feet, the ranges running generally northwest to southeast and dividing the area into a number of large valleys. A police officer in earlier days, R. H. Sneider in 1906[1] described the topography as "a mass of hill, ravine and cliff covered with dense bamboo, trees and creeper jungle. The mountains are steep and difficult of ascent. . .the valleys are covered for the most part with dense virgin forest, interspersed with small water courses and swamps of all sizes and description. . . .They are slowly yielding to the advance of civilization and by clearance and drainage are being converted into rich arable land capable of

producing food and other grain in abundance." Change was coming gradually as forecasted. In 1960, a major change to the terrain came about when a dam was constructed at Kaptai, 35 miles upstream from Chittagong on the Karnaphuly River for producing hydro-electricity. Upstream from the dam, the Karnaphuly Valley became a great lake, now measuring about 300 square miles. With the heavily jungled compartmented terrain, the CHT is as ideal an area as one could find for waging guerrilla war.

Ethnicity and Population[2]

It is difficult to trace the ethnic origins of the people of CHT with accuracy, nonetheless there is marked difference between the Bengalees (who are 99.5 percent of the population of Bangladesh and who occupy the whole of the plain land of the country) and the tribals of CHT. The Bengalees are of mixed proto-Australoid and Caucasoid origin. The tribals are predominantly of Mongoloid or Tibeto-Burman origin. Ethnically, the ancient tribes belong to a broad group of similar people of Mongoloid origin, who over many centuries migrated into Southeast Asia from Yunan in southern China. They now occupy hills and uplands across a vast tract of land stretching from Assam and Tripura (provinces of India), CHT, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam to South China. At the time of the Burmese War of 1784, the Chakmas were ousted by the Mogs from Arakan and forced to enter the CHT region.

The total population of CHT, as per 1971 census, was 508,000; of whom 90 percent belonged to the tribes. By the end of 1981,[3]

the population was calculated to be around 746,000, out of which approximately 40 percent were nontribals (or plainland or plains area Bengalee). The Bengalees are two types: one who settled in CHT during the 17th, 18th, 19th and the first half of the 20th century for various purposes such as farm labor, small businessmen, fishermen, etc; the other is the larger group consisting of Bengalees settled during the post-Pakistan and post-Bangladesh era. In the context of whole Bangladesh, Muslims comprise 86.6 percent and other religions comprise in the following order: Hindus, 12.1 percent; Buddhist, 0.6 percent; Christian, 0.3 percent; and others, 0.3 percent. In the context of CHT only, of all nontribals or Bengalees, 97 percent are Muslim, 2 percent are Buddhist, and 1 percent are Hindus. Among the tribes of CHT, the Chakmas (which is the most dominant and largest tribe, comprising about 30 percent of all tribal population) are Buddhist, as also are the Marmas who comprise about 20 percent of CHT tribal population. The third largest tribe, the Tripura, are Hindu; the Lushai-Pankhu-Bowm are Christians, and the remainder of the tribes are either animist or follow variations of various religions.

Linguistically, the whole of Bangladesh is unilingual, less CHT. The Chakmas speak a dialect close to the "Chittagonian" deviation of Bengali language; they have a rarely practiced script resembling Burmese. The Marmas speak and write a dialect close to Burmese. The Tripura speak a version of Tripura-dialect as spoken in the Indian province of Tripura and written in Bengali script. The remaining minor tribes all have their own dialect, but most do not have a script. An important point to note is that Bengali,

the state language of Bangladesh, is the linguafranca for inter-tribal communication and is understood by most tribes.

Nationalism and Culture

A very sensitive issue for minorities in large nation states is their identity in relation to the majority population. In their propaganda literature and various publications, the insurgents of CHT refer to each of the tribes as a "small nation." In some literature they refer to all the tribes together as a nation; they have coined a new word: "Jumma-nation." The word "jumma" is an adjective meaning a man engaged in "jhum" ("swidden" or "slash and burn" or "shifting" cultivation, which is common among the tribes of greater Southeast Asia). Why the insurgents have chosen the word "Jumma" to identify a newly felt nationalism is not known, but the possible answer is that "jhum" is the widest of all things common to the tribes.

A prominent anthropologist cum sociologist, Steward[4] has argued that "nations" are not only conglomerations or series of communities, but are built as higher levels of socio-cultural integration. These higher levels take over the functions of the older and lower levels and also add to itself new functions in administration, banking, marketing and productive enterprises. Another sociologist, Deutsch[5] terms a "nationality" as a people consciously attempting "to acquire a measure of effective control over the behavior of its members." Once it has achieved control, it becomes a "nation." An analysis of these definitions leads to a conclusion that if a community of people is so strongly or so

well organized internally so as to constitute a nation, it is bound to come to structural opposition with the government in power--which may represent another nation. From this logic, the tribes of CHT are far from being a nation and the nearest they are is "a nationality." Even this is debatable, because there are two separate streams or currents to "attempt to acquire a measure of effective control. . . ." The first attempt is by the insurgent organization through its force and the advantage of being an organized group; the second is by the members of the various tribes themselves attempting to flourish separately as a tribe rather than collectively. As will be evident from discussions in later pages, a crucial issue is this friction between these two currents or streams and the role of Bangladesh government in respect to these two currents.

A typically anthropological definition of "culture" is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as a member of society.[69] In addition, culture draws upon religion, language, literature and emotions, perceptions of outsiders, etc., of members of the cultural entity in question. In this regard, the tribes of CHT do not have a wholly uniform culture, but each tribe's culture has some uniqueness unto itself, some commonality among themselves and some definite constrasts with the culture of the plainland or plains area Bengalees.

Politico-Administrative History up to 1900[7]

In 1760, the then Moghul governor of Bengal, Mir Qasim Ali Khan, ceded the district of Chittagong to the British. The

British took various military as well as appeasing steps to bring the area under full control, ending in 1860 when the hill tracts of the district of Chittagong were separated from the district and placed under the charge of a separate Superintendent. Between then and 1990, there were changes and events, but essentially the hill tracts of Chittagong form the present day CHT.

Generally, the internal government of the hill tracts was in the hands of two tribal chiefs or hill chiefs--the Chakma chief and the Bohmang chief--assisted by Dewans (also called Roaza) or subordinates. In 1900 the British government reorganized the area of responsibility to three (calling them circles), which exist up to the present day. These are:

a. The Chakma Circle, occupying the centre and north of CHT, mainly inhabited by the Chakma tribe.

b. The Bohmang Circle, occupying generally the area south of the river Karnaphuly, mainly inhabited by the Marmas. The whole of the present district of Bandarban is in this circle.

c. The Mong Circle is in the northeast of CHT, corresponding largely to the present-day district of Khagrachari.

Besides the circles, there remain several reserved forests outside the control of the tribal chiefs and controlled by the government directly through the Department of Forests.

Hill Tracts Police

Another salient development during this peiod is the passing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police Regulation Act in 1881, by which a police force composed primarily of tribals (less officers) was formed and deployed to various police stations (or

"thana") and farflung outposts. They were used (until 1948) to maintain law and order and help administration.

CHT: 1900 to 1947

The year 1900 and the famous Regulation I of 1900 is a landmark in the history of CHT. "The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, (I of 1900), A Regulation to Declare the Law Applicable in, and Provide the Administration of, the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bengal" was published in the Calcutta Gazette (Calcutta, Bengal) on May 17, 1900, and came into force soon after. The Regulation and the rules (made under Section 18 of the Regulation) for the administration of CHT became an "unwritten constitution" for CHT; their amendment by the governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh after 1947 and 1971, respectively, have often been the subject of bitter criticism by the radical tribes and the insurgents. It is, therefore, necessary to be conversant with few of the salient provisions of those Regulations/Rules, so as to be able to understand their contribution on the insurgency.

The Regulation[8]

According to the Regulation of 1900, the CHT was divided into three circles for revenue and traditional socio-cultural administration and into three subdivisions[9] for other routine government administration. The circles were to be headed by tribal chiefs and subdivisions administered by subdivisional officers (SDO). The district was to be administered by a Deputy Commissioner who had wide powers. The district was placed outside the purview of

the High Court of the Province of Bengal, for confirming death penalties, the provincial government would act as the High Court and for other matters, the Commissioner of the Chittagong Division would act as the High Court. The Deputy Commissioner could amend the orders of any government officer within the district and no civil or criminal court could override any order given under the provision of the regulation by any government officer.

Rules Under the Regulation

The "Rules" made under the Regulation of 1900 went into details of administrative function. A few of the important rules are:

a. Rule 36 related to Settlement of land, transfer-subdivision-fragmentation of agricultural land, and leasing of land. The aim was to limit the settlement of nonhillmen in CHT; nonhillmen farmers could get leases of farming land only in the village where they were cultivating. No hillmen or nonhillmen lessee could transfer by any mode any land holding without permission of the Deputy Commissioner; "nothing in the rules or any grant or any lease or any contract under which land is held in the CHT, would operate to increase the existing number of nonhillmen lessees in respect of any holding or to permit the inheritance of any hill-tract land by a nonresident of the district" except with the consent of the Deputy Commissioner.

b. Rules 41 and 42 gave the Deputy Commissioner power to control and regulate the "jhum" cultivation--for the first time in history.

c. Rule 49 provides for the discouragement of hillmen cultivation to move or shift from one Circle to another within CHT.

d. Rule 51 gave the Deputy Commissioner power to expel any person out of CHT if considered unwanted for any reason or behavior.

e. Rule 52 provided that no nonhillman could enter or reside in the CHT without written permission of the Deputy Commissioner. This was an important restriction to limit increase of nontribal population in CHT, but was repealed in 1933.

The rules made under the Regulation of 1900 were amended or augmented a number of times by various other Acts, Regulations and government notifications, most importantly in 1920, 1925, 1933 and 1935. The amendment of 1933, which repealed the provision whereby no nontribal or nonhillman could enter or reside in CHT without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner, was an important change.

Nonregulated and Excluded Area Status

In 1860 the hill tracts of Chittagong were separated from the district of Chittagong. Chittagong, like other districts, used to be administered by Regulations of the government of India; so was called a Regulation district. CHT, being put outside the purview of Regulations, became a "nonregulated district." In 1920, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Amendment) Regulations declared CHT as an "Excluded Area."[10] In 1935 the British passed the famous Government of India act which brought in wideranging

politico-administrative reform in India, including provision of elections to legislative assemblies on the basis of adult franchise. However, the government accepted the appeal of tribal leaders to remain in the earlier status and CHT continued to be an "Excluded Area."[11]

Some Conclusions

An analysis of the preceding five paragraphs reveal that two intentions of the then British administration probably worked in the formulation of the Regulation/Rules and keeping it an excluded area. First, to keep the tribes of CHT secluded from the rest of the province of Bengal or India while ensuring they are not politically or socially developed so as to cause problems for the government. The second aim was probably to protect and preserve the tribal population and their socio-cultural entity from the effect of nontribal plainsmen. These two conclusions are important because these are often referred to by the insurgents in their literature. The tribes liked the protection provided against any increase in number and influence of nontribals, but they disliked the seclusion from the mainstream of life in the country (British India) or the province of Benegal. Another conclusion that may be emphasized here is that the district of Chittagong or the town of Chittagong (headquarters of the Chittagong Division) served as the umbilical cord linking the CHT and its people to the rest of the country in all aspects of life.

Organizations, Political Consciousness and Independence of 1947[12]

An obvious statement, but nonetheless succinctly stated by Colonel Vought and Major Babb: "Insurgency is not a spontaneous popular upheaval nor a jacquerie; it requires organized effort . . . .An insurgency is not something that springs full grown from the head of the leader, nor are the military aspects the first to appear. There are many factors to consider in developing an insurgency."[13] The insurgency in CHT is the cumulative effect of many factors. The political awareness that has contributed to the present state probably began taking shape in the early years of this century. Among the notable organizations was one founded in the late 1920s, "Parbattya Chattagram Jano Shamity" (translated as: Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Association), with Kamini Mohan Dewan as President. This organization played limited political as well as social roles.

When the All-India Muslim League and The All India National Congress were working out the partition plan, the tribes of Chittagong grew wary. Although there were conflicting views about the type of administration that would be best suited to CHT, there was unanimity of view among the tribal leaders, handful in number though they were, that they wanted to try and join the Union of India on the basis of CHT being a non-Muslim inhabited area. To this effect, tribal leaders such as Kamini Mohan Dewan and Sneha Kumar Chakma traveled to Bombay, New Delhi and Calcutta to meet and confer with prominent Congress leaders such as Mahatma Ghandi, Acharya Kripalini, Rajendra Prasad, Shyama Prashad Mukherjee and Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel. Congress even sent a delegation to

Rangamati to assess the feelings of the tribal people about the type of administration they wanted. Congress showed sympathy to the desire of the tribal leaders to join India.[14] However, when it became apparent that chances of being included in the Indian union were dim, the tribal chiefs had a different proposal. In 1946 the tribal chiefs formed "The Hillmen Association" and proposed that if CHT cannot be merged with India, then CHT, along with the princely states of Tripura, Koochbihar and Khasia, should form a confederation of princely states to be administered by the central government of India. Finally, however, none of these efforts materialized and the "Radcliff Commission" awarded CHT to Pakistan in 1947. Some leaders such as Snehakumar Chakma, with the help of a few radicals flew the Indian flag at Rangamati for three days after August 14, 1947, until Pakistan armed forces forcibly brought the town under control.

First Crisis of National Integration

The above narrative is important because at the important crossroad of history in 1947, the tribal leaders chose such risky actions that made the latter Pakistani authorities construe, not the few tribal leaders only, but the bulk of the tribes, as pro-Indian. It is also important from the viewpoint of the tribes to note that they started their journey as citizens of an independent country with apprehension.

ENDNOTES

1. R. H. Sneider, Chittagong Hill Tracts (first published in 1909), New Delhi, India: Vibek Publishing Company, Reprint 1978, p. 4.

2. This section has been based on discussions contained in various sources, namely:

(i) R. H. Sneider, op. cited, pp. 4-10.

(ii) Muhammad Ishaq (general ed.), Bangaldesh District Gazetteers--Chittagong Hill Tracts, Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press, 1971, pp. 39-78.

(iii) Peter Kunstadter (ed.), "South East Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations, Vol. 1," Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 3-74. Also, Robbins Burling, ibid., pp. 215-232.

3. More figures have been quoted and their sources acknowledged in Chapter III.

4. Julian H. Steward, "Cultural Casualty and Law: A Trial Formulation of the Early Civilizations" quoted in Peter Kunstadter, ibid., p. 40.

5. Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication: An Enquiry Into the Foundations of Nationality, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1953, p. 75.

6. Edward B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture," London: John Murray & Company, Vol. 1, quoted in Peter Kunstadter, p. 40.

7. Discussions in this section are based upon discussion contained in the following:

(i) R. H. Sneider, Chittagong Hill Tracts, ibid., p. 8-13.

(ii) Muhammad Ishaq (general editor), Bangaldesh District Gazetteers--Chittagong Hill Tracts," p. 25-38.

(iii) Kamini Mohan Dewan, Parbattya Chattaler Ek Deen Shebaker Jiban Kahini (a book in Bengali language, title translated: The Autobiography of a Humble Servant of the Hill Tracts of Chittagong), Rangamati, Bangladesh: Dewan Brothers and Company, 1970. This is a rare book now, but the present writer has a copy.

(iv) Shiddharta Chakma, Prasanga Parbattaya Chattagram (A book in Bengali language, title translated: Matters Regarding Chittagong Hill Tracts), Calcutta: Nath Bothers (Agrahayan 1392 Bengali Year __ 1986 AD), pp. 5-22.

(v) Chakma Raj, Paribarer Itihash (a booklet in Bengali, title translated: History of the Family of Chakma Chief), compiled by Chakma Chief Raja Bhuban Mohan Roy--the 48th Chakma chief. This is available in the archives of the family of the Chakma chief at Rangamati, Bangladesh, from where the present writer

obtained a photocopy for personal record, while serving in Rangamati in 1987. It may be noted that the present Chakma chief, Debashish Roy, is the 50th chief.

8. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation, including the Rules, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police Regulation, Lists of Acts and Ordnances in force in CHT as of 1900, were all compiled into cone compendium made available for official purposes. This compendium was/is known as "CHT Manual." As of now, it is rarely available for public consultation and being out of print; the present writer obtained a photocopy of a reasonably updated version from the Office of the Deputy Comissioner of Rangamati while serving there in 1987. Whatever summary has been made in this paper is based on this copy.

9. During the British Reign (i.e., up to August 1947), present Bangladesh and present province of West Bengal in India together formed a province called Bengal. In Pakistan (i.e., 1947 to December 1971), present Bangladesh formed a province called East Pakistan. The administrative divisions and the hierarchy below the province was as follows: A group of districts was called a division with a divisional commissioner as the administrative head. A district used to be administered by a Deputy Commissioner but there were many other civil servants representing various ministries and public services, including an independent "District and Sessions Judge." Each district had a varying number of subdivisions depending upon size and population. The bureaucrat heading it was known as Subdivisional Officer. For police administration, the subdivisions were divided into various police stations locally called "thana." In Bangladesh, in effect from 1983, all subdivisions have been upgraded to the level of districts; area of each police station has been designated as an Upazilla (meaning subdistrict) with an elected local government system.

10. This practice was not peculiar to CHT of the then-province of Bengal, but was adopted to various other frontier areas for more or less similar reasons at about the same time. For an explanation regarding "excluded areas" in Burma, see Joseph Silverstein, Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1980, pp. 26-32.

11. Details are given in Biraj Mohan Dewan, Chakma Jateer Iteebritto (a book in Bengali language, title translated: History of the Chakma Nation), published by Kalishankar Dewan, Rangamati-Bangladesh, 1969, pp. 170-190. This is a rare book now, but the present writer has a copy.

12. Based on Kamini Mohan Dewan, pp. 248-268; and Siddharta Chakma, pp. 8-13.

13. LTC Donald B. Vaught and MAJ Michael A. Babb, "Support for Insurgencies: Nike or Nemesis" in Military Review, January 1990, pp. 18-20.

14. For a British authoritative viewpoint regarding the partition of Bengal (into India and Pakistan) and the fate of CHT as well as the role of Congress, see H. V. Hodson, The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan, New York: Atheneum, 1971, pp. 346-350.

CHAPTER III

THE PAKISTAN ERA 1947-1971: APPREHENSIONS COMPOUNDED AND THE SEEDS OF INSURGENCY

The previous two chapters have gone into details of the tribal history, society and politics up to 1947 so that developments thereafter can be placed in the correct perspective. Causes of any insurgency, like other wars, could be grouped into immediate causes and historical or long-standing causes. This author considers that the failure of the radical tribal leaders to be able to merge CHT with India in 1947 was the first of the historical causes. When the chances of joining India were finally gone, the only viable alternative in the minds of the tribals was to have a separate guaranteed constitutional status in the new country. They would like to reap the benefits of independence, yet would like to flourish within seclusion. As will be apparent, all events related to the insurgency in CHT revolve around this theme.

The history of Pakistan up to the emergence of Bangladesh is characterized by problems of national integration and politico-economic conflict. East Pakistan was significantly neglected. The neglect was more severe in the case of CHT, even though the young men of CHT (especially the Chakmas) were getting some education and the society getting some benefits, while at the same time their political consciousness was rising. Modernization, to the degree that it materialized, came at a time when the common tribals were not fully ready for it, thus also causing social, political and economic dislocations in the tribal societies.

Amendments to the CHT Regulation

In the new country of Pakistan, the police force was reorganized to suit the requirements of the changing situation. One of the earliest acts of the Pakistan government regarding CHT was to abolish the CHT police in 1948. In 1956 the Pakistan government adopted the first constitution of the country. The status of CHT as an excluded area was maintained by keeping the Regulation of 1900 in vogue, but the section relating to powers of the High Court was amended. In 1965, the High Court of East Pakistan declared Rule 51 of the Rules made under Regulation of 1900 as ultra-vires of the constitution with the result that the Deputy Commissioner could not expel anyone out of CHT.

By notification published in the Dhaka Gazette on October 21, 1971, the government of East Pakistan made substantial amendments to Rule 34 which dealt with grants of land settlements, land lease, land transfer, etc. This was a very significant step. The amendment had two important provisions:

a. Nonhillmen were given equal opportunity as hillmen. A nonhillmen resident was defined as a person who has a house in the district of CHT for at least 15 years.

b. Hillmen, nonhillmen, as well as persons of other districts were made eligible for getting land lease for terrace cultivation, rubber plantation, industry and housing allied to these, with the permission of the Board of Revenue of East Pakistan.

To the Pakistan government, this particular amendment was necessary to facilitate economic upliftment of the district. The

tribes saw this as a means of regularizing the entry of all plainsmen in the preceding years as well as facilitating future settlements of plainsmen in CHT. In retrospect, both views have proven true.

Economics and Industrialization

In the year 1952 a "paper and rayon mill" was set up at Chandraghona on the bank of river Karnaphuly 27 miles upstream from Chittagong. This was a private enterprise. This was the first ever big industry on the soil of CHT so the tribes looked at it with mixed feelings. Being a private industry, the management chose to employ officials and labor from sources known and experienced, that is, the plainsmen. The tribes had a very meager share. The fact that there were few educated tribesmen available became a secondary issue in their minds. Tribesmen did find opportunities to work as laborers cutting bamboo in deep forests, but here again, they were employed (and maybe in the process exploited also) by plainsmen middlemen and only few tribal businessmen sprang up.

In 1953 the government of Pakistan undertook the construction of a hydro-electric project at Kaptai, 35 miles upstream from Chittagong on the river Karnaphuly, with multinational (but principally U.S.) aid. The dam was finished by 1960 and upstream from the dam a lake named "Karnaphaly Reservoir" formed with total area of 300 square miles. Although the Rules under Regulation of 1900 did not allow for compensation of arable land, the Pakistan government amended the rules in 1958 to allow for such

compensation. The lake submerged the old district headquarters town of Rangamati as well as about 40,000 acres of arable land in the Karnaphuly Valley. Approximately 100,000 tribesmen were affected and had to be resettled. Among those displaced, the bulk were of the Chakma tribe. During the resettlement, adequate compensation was not paid by the central government of Pakistan and whatever was paid, was affected according to reports of corruption in the process of distribution and resettlement.[1] The worst impact of the ill-managed resettlement was that displaced persons were not organized for a vocation or profession, they were left with cash only--which took no time to dry up in the hands of the spend-thrift tribesmen. The primarily agricultural tribal economy in northern CHT thus received a great setback. A corollary to this predicament was that no attempt was made to provide any visible effect of the electricity generated by the dam to the society or economy of the tribes, and the tribes to concluded that the rest of the country was benefitting from their sacrifice.

Due to mismanagement of the settlement process, apprehension in tribal minds, and other reasons, approximately 40,000 tribesmen (mostly Chakma) left the then East Pakistan and never came back. Some were settled by the government of India in their North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) or present Arunachal Pradesh. The remainder, who crossed to India in the east, were settled in the present Indian province of Mizoram; a unique district called Chakma District was created in Mizoram adjoining the border with CHT.

The Status of Excluded Area

The constitution of Pakistan adopted in 1956 continued to keep the status of CHT as an "Excluded Area." However, it needs to be highlighted that CHT was not the only hilly or mountainous area lying in the frontiers of Pakistan, nor the inhabitants of CHT the only tribes. The Pakistan government followed a uniform policy regarding status of all such frontier areas. The insurgent leaders and pro-insurgent intellectuals, however, present their case in such a way as to indicate that the Pakistan government made changes tailored only for the CHT.[2] With imposition of martial law in Pakistan in 1958, the constitution was abrogated. The new constitution adopted in 1962 changed the status of CHT from an "Excluded Area" to "Tribal Area" and in 1964 altogether abolished this special status. The facts contained in this paragraph are important because both have directly influenced the political demands of the insurgents in later years. With the change in status, however, the CHT Regulation (Regulation of 1900) was not discarded; the tribes continued to receive benefits as well as occasional disadvantages under the special law.

Settlement of Non-tribals in CHT[3]

One of the most important and serious phenomenon in the CHT having all pervading influence is the settlement of non-tribal population. It would be apparent to the reader, from discussions in one of the preceding chapters/sections, that the British took specific steps to restrict influx of non-tribal members. During 1947 to 1971, the population increase in CHT was heavily

influenced by non-tribals. The following tables[4] clarify the position.

Table 1

Population Growth in CHT
Tribals and Non-Tribals

Year	Population	Percent Increase
1901	124,762	--
1911	153,830	23.2
1921	173,243	12.6
1931	212,922	22.9
1941	247,053	16.0
1951	287,274	16.3
1961	385,079	34.0
1974	508,199	32.0
1981	746,026	46.8

Table 2

Breakdown of Tribal/Non-Tribal Population

	1951	1974	Percent Increase
Tribal	261,538	449,315	71.7
Non-Tribal	26,150	58,884	125.1

In 1947 tribals constituted more than 98 percent of the population of CHT and the non-tribals less than 2 percent. The non-tribal population was 9 percent in 1951, 12 percent in 1961, 39-40 percent in 1981. The influx of non-tribals was an attendant phenomenon of the modernization/industrialization that came gradually into CHT. The paper mill, the hydro-electric project, road construction, construction of office and school building and all such jobs brought plainsmen into CHT. With these came small-scale businessmen and various categories of farmers. In addition

to this, in early fifties and in 1966 in two installments, the Pakistani government also encouraged or sponsored settlement of non-tribals. Some of these were Muslim immigrants from India and yet others were landless farmers from other places in East Pakistan. Fortune-seeking well-to-do people also took advantage of the situation. More important than statistics is the fact that increasingly the non-tribals were having a growing effect on the tribals' society and life. The most serious impact was on land issue. The non-tribals occasionally gained more land than they were officially allowed or allotted, fraudulently took possession of unoccupied government land and purchased tribals' land at nominal rates (making the concerned tribals landless). Land being scarce in CHT and the tribal population being almost fully dependent upon agriculture, land-related litigation and feuds increased and the tribals were antagonized.

Although not pertinent to this chapter, the discussion above is relevant for the settlement of non-tribals up to the early eighties in independent Bangladesh.

Organizations, Political Consciousness and Independence of Bangladesh 1971[5]

The moderates among the tribal leaders who became reconciled to the creation of Pakistan decided to try afresh in organizing the tribal people to raise their political consciousness. With this in view, in 1950 the "Hill Tracts Peoples Organization" was formed; but this organization did not last long nor did it make any impressionable contribution. However, efforts to organize the

tribals did not stop, and the next initiative came from tribal students studying in Dhaka University. In 1962 they formed "Pahari Chatra Samity" (meaning Hill Students Association); with the establishment of a government college at Rangamati, they had easy access to the heart of CHT. This organization was, however, infiltrated by and inclined towards the pro-Peking student faction.[6] Officially there was no overt "communist party" in Pakistan, so there could be none in the CHT also, nonetheless one Mohanlal Chakma had attempted to make a tribal communist party in early fifties but was thwarted by the government. Some of the tribal student leaders continued to harbor the intention of forming a communist party. On May 16, 1970, four such ex-tribal student leaders in a secret meeting formed the Rangamati Communist Party (RCP).[7] Two of these four leaders were Manabendra Narayan Larma (in short MN Larma) and his younger brother, Jotindriya Boddhiprioya Larma (in short JB Larma). Both these persons had completed graduate/post-graduate education from Dhaka University; in addition M N Larma had gained publicity as being the first tribal student to go into jail for political reasons. Both had taken up the teaching profession and organized a Hill Tract Teachers' Association.

The aim of the party founded in May 1970 was to organize the people of CHT to help achieve, preserve, protect and enhance the socio-cultural-economic-political rights/conditions of the tribals. It expected to receive all possible cooperation from ex-student leaders, current students, teachers and tribal servicemen.

However, before the party flourished much and started working, the war in East Pakistan started.

It would be wrong to say that all feelings were against the government alone. As education spread and as tribal intellectuals came into more touch with the outside world, they found they were the only feudalistic society. Some intellectuals blamed the tribal chiefs for keeping their subjects shackled to medievalism and failing to perfect the interests of the tribals vis-a-vis government's aggressive attitude.

The Liberation War of 1971

While all of East Pakistan was electrified with anti-Pakistan political feelings, the tribals took those feelings as encouragement for themselves alone. During the initial stage of the liberation war of Bangladesh (which began on March 25, 1971), the younger generation of tribals, specially those living in the towns, showed enthusiasm towards the struggle. But unfortunately there was lack of encouragement from ethnic leaders and elders as well as lack of coordination on the part of political leaders of the liberation war to incorporate willing tribal youths. Most elders remained either neutral or sided with Pakistan, including the Chakma chief. Some of the youth joined the liberation war, but more joined the infamous Razakar force (officially known as Civil Armed Force) formed by the Pakistani authority to collaborate with Pakistani army in their effort against the freedom fighters. M N Larma decided to remain overtly neutral but covertly organized his own party and widened its base among the

people. Among the elderly tribals, only the Mong Chief of Manikchari took part in the liberation war. Among the tribes it was the Tripuras who took part in greater numbers.

As the liberation war came to a successful conclusion, the Chakma chief fled to West Pakistan and many members of the Razakar force went into hiding in the jungles. As in 1947, in 1971 also the tribals of CHT (especially the Chakmas) took the wrong decision which was to have important effects upon their relations, with the rest of the country, and vice versa. In retrospect, it appears the tribals had taken the wrong decision at two successive crossroads in history, namely in 1947 during the independence of Pakistan and in 1971 during the independence of Bangladesh.

ENDNOTES

1. Shiddharta Chakma, pp. 25-29. Also Syed Nazrul Islam, p. 1216.

2. Even foreign writers or organizations tend to overlook this essential fact. For example, see "Chittagong Hill Tracts--Militarization, Oppression and the Hill Tribes" published by Anti-Slavery Society, London, 1984, p. 21.

3. Disucssion in this section is based on Siddharta Chakma, pp. 66-70; and Syed Nazrul Islam, pp. 1215-1218. These authors have consulted various government documents such as census reports, District Gazetteers and statistical year books to arrive at their conclusions.

4. Ibid.

5. Discussion in this section is based on Siddharta Chakma, pp. 37, 45-47, 51, 55-57, 100-102. This writer's discussions held at various times at various places during his tenure of service at Rangamati and Khagrachari, 1987-1989.

6. Shiddharta Chakma, pp. 50-53.

7. No author that I could consult confirms that the party formed on May 16, 1970, was entitled the Communist party, making

only vague references to it, but most confirm that the meeting, where it was formed, was secretly held, members took an oath to keep decisions secret and agreed to unite the students and peasant class. The circumstances under which the PCJSS was formed in 1972, the circumstances under which cleavage took place in the "Parbattya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Shamity (PCJSS, the main insurgent political party now) in 1983-85, and the confessions of innumerable insurgent leaders after they returned to peaceful life, mostly during 1983-1986, confirm that the party formed on 16 May 1970 was RCP. Documents captured from insurgents definitely show their reference to communist ideology and its teachings. During this author's tenure in CHT, he personally saw insurgents after being killed, captured or after surrendering to security forces, to be in possession of "Mao tse Tung's quotations (Little Red Book in Bengali language)" and other books by Mao tse Tung as well as communist writers of West Bengal. (The explanation given here does not necessarily mean that the insurgents have any connection with Beijing; in fact, during his research this writer found no indication whatsoever of any such connection.)

CHAPTER IV

DECEMBER 1971 ONWARDS: INSURGENCY TAKES SHAPE

Constitutional Efforts in Bangladesh

As soon as the new government of Bangladesh set about to draft a constitution for the new country, the tribal leaders renewed their efforts to "restore" their lost privileges and remedy the "wrongs" perpetrated. On February 15, 1972, they called on the Prime Minister of the country, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, but were reportedly not given either a patient hearing or a satisfactory reply. They officially submitted a memorandum to the government, outlining their demands[1] to be incorporated into or guaranteed by the constitution being drafted. There were four basic demands: (1) autonomy for Chittagong Hill Tracts including its own legislature; (2) retention of constitutional provisions similar to Regulation I of 1900 in the constitution of Bangladesh; (3) constitutional provision restraining the government from amending the constitution in any means which affects the CHT; and (4) continuation of the institution or offices of tribal chiefs. The demand for a ban on the influx of non-tribal people into CHT was added much later (at a time whichg could not be determined by this author).

The Prime Minister rejected these demands because in his opinion these demands were harmful to the existence of the single nationalism (Bengali nationalism) of the country and their fulfilment could threaten the integrity of the country. He advised the

seven-member tribal delegation led by MN Larma to forget their ethnic identities and merge with greater "Bengali" (or Bangali) nationalism. This triggered yet another sensitive aspect latent in the tribals' feelings: ethnic-nationality. During the debate on the draft constitution in the Bangladesh constituent assembly, MN Larma,[2] who was a member of the assembly, indignantly said, "I am a Chakma. A Marma can never be a Chakma, Chakma can never be a Murong and a Chakma can never be a Bangalee. . . .I am a Chakma. I am not a Bangalee. I am a citizen of Bangladesh--Bangaldeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bangali . . .They (tribals) can never be Bangali."[3] The new constitution of Bangladesh was adopted on December 16, 1972, where all nationals of Bangladesh were designated as "Bangalee."

Meanwhile, the tribal leaders had been utilizing their time in organizing the tribals, especially the youth and intellectuals. On May 16, 1972, a large meeting was held at Ragamati and a party called "Parbattya Chattagram Jano Shanghati Shamity," in short, PCJSS (translated "Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Association") with MN Larma as the head, and other radical tribal leaders, including the leaders of RCP, planted or positioned in various echelons of leadership. Meanwhile, in the first free elections of Bangladesh held in 1973, MN Larma was elected a member of the Bangladesh legislature (called National Assembly), thus he had the opportunity to air his views in the National Assembly regarding CHT, as well as continue to organize the party.

The government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was meanwhile battling against many odds in the new country's socio-economic and

political fields. The law and order situation had deteriorated and natural calamities had struck more than once. It is reasonable to conclude that the government had too many overriding concerns to be able to spare serious attention towards CHT. In CHT, therefore, the lower level administration was doing the best it could and the PCJSS was gaining strength. At one stage, the PCJSS came to the conclusion that they would not be able to achieve their political demands in a constitutional manner. They therefore decided to organize their armed wing to take up armed struggle against Bangladesh. The armed wing called "Shanti Bahini" (SB) was organized on 7 January 1973. Their decision to have an armed wing was influenced by many factors, such as:[4]

a. very recent experience in which Bangladesh achieved independence through armed struggle.

b. the success and perceived successes of the tribals of Northeast India in achieving their political demands through insurgency or guerilla warfare. (More about this in a later chapter.)

c. hope that the tribals of Northeast India, and Northwest Burma, would come to their aid out of feelings of tribal solidarity.

d. hope that the government of China (which had not yet recognized the new country of Bangladesh--China having been a very close ally of Pakistan) would help CHT tribals against the government of Bangladesh.

e. Last, but not the least, the cumulative effect of frustration over the last two decades.

Meanwhile in 1974, Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had managed to have a constitutional amendment passed, making Bangladesh a one-party state--the party being Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League or in short BAKSAL. MN Larma joined the BAKSAL with a view to be inside the policy making machinery hoping to be able to influence the fate of CHT. But BAKSAL as the ruling party did not have more than one year to rule when on August 15, 1975, in a military coup de tat, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was murdered. With the death of Sheikh Rujib, MN Larma lost all hope of any benefit for CHT within the constitutional framework/ politics and further estimated that "while the Bangladesh armed forces remain busy in coups and countercoups possibly leading to a civil war,"[5] the PCJSS with its armed wing, the Shanti Bahini, will gain by launching an armed insurgency. Thus MN Larma went underground and started the insurgency leading to what it is today.

Before proceeding to the next chapter, it may be useful to briefly recapitulate the process of the growth of insurgency:

a. The tribal members of CHT had their own socio-political independence until the British seriously colonized them.

b. The district and town of Chittagong had been their (i.e., the tribals) link to the rest of the country and world for the last three centuries, if not more.

c. The British wanted to protect them which benefitted the British in all ways, benefitted the tribal in some ways, and hurt them in other ways.

d. The tribals, primarily the Chakmas, did not like being part of Pakistan. As a consequence, the Pakistan government did not possess an enthusiastic or favorable attitude towards them, but some tribal leaders made efforts to change the relationship.

e. The tribals have suffered, relatively more than benefitting, due to the government sponsored economic-industrialization effort in CHT which benefitted the rest of the country.

f. With increased education and exposure to the rest of the country as well as environmental (political environment of the-then East Pakistan) effects, the tribals became politicized. Efforts to organize and institutionalize politico-military struggle made a beginning.

g. With increased exposure to development, influx of non-tribals increased, having destabilizing effects on tribal culture, economy, way of life, and politics.

h. Tribals as a body failed to support the liberation war of Bangladesh, causing misperception in the minds of independent-Bangladesh's administration about their loyalty.

i. Neither Pakistan nor the Bangladesh government until 1975 had any serious concern about the problem of integrating the ethnic minority into the Bangladesh's nationalism. The tribals had been worried about their ethnic security.

j. The governments of Pakistan and Bangladesh up to 1975 did not take specific steps to protect the tribal population from the effects of domination by non-tribals, instead allowed non-tribal settlement in CHT, and that, too, in a disorganized way.

k. The tribal leaders made only limited overtly political efforts or constitutional efforts before deciding to go insurgent.

l. The insurgent leadership is educated, has Marxist/Maoist connections, and lead two parties; namely, the RCP and PCJSS, the latter being more of a front party. Currently this PCJSS is also underground or covert.

ENDNOTES

1. It has been difficult to trace the original memorandum but a booklet dated 24 April 1972 circulated by MN Larma (under his signature) gave out the details. The booklet was titled "CHT: Why Autonomy?" The present writer has a photocopy of the booklet.

2. In December 1970, elections to Pakistan National Assembly and East Pakistan Provincial Assembly were held. Chakma Chief Raja Tridiv Roy was elected a member of the National Assembly; Aung Shue Prue and MN Larma were elected members of the Provincial Assembly. Tridiv Roy fled to Pakistan before 16 December 1971, As Prue was taken into jail on charges of collaboration with Pakistan Army. Therefore, MN Larma was the only tribal elected leader left to be a member of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh composed of all East Pakistani members who won December 1970 elections.

3. Proceedings of the Debate in Bangladesh Gono Parishad (i.e., Constituent Assembly), Bangladesh Jatio Sangsad Bitorka, Vol. 1, No. 6, 23 January 1974; as quoted by various authors, e.g., Syed Azizul Ahsan and Bhumitra Chakma, p. 968.

4. Siddharta Chakma, pp. 103-105.

5. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: NORTHEAST INDIA

Population and Ethnicity

The larger northeastern India is geographically linked to the southeast Asia and southern Chinese mountainous landmass. The people are distinctly of two origins: the tribals who are ethnically Mongoloid and the plainsmen who are Austro-Caucasian (part of the greater mass of India proper). The following data may be relevant to understanding this.[1]

Area	Number of Tribes	Tribal Population as a Percent of Total Population of the Area
Assam	13	17.39
Manipur	17	31.93
Nagaland	15	93.09
NEFA	15	88.59
Tripura	5	31.53

By 1930 political awareness had grown fast among the Indians and therefore preparations were being made for further reforms when various British intelligentsia offered varying suggestions which now, in retrospect, seem to have been a cause of insurgencies in India. According to one plan[2] advanced by R. Coupland, and former governor of Assam Sir Robert Reid, "India should be divided into four main regions - the Indus Valley, the Ganges Valley, the Deccan and the Bengal Delta. . . .The hill areas of Assam, the area known as the north east." Coupland explained

thus: "Since these areas belonged neither to India nor to Burma, they should be grouped together into an independent entity under the direct jurisdiction of the British crown to be called "the crown colony." According to Governor Reid's plan, "the area would have been right up to Chittagong port, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts." However, these theories of British ideologues did not work out and the political reforms were implemented in India through the Government of India Act of 1935, the hill areas of Assam were designated as Excluded Areas or Partially Excluded Areas. This status continued until 1947 when India won independence from the British.

The India Constitution[3]

The constitution of India made specific provisions for the tribal population of Assam. In its "Sixth Schedule," the Constitution divided the area into two classes:

a. The wild areas were grouped as the "North East Frontier Agency" (NEFA).

b. The less wild areas were apportioned among six districts --the United Khasi-Jainti Hills, the Garo Hills, the Mizo District (formerly Lushai Hills), the Naga Hills, the North Kacher Hills, and the Mikir Hills.

The NEFA was to be administered by the Central Government of India with the Governor of Assam acting as its agent and a government nominee sitting in the Indian Parliament representing the people of NEFA. In the six hill districts, each had an elected district council with broad local powers. No laws passed by the Indian

Parliament or the Assam State Assembly would have effect in the tribal areas failing the passing of a specific resolution by the district council making such laws applicable to the hill districts concerned. All these were designed to ensure that as far as possible the tribals should be allowed to run their own affairs and not be subjected to interferences from the outside. However, none of these could forestall the insurgencies in Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya and Gurkhaland. Some authors have squarely put the blame on the British, Chinese, and Pakistani governments for encouraging and materially helping these insurgencies, yet others have ascribed to more philosophical causes for the insurgencies; namely, cultural differences and misunderstandings. When the insurgencies began, the Indian government hardly had any precedents to look for solutions, it took its own actions as deemed fit. The Naga Insurgency was the first to come up and was also the fiercest, still continuing (though much abated); while the Tripura insurgency is the nearest to CHT and the latest.

Naga Insurgency

A Short Chronology:[4]

1878 First British outposts set up in Naga areas.

1881 Naga Hill District formed.

1918 Naga Club formed by leading politicians and intelligentsia.

1929 Naga Club put forward demand to Simon Commission for independence after British leave India.

1944 Some Nagas under A. Z. Phizo help Japanese, on the latter's promise of independence after British defeat.

1945-46 Phizo organizes "People's Independence League," "Naga Youth Movement" and "Naga Women's Society."

1946 Moderate Nagas form "Naga National Council" (NNC); demand local autonomy within Assam.

Feb 47 NNC declares intention to accept sovereignty of India for ten years after which they should have the right to self-determination.

Jun 47 Nine-point agreement between Governor of Assam and NNC leaders reached.

Jul 47 NNC delegation met Mahatma Gandhi, demanding independence. No definite responses.

Aug 47 A. Z. Phizo declares independent Nagaland. Phizo arrested.

1949 Phizo released from jail on compassionate grounds.

1950 Phizo becomes President of NNC with Theyieu Sakherei as General Secretary.

1951 NNC organizes plebiscite to support its claim for independence.

1951 First general elections under the new constitution of India held. Nagas boycott.

1952 Phizo arrested by Burmese security forces while attempting to organize Nagas of nothern Burma. Handed over to India. Released on compassionate grounds.

Mar 53 Prime Minister Nehru of India and Prime Minister Thakin Nu of Burma visit Kohimna (Naga district HQ) and hold discussions.

Sep 54 Phizo forms "Hongking" or Naga Federal Government with parliament, president, minsters, and a commander-in-chief.

Mar 55 NNC under Phizo engage in armed clash with Indian police and Assam rifle units. Armed insurgency begins.

Jan 56 Theyieu Sakherei (a cousin of Phizo and General Secretary of NNC) with few others try to reorganize NNC to avoid armed insurgency and arrive at negotiated settlements. Sakherei murdered by Phizo men. Armed insurgency escalates.

Jan 56 Indian army deployed for counterinsurgency along with Central Reserve Police and Assam Rifles Battalion. Area declared as "Disturbed Area" under the provisions of the constitution.

Mar 56 NNC formally proclaims the (underground) Federal government, parliament and army.

Aug-Oct 56 Moderate Nagas opposing Phizo (in NNC) organize "Peace Organizing Committee."

Dec 56 Phizo escapes to East Pakistan. (Incidentally, Phizo now lives in the U.K.)

Mar 57 Church leaders issue call for peace.

Aug 57 Moderate Nagas organize Naga People's Convention (NPC). Demand separate constitutional status separate from Assam under Central Government of India.

1957 Nagas (under Phizo's influence) boycott national and provincial elections. Government sponsored candidates win uncontested.

Dec 57 "Naga Hills and Tuansang Area" formed separate from Assam and under the central government.

Dec 57 Approximately 3,000 Naga insurgents (armed/unarmed) turn overt amd surrender.

May 58 Second NPC held. Establish liaison committee to contact insurgents for negotiation.

22-26 Oct 59 Third NPC held. Demand separate province under Indian constitution.

Jul 60 NPC delegation confer with Nehru. 16-point agreement made, including separate province.

Aug 60 Decision to form a separate province announced by the government and arrangements started.

Oct-Nov 62 Indo-China war in NEFA/Tibet border.

1963 Overt political party, Naga Nationalist Organization, formed.

Feb 63 Phizo establishes communications with Nehru for negotiations. Government calls for ceasefire first.

May 63 Phizo renounces offer.

Dec 63 New province functional. Insurgent Nagas under Phizo do not support.

Jan 64 Nagas take part in election to new provincial assembly.

1964 "Hongking" or underground government shifts headquarters to Burma opposite Tuensang area.

Feb 64 Church leaders of Nagaland confer and form a peace mission to negotiate with insurgents.

Sep 64 Under the auspices of peace mission, ceasefire agreed with Insurgent leaders effective 6 Sep 64.

1966-67 Six rounds of discussion held between insurgent leaders and Nehru. Ceasefire remains effective until 1972.

1967 Insurgents-China contact established insurgents start going to China.

16 Aug 72 Fresh peace agreement signed betwen insurgents and government. 1,500 insurgents surrender including "Hongking" President Joeter and "Hongking" CINC Sato Sue.

Nov 72 "North Eastern Council" inaugurated to oversee and coordinate economic development of entire Northeast India.

1974-75 Insurgent traffic to and from China reportedly on the increase.

May 75 Kevi Yalley (brother of Phizo) proposes peace talk with government.

Nov 75 Fresh peace agreement (called Shillong Accord) signed between breakaway insurgent leader Kevi Yalley and government. Demand for Naga independence renounced.

Jan 76 Nhueng Sing Muiva, Isac Swu and other insurgent leaders on the Burmese side of border do not agree; renounce the government as well as threaten to renounce Phizo if he agrees with the government. Forms "National Socialist Council of Nagaland" reportedly under Chinese sponsorship.

Involvement of the Indian Army in Nagaland. The army deployed in 1956 has been successful in controlling the armed insurgency, which has been the single most important reason forcing Naga insurgents to accept negotiated settlements. One of the most debated aspect of army's operational technique was the establishment of segregated tribal villages called Protected and Progressive Villages (PPV), New Group Centres (NGC), and Voluntary

Group Centres (VGC). This was done with a view to isolate the insurgents from the support of the people and logistics. While it achieved its aim to a large degree, it had some important damaging side effects. Tribals were removed from agricultural lands and food production decreased, the economic pressure on the government was tremendous, for which reasons the rigidity of protection was later relaxed.

Foreign Involvement in Naga Insurgency. Nari Rustomji[54] who was, for the first ten years of independent India the Adviser to the Governor of Assam for Tribal Affairs, has the following to say: "The view has from time to time been advanced that the Naga troubles have been mainly fomented by the mischievous schemings of neighboring countries, more particularly China and Pakistan. While, however, there is evidence that India's neighbors have taken advantage of the unsettled conditions along the frontiers, it would be incorrect to brand them as the root cause." However, such authors as Profullo Chowdhury and Biswakesh Tripathy have in detail laid down the involvement of Pakistan and China with the insurgents. It does highlight a fact that foreign assistance in terms of asylum, training, arms and ammunition, and other facilities is vital for insurgents to survive. But this alone is not the cause, as Nari Rustomji comments, "A final solution lies in the removal of the malaise itself." The Naga experience also shows that overt political organizations are essential for mobilizing public support and for the government to conduct negotiations as well as to implement reforms.

Insurgency in Tripura.[6]

The Indian province of Tripura has 520 miles of borders with Bangladesh on three sides (70 miles of which is with CHT) and only on the east does it border the Assam province. Geographically, it was more a part of "East Bengal" before the partition of India in 1947. It has an area of 40,447 square kilometers, 60 percent of which is hilly.

At the turn of the 19th century, Tripura was a princely state ruled by a Maharaja and inhabited by tribals, the Tripura or Tripuri being the largest tribe. Under the auspices of the Maharaja and landowning elites, many plainsmen Bengali peasants were settled there to facilitate cultivation. Some years before the 1947 partition of India and after, a large number of non-Muslim (or Hindu) Bengalis went to Tripura to settle (as did many Muslims cross over to East Pakistan and settle there). This was repeated immediately after the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 (and, to a degree) and 1971. Added to this was the influx of Bengali Hindus from West Bengal, Mizoram and Manipur when insurgents there drove away "nonlocals." As a result, the demographic balance had changed dramatically, much to the disadvantage of the tribals; the tribals had lost much of their land, employment opportunities were restricted, and their influence on politics of the province waned. Tribal intelligentsia and radicals thus had cause to organize political parties, agitation and, lastly, insurgency. During the period from 1956 onward, there was insurgency in Nagaland, and from 1966 onward, in Mizoram and Manipur, all of which affected Tripura youths.

The first to be organized was the "Sangrak" movement--with anti-nontribal overtones--which lived up to about 1971. A section of youth from this organization in 1967 formed the Tripura Upajati Jubo Shamity (TUJS) and over a period adopted four demands: an autonomous district council under the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution for the tribal areas, restoration of the old tribal belt, restoration of all tribal land transferred to nontribals since 1960, and recognition of the Tripura dialect "Kogborok" as the language of the state. In January 1972 Tripura was given the status of a province in the Indian union which satisfied part of the political demand. The same year the Marxist government of Tripura Province also created the "Autonomous District Council for the Tribal Areas," thus fulfilling one more of the demands. At this, the radicals demanded expulsion of all nontribals from Tripura who had come after 1969. It may be noted that the tribal population, which was about half of the total in 1931, was by 1981 only one-third of that number. The armed wing of TUJS called "Tripura Sena," since renamed Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), has waged violent insurgency, especially against the local Bengali or nontribal population, burning whole villages and shooting down all Bengali inhabitants. Other important demands of the TNV put up later include, 50 percent of the provincial legislature seats to be reserved for the 31 percent tribal population; introducing Kogborok (which by now had a Bengali script) in roman script; adopting an "inner line system" (like the British did in northeast India) to restrict the nontribal population; and expansion of the area of the autonomous tribal district.

The insurgency raged violently only for two years (mid-1986 to 1988) and the counterinsurgency was kept at a low level. The Indian Government attempted a novel way to force the insurgents to come to a solution. In March 1988 they deployed a full division[7] in the insurgency area, more or less "sealed" the border by deploying additional security forces, and then offered to discuss peace with the TNV. Bangladeshi refugees occupying various camps on the Indian side of the border also acted as a check on the border. The President of TNV, Bijoy Rankhael, was taken to Delhi where, after a few days of discussion, a peace agreement was signed. Only two of the demands of the TNV were partially met, e.g., the area of the autonomous district would be increased and tribal membership in the provincial legislature would be increased to one-third. It may be mentioned that the governor of the Province of Tripura during this time (1988) was K. V. Krishna Rao, a retired general.

Insurgency in Gorkhaland[8]

On April 13, 1986, Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) made a massive political demonstration, protested "genocide and ethnic discrimination against the Nepali descendent Indians" and as a solution demanded a separate province called "Gorkhaland," consisting of the whole district of Darjeeling in northern West Bengal. On July 25, 1988, the GNLF president Subhash Gheesing signed an agreement with the government of the province and the central government, bringing his low level insurgency to an end. The end product was the GNLF agreed not to demand a separate province, the government agreed instead to create a "Darjeeling

Gorkha Hill Council" to administer the autonomous district of Darjeeling. To administer the district, the council would have 28 elected and 14 government nominated members. The council would have powers over 19 subjects transferred to it constitutionally, e.g., allotment/occupation or use of land other than reserved forests, management of other forests, agriculture, tourism, etc.

Notable features of this counterinsurgency is that the army was not deployed until the last few months and the basic law enforcement job was done by the Indian Central Reserve Police.

ENDNOTES

1. Peter Kunstadter, pp. 207-212. The data quoted by Peter Kunstadter is from Census of India 1961, Vol. I, Part II. The population data for Tripura shows the presence of Chakmas; the data about tribal population in NEFA was difficult to get so not given in details, but as mentioned in Almut Mey, "Modernization in the Chittagong Hill Tracts" in Asian Highland Societies: An Anthropological Perspective" (Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, ed.), Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi/Humanities Press, Inc., New Jersey, 1981, p. 225, bulk of Chakmas were settled in NEFA. The matter has been discussed in this paper earlier under Economics and Industrialization.

2. Discussion about "Crown Colony" and "Coupland Plan" contained in Profullo Chowdhury, The North East: Roots of Insurgency, Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Limited, 1986, pp. 85-88. Profullo Chowdhury cites as further reference, the following:

(i) R. Coupland, The Future of India, London: 1943, pp. 164-165.

(ii) A letter written by A. Z. Phizo (the Naga insurgent leader) to Raja Gopalachari, which was published in print in Dainik Sangbad, a Bengali language daily newspaper from Agarttala, the capital of the Indian Province of Tripura, in 1983.

3. Based on Robbins Burling, "Tribesmen and Lowlanders of Assam," in Peter Kundstadter (ed.), pp. 216-218; and Nari Rustomji, Imperilled Frontiers: India's North Eastern Borderlands, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983, pp. 18-19.

4. The narrative has been built up from discussions in:

(i) Profulla Roy Chowdhury, The North East: Roots of Insurgency, Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1986, pp. 45-88.

(ii) Bishwakesh Tripathy, Terrorism and Insurgency in India 1900-1986, Pacific Press, Berhampur-Orissa, India, pp. 171-174, 176-189.

(iii) Nari Rustomji, pp. 12-13, 18, 24-26, 30-31, 49, 68-69.

(iv) Bidhan Singh in Desh (a prestigious weekly Bengali language magazine published from Calcutta), Vol. 56, No. 3, 19 November 1988, pp. 51-56.

5. Nari Rustomji, p. 68.

6. Discussion here is based on:

(i) Subir Bhoumik in Desh, pp. 46-50.

(ii) H. K. Sareen, "Insurgency in Northeast," Sterling Publisher Pvt, Ltd., New Delhi, 1980, pp. 77-88.

(iii) Bishwakesh Tripathy, pp. 206-209.

7. Report about a "division" not confirmed. Quoted here from recollections of daily newspaper reports published from Agartala in Tripura and Dhaka in Bangladesh during this period.

8. Discussion here is based on:

(i) Tapash Mukherjee in Desh, pp. 27-36.

(ii) Daily newspaper, Indian Express, New Delhi, 23 August 1988.

CHAPTER VI

COUNTERINSURGENCY TAKES SHAPE

General.

Between 1973 and 1976, the insurgents established hideouts and training camps in deep jungles inside CHT, gave training to a few hundred men in small arms, organized themselves into various echelons and groups, established contact with elements of the Indian administration in the neighboring Indian province of Tripura, and carried out a number of ambushes and raids on security forces installations and groups, inflicting some casualties. In summary, there was evidence of law and order deteriorating and armed threat taking shape. The few police stations (PS) of Bangladesh Police and border outposts (BOP) of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) (which is a border security force) had lost much of their effectiveness in all areas but the immediate vicinity.

Meanwhile Bangladesh had experienced a number of military coups and counter coups and a "people's revolution" which brought the Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Ziaur Rahman, in charge of the administration of the country. The benefit of having a military man at the helm of affairs was that the military aspects of any situation can be placed in proper context. A counterinsurgency effort began taking shape.

The strategy of counterinsurgency adopted or applied in Bangladesh was not the end product of "one single voluminous estimate of the situation" made in one instance when insurgency

began. Such would have been ideal but was not practicable. Nonetheless, if the insurgents had models of insurgency before then, the governing authorities also had some. Certain assessments and decisions therefore had to be made early enough and others at a later stage; these in turn ran from the stages of development of Bangladesh's strategy of counterinsurgency. Therefore there could be two ways of discussing it: one, stage by stage description/evaluation for the reader, taking him through the history (as has been done for the preceding few chapters); and two, analyze the events of the past and erect a framework as it looks in retrospect. The latter method seems to be better for understanding and obtaining a wholesome view.

Relevance of Campaign Planning

There has been a plethora of writing on LIC, including the discussing of a key issue: Is fighting insurgents a campaign and, if yes, can there be campaign plans for it? For example, Lieutenant Colonel James M. Fletcher[1] concludes that "campaign planning is not applicable to insurgency, counterinsurgency and peacekeeping operations"; one of the reasons cited in support of the conclusion is because "the enemy center of gravity cannot be defeated by military power." Lieutenant Colonel Earle C. Richardson,[2] on the other hand, quoting relevant Army manual and by his own logic, remarks that "A successful counterinsurgency operation requires a national campaign plan. This plan defines the long range programs for neutralization of the insurgent, and the correction of adverse conditions conducive to insurgency.

Campaign plans must comply with national policy for dealing with insurgents." Professor Steven Metz,[41] for example, argues that campaign planning can be and needs to be applied to counterinsurgency, but the present form (as applicable to conventional war) is not directly applicable to counterinsurgency and adaptation is required. It is not superfluous to argue whether campaign planning is necessary or applicable to counterinsurgency because whatever it be called, Counter Revolutionary Strategy or National Plan or Action Programs or Campaign Planning, that "something" is necessary goes beyond argument. The most fundamental reason as to why "something" is necessary is because the revolutionaries or insurgents have "something." It is inconceivable to fight an adversary who is having a plan without a plan on the home side. The arguable issue may be "who" will formulate or initiate or coordinate that "something," i.e., the plan? An answer to this may vary, depending upon whether it is from the perspective of the U.S. Government (or Army) supporting a different government (or army) or the perspective of a government fighting without help from the U.S. or any other source. Answers to this may also vary depending upon the goals of the insurgents: "seizure of power through revolutionary takeover and replacement of the existing government" or a more limited one "breakaway from government control and establish an autonomous state within the traditional ethnic or religious territorial bounds."[4] Discussion or comments on these aspects are relevant to Bangladesh experience, thus have been raised, and will be discussed.

In retrospect it can be said that the Bangladesh government did not develop a comprehensive "campaign plan" at the very outset of insurgency, but as discussions in the following pages will show, various steps taken by the government in various fields essentially compose parts of a "campaign plan." Due to various limitations, this writer is not going into the merits/demerits of such an approach by the government.

Phases or Stages of Insurgency.

Having first discussed the strategy of revolutionary wars, Lieutenant Colonel John J. McCuen[5] suggests that "to protect oneself against methodical, crushing blows of the revolutionaries and to be able to strike them in their most vital parts, it is necessary to fight them on their own battlefields--in their own media. It is necessary to paving the revolutionary weapons, adopt them, improve for one's own use and then turn them against the revolutionaries." Colonel McCuen identifies the principles of counter-insurgency or counter-revolutionary warfare as: Preserving Oneself and Annihilating the Enemy, Establishing Base Areas, Mobilizing the Masses, Seeking Outside Support, and Unifying the Effort. Colonel McCuen then coins the sixth principle applicable only for the counter-revolutionary (or the governing authorities) to be "Unity of Principles" and explains: "All five principles we have discussed form the basis for an effective strategy but they cannot be implemented separately. They are closely interdependent. The successful employment of one can hardly be asserted without the successful employment of all others." These are the same ones U.S. military pamphlets describe as Balanced Development,

Security, Neutralization and Mobilization.[6] But having said that, it is to be emphasized that even the best of governments or most brilliant of military planners on the one side and the revolutionaries or insurgents on the other side, will each have one great disadvantage. The government or counter-revolutionary will have started the race or game late and must compensate for the time lost by intensive work. The revolutionary can only raise the grievances and capitalize upon them--he does not have the means to solve or eradicate them nor the mode or machinery to do it; thus if the government can eradicate the cause or grievances, then the very existence of the insurgency becomes difficult. The insurgents often do not want the government to solve or eradicate the problems, instead want the power to themselves to do so--this is where the question comes of legitimacy. To justify its legitimacy, the government has to achieve or implement such reforms and improvement as are the causes of the insurgency.

It is, therefore, necessary to know the insurgents and the insurgency if the counterinsurgent "is to fight them on their own battlefields." The development of the insurgency throughout history has been discussed at length, a comprehensive overview of the period 1975-1989 in CHT is necessary to complete the study and place it in relation to government efforts.

Analysis of the Insurgency in CHT[7]

Leadership. The insurgency began at the behest of a few politically conscious educated persons of the Chakura tribe imbued with "Marxist-Mao's thought" and encouraged by happenings in the

neighborhood of Bangladesh. Since the "Marxist-Mao's thought was neither familiar nor estimated to be palatable to the population, the insurgents added a nationalistic flavor to it and worked hard at it. The CHT insurgents had the benefit of having a fairly charismatic leader in the person of N.M. Larma (until he was killed by a rival faction in 1983). Over th years, a few hundred more Chakma-educated youth have joined the insurgency and now provide the leadership in the field.

Ideology. Early in their insurgency, the insurgent leaders exposed their ethnic bias but expressed it in nationalistic terms. Nationalism, per se, is too vague to offer specific mechanism for organizing and disciplining a cadre as well as to offer a framework for the implementation of aspired goals. The insurgent leaders in CHT thus used nationalism to camouflage their "Marxist-Mao's thought" beliefs and programs.

Objective. Between 1973 and 1986 the insurgents never let their official objectives be formally or officially known. Apart from the memorandum they had submitted to the Prime Minister in 1972, there was no other document conveying their political goal. However, in their propaganda circulated to the common people and training literature made available to the cadre, they have emphasized "liberating the homeland from occupation," "consolidating the existence of the tribals (named by them as Jhumma nation)" and "establishing social justice and equality." Their political demand for "autonomy for Chillagong Hill Tracts" was not elaborated more than saying it would have a legislature until December 17, 1987,[8] when details were given. It transpired that

they wanted to have a federation--a state within the state--although the constitution of Bangladesh provides for a military form of government only. The insurgents, being mostly from the Chakma tribe, also wanted to maintain the superiority/dominance of the tribe in the society. At the strategic level, their aims have been to try and internationalize the issue or at least get a third country (e.g., India) involved. They have so far not been able to secure a key building or bridge or government facility for any length of time although they have and still carry out raids and ambushes.

Environment and Geography. Much has been discussed about the people, terrain and socio-political developments which will enable us to deduce the effect it will have on the CHT insurgents. Trans-border communication and travel on foot is possible. Ridgelines provide safe walking trails and observation of the valleys. Government efforts to carry out economic development and improve infrastructural facilities offer opportunity for illegal levy collection and targets for ambushes and raids. The basic emphasis is still on rural areas because urban areas as such are not large or many. But political and organizational activities of the insurgents are conveniently and enthusiastically carried out in bigger cities of Bangladesh, in the universities,[9] among tribal students and government workers all over CHT and in neighboring districts.

External Support. By 1979, military operations forced the insurgents to retreat into sanctuaries beyond the border into mostly the province of Tripura and some to Mizoram.[10] The terrain

being contiguous and rugged, security forces on the ground being thin and inhospitable attitude of the governments of the neighboring country of India and its province of Tripura made this possible. Efforts to obtain support from insurgent groups operating in Tripura, Ramipur and even MNF were made successfully.[11] However, the legitimacy of the insurgent group to be the genuine representative of the tribal people and to be the spokesman for their aspiration has been degraded because they are very dependent upon external support for their existence. It dawned on the tribal people gradually that, "If the insurgents are dependent upon external material or financial support, then they are also likely to be obliged to adhere to the directions or desires of the external source."

Phases and Turning. The foremost exponent and military theologist of revolutionary war, Mao Tse Tung, said revolutionary war has to be protracted and must pass through three stages: first stage--strategic defensive, second stage--period of stalemate (a period of preparation for the third), and third stage--open war with government military forces employing conventional military tactics.[12] Some French military writers, trying to develop counter-revolutionary doctrine, adopted "Trotsky's Five Phases of Revolution": First--secret organization building, second--expanded organization linking urban and rural networks to include infiltration into all sorts of official and unofficial organizations and formulating overt discontent, third--(insurrection) or armed bands carry out terrorism/raids/ambushes while political workers intensify propaganda/subversion, fourth--create liberated zones and

organize regional forces, and fifth--counteroffensive using mobile warfare as the decisive form of combat.[13]

McCuen summarized by saying that revolutionary and counter-revolutionaries usually have used various combinations of these three or five phases or stages and outlined the following four stages: Organization, terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and mobile warfare.[14] According to McCuen's format, the insurgents in CHT (now in 1990) would be spread between the terrorism and guerrilla warfare. Like the FMLN in El Salvador and few others elsewhere, they have been forced by the government and military to shift back and forth. The insurgents have not been able to hold any chunk of terrain as "liberated zones," have inflicted many times more casualties on civilians than on security forces and were forced to keep the level of lethality also down.

Organization and Operational Patterns

The CHT insurgents fall into the general pattern of what may be called "traditional" but having tones of "mass orientation" and subversion. Undoubtedly the basic cause is ethnic consciousness and desire to protect it--by extra-constitutional methods. Because of differences in the level of political consciousness among various tribes, the perceived threat to the smaller tribes from the overly conscious and educated large Chakura tribe, and lastly because of the uncertainty in the minds of the people of smaller tribes as to where the situation might lead if and ever the political demands of the insurgents were fully met--the insurgents have not been able to gain wide acceptance among other tribes. But it has been in the insurgents' interest to maintain a

facade of unity by motivation or coercion. Further, over the years the insurgents have built up elaborate organization for political and administrative control of the population in the predominantly Chakma areas, but they could not gain complete loyalty of the men of smaller tribes. The armed wing of the insurgents (called Shanti Bahini, or SB for short) is the most powerful organ of the party having dominant say in the political wing also. Unlike many insurgencies across the globe, the SB do not have an overt (front) political party because the PCJSS went underground in 19765 and never made a debut afterwards. The insurgents' main tools to keep the tribals on their side are propaganda disseminated by leaflets/booklets and verbally, coercion/intimidation/torture and murder. Their weaponry is small arms, including use of explosives and mines.

ENDNOTES

1. LTC James M. Fletcher, "Campaign Planning in Low Intensity Conflict" (unpublished study project) thesis at USAWC, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 23 April 1989, p. 53.

2. LTC Earle C. Richardson, "Considerations for Nation Building in Counterinsurgency Warfighting" (unpublished study project) thesis at USAWC, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 31 March 1989, p. 17.

3. Steven Metz, "Counterinsurgent Campaign Planning," in Parameters, Vol. XIX, No. 3, September 1989, p. 16.

4. Final Draft, FM 100-20/AFP 3-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, 1 December 1989, p. 2-2.

5. LTC John J. McCuen, "The Art of Counter Revolutionary War," Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1966, pp. 50-76.

6. FM 100-20/AFP 3-20, p. 2-14.

7. Format as followed in pages 2-4, Chapter 2, Fm 100-20/AFP 3-20, is followed.

8. The second official dialogue (or peace-talk) was held between a government delegation and PCJSS delegation at a place three kilometers north of Panchari, an Upazilla in the district of Khagrachari. There the PCJSS delegation submitted a memorandum contained 30 points. The PCJSS later printed this memorandum as a booklet and circulated it to the public. The current writer was present at this dialogue.

9. In Chittagong, Dhaka and Rajshahi Universities, for example, there is Upajatiyo Chatro Parishad (meaning Tribal Students Council) who publish journals and magazines, organize discussions and symposiumand maintain bondage among tribal students. In Dhaka the tribal students have the advantage of having a large building designated as their hostel only.

10. There is no scope in this paper to go into details of Indian involvement in the insurgency. Bangladesh has always maintained that the insurgents receive moral and material from India, but India has always denied it. The geography of the area and the fact that 20 to 30 thousand Bangladeshi tribals are refugees in India has made an "open-secret" of it. Most international news commentaries and reports (e.g., Antislavery Society, March 1989) take it as a matter of course. Nothing could be greater proof than the statements of people who have been in India, have received training and help and who later returned to normal life in Bangladesh. From this writer's own assessment, there are at least 12 locations across the border in tripura and Mizoram where armed insurgents have sanctuary--this has been confirmed by surrendered and returned insurgents.

11. "In 1973 a meeting of all insurgent elements--Chakmas (Chakma Liberation Front of Bangladesh), Nagas, Mizos, and Meitis was organized. . . ."--H. K. Sareen, pp. 52, 66. "The Santi Bahini established contact with the Burmese Communist Party and had at least one meeting with them. . . .developed friendly relations with "Chin Hill Democratic Front" Arakan revolutionaries and Arakan Communist Party"--Siddharta Chakma, p. 109-110.

12. Selections from the Marine Corps Gazette (LTC T. N. Green, ed.), New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publisher, 1963, pp. 15-16.

13. LTC John J. McCuen, p. 42.

14. Ibid., p. 40.

CHAPTER VII

COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED

Government Response--Counterinsurgency Strategy

An analysis of the insurgency-led Bangladesh to arrive, as mentioned earlier over the years, at a strategic concept to tackle it in the long run. From an analysis of the steps taken by the government of Bangladesh over the years, it appears that the following were/are salient aspects of the strategy.

a. Political.

i. Limit the political aspiration of the tribal people by providing a political system which meets their aspirations.

ii. Keep the remainder of the population of the country aware and supportive of the process--by keeping political reforms within the constitution.

iii. Gradually bring the tribal population into the mainstream politics (or political life) of the country.

b. Demography/Ethnicity. Achieve a demographic balance of tribals and nontribals within the jurisdiction of CHT, thus removing the fundamental strength of the insurgents while at the same time ensuring that their ethnic identity can exist as well as flourish. The aim is not to overwhelm the tribals in number but to present them with sizeable minority of nontribals to reckon with within their territory and new-found political system. This is not to be mixed-up with population control.

c. Containment of Insurgency Prior to Elimination. The insurgency has to be kept to a particular level by use of military force, political tact and internal diplomacy. If this cannot be done, then neither economic development can be implemented due to armed interference nor political-administrtive reforms given without antagonizing the greater population of the country. It is not feasible to eliminate insurgents only by military power, therefore coordinated effort of all agencies of the government is necessary.

d. Socio-economic Development. One of the indirect methods of limiting political aspirations is to carry on economic and social development so as to convey that these are possible within existing political arrangements. Also, a socio-economically contented man is less prone to succumb to the appeals of insurgency.

The Strategic Importance of CHT in Regional Perspective

CHT overlooks the district and port of Chittagong from the east, has the only hydro-electric project of the country and can act as a base for a force to come down upon Shubhapur--the neck connecting Chittagong to the rest of the country northward. In December 1971, in the last stages of the Bangladesh war of liberation, Major General (now retired) S. Uban of the Indian Army commanded the Special Frontier Forces[1] (SFF) in CHT. In his book, "Phantoms of Chittagong--The Fifth Army in Bangladesh," he narrates how he infiltrated into CHT from Mizoram and captured Rangamati, threatened the Kaptai Dam, destroyed bridges on the Chittagong-Arakan Road and was poised for guerrilla attacks to destroy and capture Chittagong Port. In the above context, in

addition to the availability of all the forestry and other economic resources, the CHT rightly deserved to be defended by Bangladesh and a precondition for attaining good defense is a healthy and loyal population base. This means that the question of national-integration is the foremost one to be answered in the series of steps taken as a counterinsurgency measure.

National Integration

Anthropologists and political scientists suggest that the process needs "assimilation" and "mobilization" of the diverse people concerned. Political scientists also discuss two dimensions of national integration, viz., "integration in terms of values, attitudes, feeling of community, etc., and integration in terms of structured relationship such as the provision of governmental services, kinds and amount of patterned interaction among subgroups and so forth."[2] In some cases, for example in southern Thailand or southern Philippines, the revolutionaries derive their mass support because these minorities perceive to be falling outside the perception of nation-statehood as exist in the minds of the majority of Thais or Filipinos--thus feeling that they (the minorities) are neither entitled to nor are being awarded the same trust or benefits as members of the national community. "This happened because nationality is conceived in the nation state as a kind of super-ethnicity which supersedes all pre-existing identifications and at the same time almost invariably reflects the values of the dominant population group which as a rule provides the historic high culture."[3] The situation in CHT was very

similar to the one theorized here; because of their anti-Pakistan view during and before 1947 and role against the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the tribals, especially the largest tribe (Chakma), had nearly forfeited the trust of the rest of the country. The situation had to be remedied if Bangladesh as a nation was to be sufficiently integrated.

These all meant the tribal people have to be given a feeling of belonging to the same nation as the rest of the people of the country. Development works have to be initiated (to create employment opportunities, improve agricultural income, enhance education, provide better health care, etc.) and administrative and political reform instituted regarding national integration.

One of the earliest of the important actions to be initiated by the government of President Ziaur Rahman was to bring about amendment in the constitution and provide for "Bangladeshi nationalism" instead of "Bengali nationalism" which had caused so much emotional setback and disenchantment in the tribal minds.

Force Deployment: Type, level and Lethality

Counterinsurgency, everywhere, has to be more than a military response, and the military's involvement is not with guns and bullets only. Therefore the military has to be carefully located, organized, armed, infiltrated and integrated with not only the civil administration but also other elements of security forces. Bangladesh experience in this regard present similarities with some counterinsurgencies and dissimilarities with some others and has its uniqueness in terms of strengths as well as weaknesses.

In this regard the very first action taken by the government of Prime Minister (later President) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was to establish three cantonments or permanent garrisons, one each at Dighinala in the north, Ruma in the mid-south, and Ali Kadam in the south. Communications to each of these were tenuous, taking more than two days from Chittagong and air (helicopter) was the only seure means. Nonetheless, these cantonments, which housed less than an infantry battalion each, opened the door for the military to come in closer touch with the civilian population.

This leads to the next important question that any government or authority facing an insurgency problem has to answer. The British, who have experienced modern counterinsurgency the most among the Euro-American powers, have usually practiced entrusting the gathering of intelligence to police and its "special branch" and leave the on-ground fighting with insurgents to the army. This obviously required a very well-integrated command structure and the British were usually blessed to have this. For example, in Malaya Field Marshal Templer and in Cyprus Field Marshal Harding practically enjoyed pro-consular power and all counter-insurgency effort originated from their "military experience reinforced by civilian authority in which they were placed." Major General Frank Kitson is also found recommending the expansion of the Army to meet insurgency rather than expansion of police.[4] Bangladesh entrusted the responsibility to the Bangladesh Army (and had, therefore, perforce to expand its infantry to cater for this) to conduct the military aspects of counterinsurgency and all other forces, e.g., all Bangladesh

Rifles and Bangladesh Police forces operating within the jurisdiction of CHT under the operational command of the Bangladesh Army.

The main reasons to do so were three-fold. First, for a poor country like Bangladesh, it is not possible to arm and train more than one force well enough to meet all contingencies; the police, if trained and equipped for counterinsurgency, could not yet, go to the borders for conventional defensive operations. Second, the experience of the country between 1972 and 1975 showed that having two parallel or equal forces in the same country place them as villains and opposed to each other instead of being complimentary efforts of the same government.[5] Thus, it was not wise to have an expanded police. Third, the necessity to call the army in support of the police would most likely arise and the army by tradition was never to be placed under the command of the police--therefore better what is most inevitable be adopted earlier.

There is one more aspect of counterinsurgency which has political, military and occasionally international (diplomatic) significance--the level of force deployed and the level of lethality. Bangladesh concept has been to keep both aspects low. From the concept of national defense, a division headquarters (HQ) with necessary force would otherwise be positioned in Chittagong, where a cantonment (or garrison) was established in the early fifties (during the Pakistan era). It has therefore been found convenient to employ this very Division in a counterinsurgency role and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) the division to be the counterinsurgency force commander.

Regarding lethality, it has been a deliberate policy to keep the level low, occasionally at the cost of operational efficiency. Insurgents all over the world have a tendency to match the security forces weapon for weapon as much as they can--at least for retaliation--and the insurgents have a psychology to blame only the counterinsurgents' weapons for any defeat or reverses. The Bangladesh army has neither deployed nor employed artillery or heavy mortars although there have been plenty of targets. The prime reason for this has been to avoid casualties of the civilian population. Encounters with insurgents occasionally take place very near international borders and high trajectory weapons could throw ammunitions across the border, even by mistake. The Bangladesh army has also not used 106 milimeter or 75 milimeter recoilless rifles against insurgents. The Bangladesh Air Force involvement has been limited to providing helicopters for casualty evaluation, other logistic support and movement of command echelons. Very infrequently it has been used for troop carrying and never in attack or gunship roles. This has kept the precious helicopters safe from anti-aircraft weaponry which the insurgents could ask from their mentors (as was done in Afghanistan when the Mujahideen were supplied with Stinger missiles).

Territorial Organization for Counterinsurgency

The preceding discussion leads to the deployment pattern of security forces for counterinsurgency. The guiding concept is the unity of command. Thus, it was necessary to make specific commanders/Headquarters/units responsible for specific areas. The

whole area of operation is divided into Regions. Presently, each Region territorially encompasses a whole or part of a district. Each Region is based upon an Army Brigade. Each Region is further divided into Zones. A Zone comprises of one or more Upazillas or subdistricts, or sometimes part of one or more subdistricts. A Zone constitutes the area of responsibility of a Regular unit (Infantry or Artillery or Engineers) augmented by units or sub-units of various paramilitary forces who have defined responsibilities. Thus, the Region or Zones have to keep their areas under domination or control. The domination of the respective Region is planned by the Region Headquarters (i.e., Brigade Headquarters) and executed by Zonal troops by physical presence or patrols and Intelligence networks. The Region commander and the Zone commanders are made responsible for coordinating all military-civic actions.

National Political Direction

"Unity of Effort" has always been highlighted as the single most important principle to combat insurgency. Unity of Effort does not mean only unity of the efforts of all types of security forces but also of all the agencies of the government involved. The latter requires an organizational approach. In some places, as in Malaya, the man at the apex was called the Director of Operations.[6] In the Bangladesh concept, there is no such "Director of Operations" but the much-advocated British committee system has been kept with modifications. The important committees are:

a. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Council Committee (i.e., a Committee of the Council of Ministers). The council committee is the highest policy making body dealing with counterinsurgency in CHT. It is headed by the President, the chief executive of the country and GOC of the Division, who is the commander of all security forces employed in CHT is one of the members. Other members are the Ministers in charge of Home Affairs/Finance/ Foreign Affairs, and the Chiefs of the Army/Navy//Air Force. It provides directions and coordinates all military, economic, social, psychological, information, legal and political aspects of counterinsurgency. All military and politico-economic directions comes to the GOC who implements these through the existing military and civil organizations/agencies. There is a civil affairs office at the Headquarters of the Division at Chittagong to assist in the management of day-to-day affairs of the civil aspects.

b. The Chittagong Hill Tract Coordination Committee. The coordination committee is a subnational committee headed by the GOC of the Division. This includes commanders of military regions, heads of civil administration up to district level of the area and heads of all departments/agencies of the area. It sets priorities on the basis of the needs of the people of CHT and coordinates all development activities to ensure unity of effort and optimum utilization of resources. The supervision of the programs are ensured through regional and zonal committees.

c. District Coordination Committee. The regional commander, who is usually a "Brigadier," heads this committee. The Deputy Commissioner of the District, and the Superintendent of Police,

are permanent members of this committee, while the senior most officer of the important departments such as Roads and Highways, Public Health, Forestry, etc., are coopted members. The members of the military zones attend such meetings as observers. Before attending such meetings the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police hold monthly meetings with their respective subordinate officers of sub-district level so that any points that need to be brought up for higher coordination can be done. One such meeting called monthly police-magisterial meeting is held between the magistrates (who preside over civil and criminal courts) and the police (who are responsible for all types of investigations and submitting charge sheets) where the basic aim is to overcome all possible bureaucratic or procedural bottlenecks towards dispensation of quick justice.

d. There are no formal committees at the sub-district level or at the military zonal level.

e. It needs to be highlighted that there is a parallel and joint committee system for the civil administration and the civil-military effort.

f. The last point to be highlighted is that, as a national issue, the subject of insurgency in CHT is not dealt by the Ministry of Defense but by the Ministry of Home Affairs--and the army is declaratorily in aid of civil power or in an internal security role.[7]

Political Mobilization of the Mass

One characteristic of political life in CHT has been that no national level political party has had any deep roots in CHT,

especially among the tribals. The only political party which had limited roots was the "Bangladesh Awami League" (translated Bangladesh People's League). The party spearheaded the Bangladesh War of Liberation and advocated secularism as a state policy. On the other hand it was the epitome of "Bengali Nationalism" (as opposed to Bangladeshi nationalism) The great charismatic leader of the country, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was from this party. The party had lost appeal to the tribals after 1973. The only political party of the tribals - PCJSS (which has been referred to earlier)--had gone underground in 1975 when it resorted to armed terrorism and insurgency. Therefore, one disadvantage for the government was not to have any political spokesmen either to speak for the government, or as a middleman or indeed to even voice the tribals demands/aspirations in a constitutional manner. This situation was unlike that in Nagaland or other provinces in north-east India which has already been discussed. But as experience has shown, insurgency with strong political overtones needs a strong political process to counter it or moderate it. The Bangladesh effort in this regard has been difficult and tedious.

Tribal Convention. This was a political forum developed in 1977 where leading tribal intelligentsia and politically conscious persons were encouraged to discuss and sponsor a political solution of the problem of CHT. The three chiefs of three circles and many others were a part of it. It gained only limited acceptance to the tribal public because it could not offer to the people any concrete alternatives to what the PCJSS was propagating (from

underground) as the solution. Nonetheless, one Charu Bikash Chakma who had been a political theorist of some repute, proposed a four-point solution to the government.[8] The then president of the country did initiate discussion with tribal convention leaders on the basis of these proposals but two factors stopped the process. First was the government's permission to settle a few thousand nontribal families in CHT which discouraged the tribals, and second, the assassination of President Zia on May 30, 1981, put an end to this process. Two great achievements of the tribal convention were first to persuade the government to agree to stop nontribal settlement, and second, to convince the president of the country to release Jotindrioy Buddhipriyo Larma (J. B. Larma) from jail[9] so that by using the good office of J. B. Larma, negotiations could be started with the insurgents. In retrospect, the release of J. B. Larma seems to have been as costly a mistake as was that of the Philippines Government when they released Louis Taruc (the commander of the HUK insurgency) or with the Indian government when they released A. Z. Phizo (the leader of the Naga insurgents). After the government stopped the settlement of nontribals, the tribal convention was revived but it had lost much of its original flavor and fervor.

"Assimilation" of the People Through Local Government Institutions

Although village-level local government institutions were in vogue in the rest of the country since 1956, it was not introduced in CHT until 1963 when the new constitution of Pakistan provided for something called "basic democracy." Along with the rest of

the country, CHT also started tasting a newer form of local government. The elected representatives formed a union (a cluster of villages for local government purposes). Councils were, however, apolitical. In 1983 the government of President H. M. Ershad introduced the widely acclaimed "Upazilla" system where the Chairman was to be an elected person. Like everywhere else in the country, the Upazilla Parishads (meaning council) had substantial powers of local governments transferred to them (from the central or national government at Dhaka). Like everywhere else in the country, in CHT also for the first time elected persons started managing much of their local affairs. This was a practical education in democracy, and was the main vehicle to get tribal leaders introduced to the machinery of government.

National Committee on CHT

On September 19, 1987, the President of the country in a meeting of tribal leaders announced his intention to accommodate all political demands of the people of the area within the sovereignty and constitution of Bangladesh. To this, a National Committee for CHT with the Minister for Planning as the chairman was formed.[10] The national committee after a series of meetings and discussions held with representative leaders of three districts as well as tribal leaders at the Upazilla level came to an understanding with the overt leaders of the three districts on a political formula which largely meets the aspiration of the people. It was formally signed in November 1988 by the leaders of the three hill districts. The understanding was enacted in three separate Acts in the national parliament in February 1989.[11]

The Acts provide for a local government council in each district. The tribals' seats will always be two-thirds in the council, which would be autonomous in character. All tribes and the Bengalees would be represented in the council on the basis of proportional representation. The Acts allow the people of each of the three districts, particularly the tribal population an active participation in the management of their own affairs. This also allows them the freedom to decide their own priorities of work, assess their own social and economic needs, prepare necessary projects to achieve such goals. The councils would also maintain law and order within their own District and create opportunities for themselves with the help of income generated by the council and bulk financial assistance from the government. Each district would have a police force of their own under the direct control of the council. The Acts also provide for utmost safeguards against the settlement of nontribals in the area, because no nontribal can buy any land, get lease of any land, or start any business in CHT, without written permission of the relevant district council. The election to the councils were held on June 25, 1989 (with members of the diplomatic community from Dhaka and local/foreign news reporters allowed to be present in CHT during the period). With the assertion of this council, a new landmark would be added to the effort of Bangladesh government in fighting insurgency in CHT. The process followed here has much in common with the ones followed in Nagaland or Mizoram in India where politically conscious peace-hungry overt political leaders came forward to institute political reforms in the face of recalcitrance form the

insurgents. It is different from the Tripura and Gorkhaland examples in that there the insurgents surrendered in the interest of peace although their demands were never met in fully by the government of India.

Political Initiatives with the Insurgents

President Ziaur Rahman and his successors kept up the initiative of having meaningful discussions with the insurgents. President Ershad, who assumed office on March 24, 1982, in his first visit to Khagrachari (the headquarters of the northernmost district in CHT) in June 1982 offered peace talks. Under his directions, the local General Officer Commanding arranged a government delegation to meet an insurgent delegation and a peace accord was signed in April 1, 1985. As a result, a sizeable faction of the insurgents surfaced and were officially accepted into peaceful life on April 29, 1985.

The other faction agreed to peace talks which were first held on October 21, 1985, and for five more times between December 17, 1987, and December 14, 1988 without much result. The main reason for failure was the intransigence of the insurgents to agree to talk within the purview of the constitution of Bangladesh.

An interesting experience at this juncture has been that the insurgents time and again refused offers of a cease-fire unlike those insurgents in Nagaland and Mizoram of India, or Tamils of northern Sri Lanka. The apparent reason was that they figured the benefits of a cease-fire would go to the government and overt tribal political leaders more than to themselves, because in their

view the common people were too mobilized in favor of peace and may not heed their call for patience (for protracted war).

Socio-Economic Development

As early as 1976 the government recognized the necessity of expediting socio-economic development of the people of CHT and with that view, established the "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board or CHTDB." The board is headed by the GOC of the local Army Division, with other senior civil servants as members. The three tribal chiefs and 11 other nominated tribals are members of an advisory committee which advises the Chairman of the Board on prioritizing development work.

The board executes programs on its own, funded by the government of Bangladesh as well as acts as the executing agency for some projects funded by external resources. Currently, for example, it is executing a "special five-year plan" (1984/85 to 1989/90 financial years) and the budget for this is more than what would be 1 percent of the national five-year plan, and its share in addition to what CHT gets as part of a national annual development plan.

Beginning in 1976, special efforts were undertaken to promote and nurture tribal heritage, culture and history by establishing special institutes, radio and television programs and the like in Bengali as well as tribal languages. Many schools and colleges were established, and seats for tribal students were reserved in medical, engineering and specialized educational institutions as well as in universities all over the country.

With enhanced education came the problem of unemployment. The standards or requisites for all but the elite services (i.e., Class One and Two of the Bangladesh Superior Serivces) only were reduced for tribal candidates. In 1988 a special presidential directive allowed 1,800 tribal youths to get employment all over the country without any competition from similar youths from the rest of the country.

Bengali Settlement

As has already been discussed in detail earlier, the insurgents' demand of autonomy for CHT to the extent of leaving only Foreign Affairs, Defense, Currency and Heavy Industries to the central or national government at Dhaka and all the other subjects that any government manages left to the autonomous CHT. This was, by any standards, the framework for a loose federation. For Bangladesh, the question was "Could CHT be let out so loosely?" And the answer was, No. Therefore, it was necessary to ensure that any decision of the people of CHT, even if taken democratically, should not be injurious to the integrity of the country.

By being "alone" in their large habitat, the tribals had started having their peculiar political demands. It was necessary that the tribal population should be integrated or assimilated into the larger Bangladeshi society so that they could be induced to thinking (politically) within the framework or parameters of a bigger community rather than in isolation. Further, as development works gained momentum, the necessity of having large numbers of manual laborers was felt. This led to the decision to allow

nontribal settlement. Such settlement had taken place during the Pakistan-era as well as immediately after liberation of Bangladesh, but the most massive settlement took place between 1979 and 1982. Siddharta Chakma and Anti-slavery Society[12] have quoted letters from government officials to substantiate that the program was government sponsored. It goes without saying that large numbers of families could not be settled without permission, encouragement and economic support of the authorities. The number of families settled and number of families who continued to stay (i.e., did not go back to somewhere else in Bangladesh) are not known to this author for sure, but the difference in population figures between 1971 and 1981 to 1988/1989 can explain this.

The number of seats in each of the three district councils were fixed at 30, plus one (mandatory to be tribal) chairman. The thirty seats have been distributed between nontribals and tribals and then between tribals on the basis of population. The population of Bengalee or nontribal is 36.3 percent in Khagrachari district, 40.5 percent in Rangamati district, and 42.76 percent in Bandarban district, making the average of CHT to be 39.38 percent. These nontribals have taken part in all elections held there, either of national level or local government, including the election to the district council held on June 25, 1989.

From the government's point of view, the nontribals will act as a link between the larger Bengali society and that of Hill Tract society and will act as a moderator and facilitator to integrate the tribal population with larger Bangladesh. To the

tribal population, the presence of nontribals in CHT, is (as of 1989) a fait accompli, much like in Assam or Tripura.

The government of Bangladesh stopped all new settlements since 1983. But before and after that, the nontribals did considerable damage to tribal lands. The scheme of settlement called for only purely landless people to be granted permission to settle in CHT; they were to be given lease of government-owned land only. In reality, due to inadequate supervision, haste, nonavailability of records of documents, and corruption, nontribals were granted settlement on tribal lands also. Further, by purchase, forgery and force, some nontribals had acquired tribal lands. In summary, the picture at some locations has been confusing and complicated.

In the opinion of the radical tribals, the nontribals have violated the "inalienable right" of only the tribals to enjoy the land in CHT. Once this view could be moderated to accepting the right of any citizen of the country to possess land anywhere in the country, then the tribals posed the more serious and genuine question--Why should the tribals lose such land as under their possession to nontribals? The government has since expressed its commitment to investigate and reinstate to the tribals such lands as may have been lost to the nontribals. The newly formed district councils have been mandated to work towards this goal. In various literature published by the insurgents, the issue has been posed as an attempt towards extinction of the tribals. There are many reasons to suggest that this is not possible or feasible but the single most important evidence to suggest that the government aim to limit non-tribal growth could be seen by the fact

that, all settlements were stopped in 1983, have not taken place since then, and the subject has been effectively placed in the realm of autonomous district councils.

There have been some riots between tribals and nontribals following insurgents' attacks on nontribal settlements causing untold suffering to many on both sides. Nonetheless, there have been many tactical advantages also. The tribal settlements being decidedly close to lines of communication and highways, has added to the latter's security from insurgent interference. For the extensive development works ample labor has been found nearby (the tribals were shy of any other physical labor but their own Jhum cultivation) and has acted as a catalyst to change tribal attitude to work and leisure. Gathering intelligence has been facilitated because the nontribals have spread to the countryside and mix with tribals in all day-to-day chores such as marketing. Last, but not least, the smaller tribes who were dominated by the large Chakma tribe now can fall back towards the nontribals for sharing woes and sufferings as well as bringing pressure for more generous behavior.

Although the overt tribal leaders have accepted the presence of nontribals, the insurgents have not. All chances are they will if the new law can redeem past damages as well as stop any further damage.

Separation of Insurgents from the People vis-a-vis from the Target Group

It has been a frequently practised pattern to establish protected villages for common people so that insurgents are cut-off

from them and their logistics.[13] The Malayan experience of husbanding together the Chinese squatters was a success, the "strategic hamlet" concept was far from a success in Vietnam; the Nagaland experiment was a partial success. Bangladesh made an attempt at such separation of tribals from the insurgents in the period 1977-1982 by establishing "collective farms" (locally called Joutha Khamar) but it did not succeed. There are many conditions necessary for such a concept to turn out successfully, e.g., overwhelming economic support to sustain the population, willingness of the population to be protected as well as to take voluntary part in protection, physical protection by barbed wire fencing (or soldiers) and a variety of checking methods.

In the period 1977 to 1982 the tribal people were not prepared to come into the jouthakhamars because they were not mentally prepared to leave their hearth and home for newer settlements, the benefits of organized cultivation and horticulture (which was a keystone of the Jouthakhamar programs) had never been demonstrated to them, they were not accustomed to bank loans/credits and their repayment, etc., which was the mode for economic assistance, and lastly, they were under motivational as well as coercive influence of the insurgents. The question of the tribals organizing themselves for voluntary defense did not come up. Since then, no large scale attempt was made to segregate tribal population for lack of the preconditions.

With the launching of a special five-year plan for CHT, a special rubber plantation cum Jhumia (meaning shifting cultivators) rehabilitation project was undertaken. Mostly landless

tribals were targeted, motivated and settled. They were given land for homestead, horticulture and rubber plantation along with well structured organizational support for technical, administrative and economic support. However, there was no direct physical protection provided, instead the assumption was that by its own lucrative appeal to tribal economy and welfare, the project would act as its own deterrent to destruction of plants/distraction of the people by the insurgents. The project has been reasonably successful. Although insurgents had access to the tribals in the rubber plantation villages, their arrival and contact could be monitored because the whole village was close knit. Through this scheme, about 1,500 tribal families have been settled and--the target being 2,300 by the end of 1990. The reasonable success of this scheme acts as an encouragement to undertake more such project--depending upon availability of funds.

Ever since nontribals or Bengalis were permitted to settle in large numbers, insurgent atrocities on them have been very frequent, leading to tribal-nontribal riots. This, in turn, led to Bangladeshi tribals fleeing to India as refugees, often being goaded as well as guided by insurgents in a planned manner. News of casualties among unarmed civilians of both tribal and nontribal groups also attract publicity in the media, much to the disadvantage of security forces. It was next to impossible to completely stop insurgent infiltration from across the border, therefore a decision was taken in early 1988 to temporarily resettle the nontribal population in cluster-villages (much in line with a national scheme of organizing landless families into cluster

villages providing them a minimum of land as well as other facilities) sharing the task of protection between security forces and "village defense parties" (who are volunteer-villagers). These arrangements are still in vogue and have removed the "target groups" from the assailant insurgents, forcing them to look for "harder" targets, i.e., security forces, which the insurgents so far have avoided.

Seeing the arrangements for the nontribals, few of the smaller tribes, i.e., the Tripuras, who for a long time have been trying to disassociate themselves from the Chakma-dominated insurgency, also moved to organize themselves into cluster villages. Limited response was shown from the government. If the level of motivation can be intensified and essential economic support provided, more tribals could be attracted to organize themselves into cluster villages or even to protect their villages "in situ." The experience in this regard brings out an old lesson that examples are better than percept and that every situation needs a solution peculiar to itself. By clustering and protecting nontribal villages, the insurgents have been dispossessed of one of their "evil tools" as would be clear from the discussion immediately following.

Insurgent Designs Relating to Nontribals and Other Issues

Under military pressure from the government, the insurgents were forced to find shelter in various places across the border inside Tripura and Mizoram. This limited their ability to organize and mobilize public opinion as well as find potential

insurgent recruits. Over a period of time the insurgents also found that they were conspicuous in a foreign land. There was a need for the insurgents to internationalize the issue. Indeed, they drew lessons from the experience of the Bangladesh War of Liberation of 1971, when approximately one million Bangladeshi had taken shelter in Indian refugee camps. The sufferings and its cause was genuine, but nonetheless it was the greatest single factor to draw international attention. Like General Grievas, who planned the insurrection in Cyprus,[13] the Shanti Bahini also made up master plans to draw international attention by capitalizing on human misery. Lastly, they wanted to project to observers the issue of nontribal settlement as the main cause of discontentment. To this end, time and again the insurgents raided nontribal villages, killing and burning people and houses. This caused riots between nontribals and tribals, at which juncture the insurgents would prod and guide them to the apparent safety of India, much as also happened in many other countries. Since then, they have cited the refugees in India as evidence of insecurity in Bangladesh and, more importantly, have used the youth in refugee camps to join the insurgency movement.

The insurgents oppose all development works in CHT so that the government is drawn into believing that the continuation of such works would weaken insurgents' base of support and thus accelerate the pace of development. Their opposition is a ruse. In actual fact, they welcome these development works because it is helping the tribal community to improve their standard of living, albeit gradually, as well as to assure the tribals a steady source

of income (indirectly assuring the insurgents themselves also of a steady income).

The other insurgent motive is to induce the deployment of more and more security forces in CHT. This they achieve by small actions at scattered places, tantalizing the security forces to be everywhere. This may look contradictory to common beliefs because the presence of more security forces causes difficulty for insurgent movement and armed activities. In this instance CHT insurgents are relying on the development of ill-feeling towards such forces and the government in the minds of tribals as their main long-term strength rather than short-term gains.

The discussion above leads to the role and use of security forces. The Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Rifles and one other paramilitary force called "Ansars" generally comprise the security forces in CHT, each having definite primary and secondary roles or tasks like protection of population and vital (or key) installations, protection at the borders to check infiltration/exfiltration of the insurgents and engaging in combat with armed insurgents. In addition, the maintenance of law and order as per the normal law of the country is routinely performed. The security forces--notably the army--represent the government to the population of remote and distant places. In the absence of organized political parties, army commanders have had to perform the difficult task of motivating and organizing conscious section of the population. In the course of performing their routine tactical tasks, security forces have run into difficulties, but in recent years have greatly improved their reputation regarding

"human rights," and their impartiality in protecting life and property of tribals/nontribals equally.[14]

A Center of Gravity Analysis

Referring to what is center of gravity, Clausewitz noted that ". . . .one must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed."[15] Clausewitz's comments related to conventional war but the concept is relevant to insurgency and counterinsurgency also. "Insurgents' leadership stresses and exploits issues which key social groups support. At the same time, it neutralizes groups supporting the government and seeks at least passive support from the society at large. The government, on the other hand, must convince key groups that its policies are reasonable, while keeping the passive support of the majority. The contest is for legitimacy. Each side seeks to demonstrate that it can govern better. . . ." But this state of contest can come about only when the insurgency is matured and advanced enough and the government control is weak. The concept can be taken one step back in the case of the CHT situation. In the case of CHT, the issue is not a contest for better government but the very right to govern. In essence, the insurgents of CHT are challenging the very right of the government of Bangladesh to administer CHT because they consider the tribals to be a separate "small nation" and they do not trust that the government of Bangladesh

can safeguard their interest within the framework of the present constitution of Bangladesh. From the viewpoint of the Bangladesh government also, the issue is two-fold--one is the demand for a autonomous province of CHT for .45 (point four five) percent of the population (occupying one-tenth of the country), and two, are the insurgents the legitimate representatives of the people of CHT? By shunning open or constitutional politics altogether, the insurgents have lost their right to represent the people. They are surviving on mixed support of the people and their support from India which is critical to their existence. From a government perspective, the essential question is will the insurgency survive if India does not harbor the insurgents in their territory and make various facilities available to them directly and indirectly. If the center of gravity can be taken to mean the greatest vulnerability of the opponent which the opponent defends with all his might, and the characteristic or feature from which he derives maximum strength, for the insurgents of CHT it is undoubtedly Indian support. For Bangladesh, legitimacy to govern is not a question because the CHT has been a part of Bangladesh from its birth, a part of Pakistan from its birth, and even before. Analysts and theorists may also suggest that the support of the people is the center of gravity for both sides. For a moment the reader's attention is drawn to our discussion of the Nagaland situation. At least once, the Nagas totally abstained from the national polls at the call of the Naga Insurgent leader, Phizo. Or, for example, in 1970 when in the then East Pakistan, 85 percent of the people voted for Awami League (who had an

autonomous East Pakistan within Pakistan as their mandate)--the people's support could have been called the center of gravity. In absence of any demonstrated overwhelming control over the population (ruling out coercion) by the insurgents, the government is not contesting for allegiance of the people but fighting to convert the passive allegiance to active cooperation. For the Bangladesh government, its strength lies in the 99.5 percent Bangali population--if the insurgents can either by persuasion or appeal or fighting convince the Bengalies to give its tribals an autonomous province in CHT, then they would most certainly be successful.

The conclusion at this stage is that the center of gravity in all insurgency and counterinsurgency may not be "legitimacy"--it could be different, i.e., external support.

ENDNOTES

1. These are like the British SAS or United States' SOF, or India's neighbor Pakistan Army's Special Services Group (SSG).

2. For discussion of "Assimilation, Mobilization and Integration," see Peter Kunstadter, pp. 39-43.

3. Ruth McVey, "Separation and the Paradoxes of the Nation State in Perspective" in Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia (Lim Joo-Jock and Vani, S., eds.), Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984, p. 12.

4. Frank Kitson, Low Intensity Operations (USA Edition), Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books; as quoted in Ian F. W. Becket and John Pimlot (eds.), Armed Forces and Modern Counterinsurgency, New York: St. Martins Press, 1985, p. 8.

5. Zillur R. Khan, "Politicization of the Bangladesh Military: A Response to Perceived Shortcomings of Civilian Government" in Asian Survey, Vol. XXI, No. 5, May 1981, pp. 553-554.

6. For example, LTG Sir Harold Briggs was appointed the first Director of Operations in Malaya in 1950 and MG (later GEN) Sir Walter Walker was appointed the first Director of Operations in Kalimantan (Malayan Borneo-Sarawak) in 1960.

7. See, for example, "Country Reports On Human Rights Practice for 1989" (Report submitted to the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, by the Department of State, February 1990, p. 1347.

8. Siddharta Chakma, p. 128. The proposals were (1) make CHT an autonomous region under the charge of a Chief Commissioner (much in line with the situation in Naga Hills before 1962); the GOC of the army division based in Chittagong to be the ex-officio Chief Commissioner. (1) To establish a separate ministry called Tribal Affairs Ministry under the Chief Commissioner. (3) All major reports about CHT to be submitted to the President of the country (to avoid bureaucratic red-tapism in decision making) and have a separate secretariat to help the President discharge this function. (4) There be an elected regional council to which the administration will be answerable.

9. Siddharta Chakma, pp. 115-117. J. B. Larma was apprehended or arrested by police from a place called Panchari in the extreme northwest of CHT on 26 October 1975. Both J. B. Larma and another important tribal leader of the Marma tribe--Chabai Mogh--were released from detention on 23 January 1979 so that they could establish liaison with the insurgents. Chabai Mogh continued to remain in overt/public life as a government servant until 1986 when he was kidnapped by the insurgents and reportedly murdered. J. B. Larma stayed in public life for about six months and then returned to his jungle hideout. J. B. Larma took over the command and control of the insurgents after his elder brother, M. N. Larma, was assassinated by a rival faction on 10 November 1983, at a place called Izara in eastern Tripura.

10. The other members, the Secretary to the government of Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, the GOC of the Division at Chittagong, the Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, and the Director General, South Asian Desk Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

11. For details of the legislation, one has to refer to the text of the relevant Acts which were published in the Bangladesh Gazette in March 1989; a summary is provided in the cover story in Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong: 23 March 1989, pp. 22, 37.

12. Siddharta Chakma, pp. 76-77. Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 71-72.

13. See, for example:

(i) LTC John J. McCuen, pp. 231-234, for an excellent discussion of the French Experience in Algeria.

(ii) Douglas S. Blaufab, "The Counter-Insurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance--1950 to the Present," New York: The Free Press, 1977, p. 103-109, for an excellent short commentry on strategic hamlets in South Vietnam.

(iii) Neal M. Lerer, "Counterinsurgency in Palestine and Malaya," in Monograph on National Security Affairs, Brown University, 1975, pp. 17-18, for a discussion on Briggs' plan and resettlement of Chinese squatters during the early years of the Malayan Emergency (1951-52).

13. Frank Kitson, Low Intensity Operations, Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1971, p. 5.

14. See, for example:

(i) "Asia Yearbook 1990," Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong: p. 83.

(ii) "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1989, Ibid, p. 1347.

(iii) "Cover Story," Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong: March 23, 1989, p. 22, 37.

15. M. Howard and P. Paret (eds. and trans.), Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 595-596.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

The Bangladesh experience in insurgency and counterinsurgency brings out a number of new lessons or findings and reinforces certain existing ones. In brief:

a. To newly independent and developing countries which are nation-states, insurgencies based on ethnicity pose a threat to their national territorial integrity rather than a threat to the form of government. For example, in CHT the insurgents are not interested in the type or nature of government at Dhaka, they are interested in forming their own government (within a federal Bangladesh) which will render Bangladesh vulnerable to losing CHT.

b. National leadership has to anticipate the future based on the behavior of its ethnic groups in the past. If the issue of Bangladeshi nationalism vis-a-vis Bengali nationalism could have been settled in 1973, then maybe the insurgency would have had a weak and delayed start, even if not forestalled completely.

c. For Bangladesh, it did little to start the insurgency, it had taken shape long before the first shot was fired, but not realized adequately.

d. Development and modernization into areas which have been socio-politically isolated for a long time should be introduced carefully over an extended time and the benefits of economic activity or industrialization need to be made visible in areas where it is taking place. If development and modernization is

introduced on the asking of underdeveloped people, it is all the better. The question of whether political reforms be undertaken first or socio-economic developments be made first, will never be answered adequately. Bangladesh experience shows that socio-economic developments and gradual political assimilation have prepared the ground for major political reforms to be implemented. If political power is granted to a socio-economically backward population, then failure of the ruling elite (for example, tribal insurgents in CHT) to implement economic development could cause the situation to deteriorate further.

d. The military is not the only answer to insurgency. The military, by "holding the ground," creates the basis for the government, through which many agencies (including the military), can hold the minds of the people.

f. An environment of open political activity is very helpful in generating political solutions of problems. In the absence of political parties and activities, the military have to take on political roles also. The military is often the most visible symbol of government. When a civil administration cannot approach the people freely because of security hazards, the military is the only representative and "eyes and ears" of the government.

g. Insurgents thrive on popular support. Popular support can be mitigated in two ways; by motivating people not to support insurgents, and by segregating them, i.e., mental and physical separation. Physical separation is a costly program and difficult to execute. Mental separation is a laborious program requiring honesty, patience, tact and time.

h. Geostrategic location has influence on insurgency. The fact that Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoran, all had insurgency should have warned the Pakistani and Bangladeshi authorities about the prospects of insurgency in CHT.

i. Geographical neighbors play or can play an important role. The cooperation of the Indian government is critical to Bangladesh's effort at countering insurgency.

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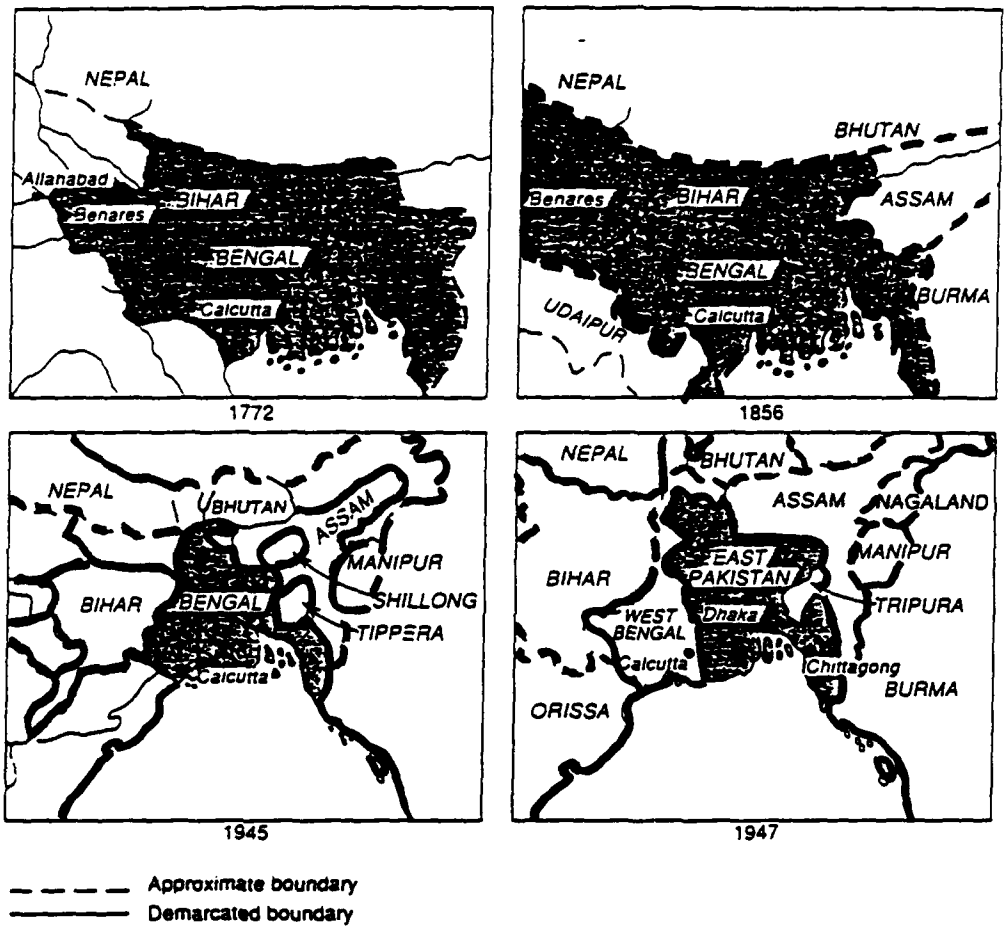
APPENDIX

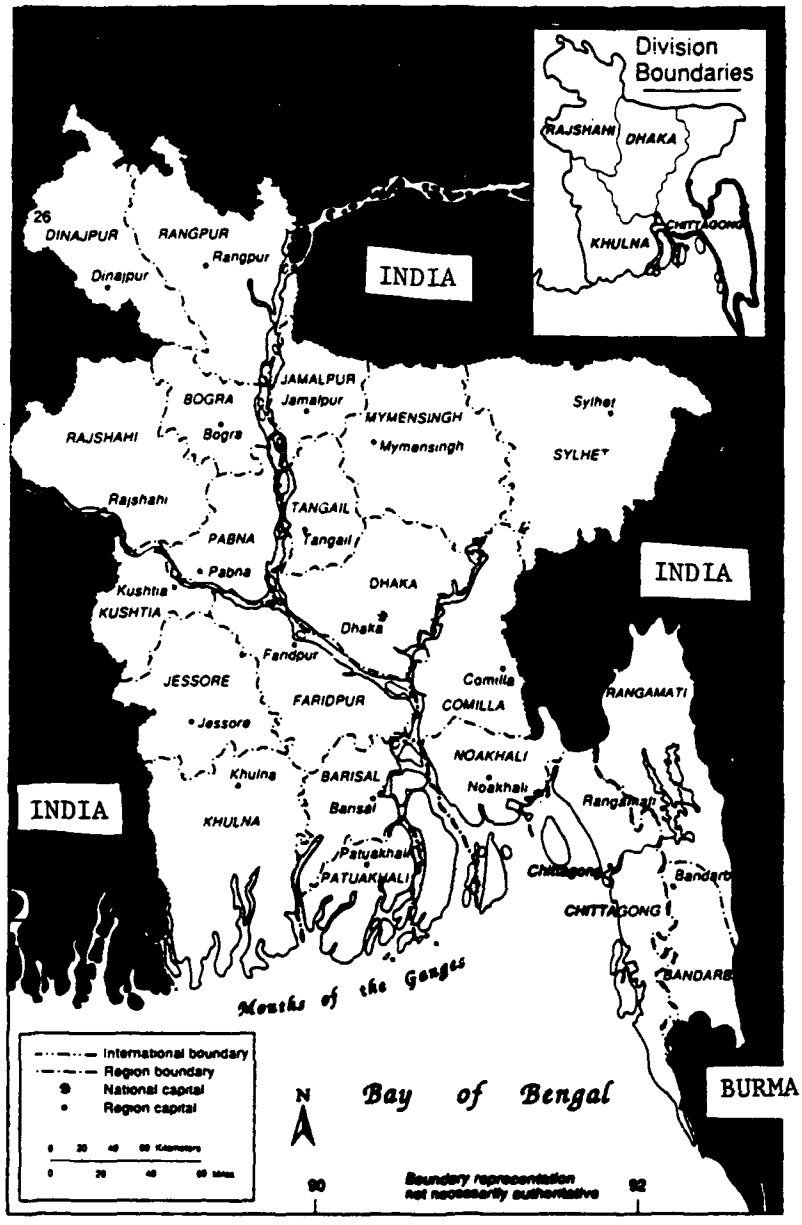
MAPS

Map 1: Historical Progression to Territorial Limits of Present Bangladesh (Bengal: 1772, 1856, 1945, and 1947)



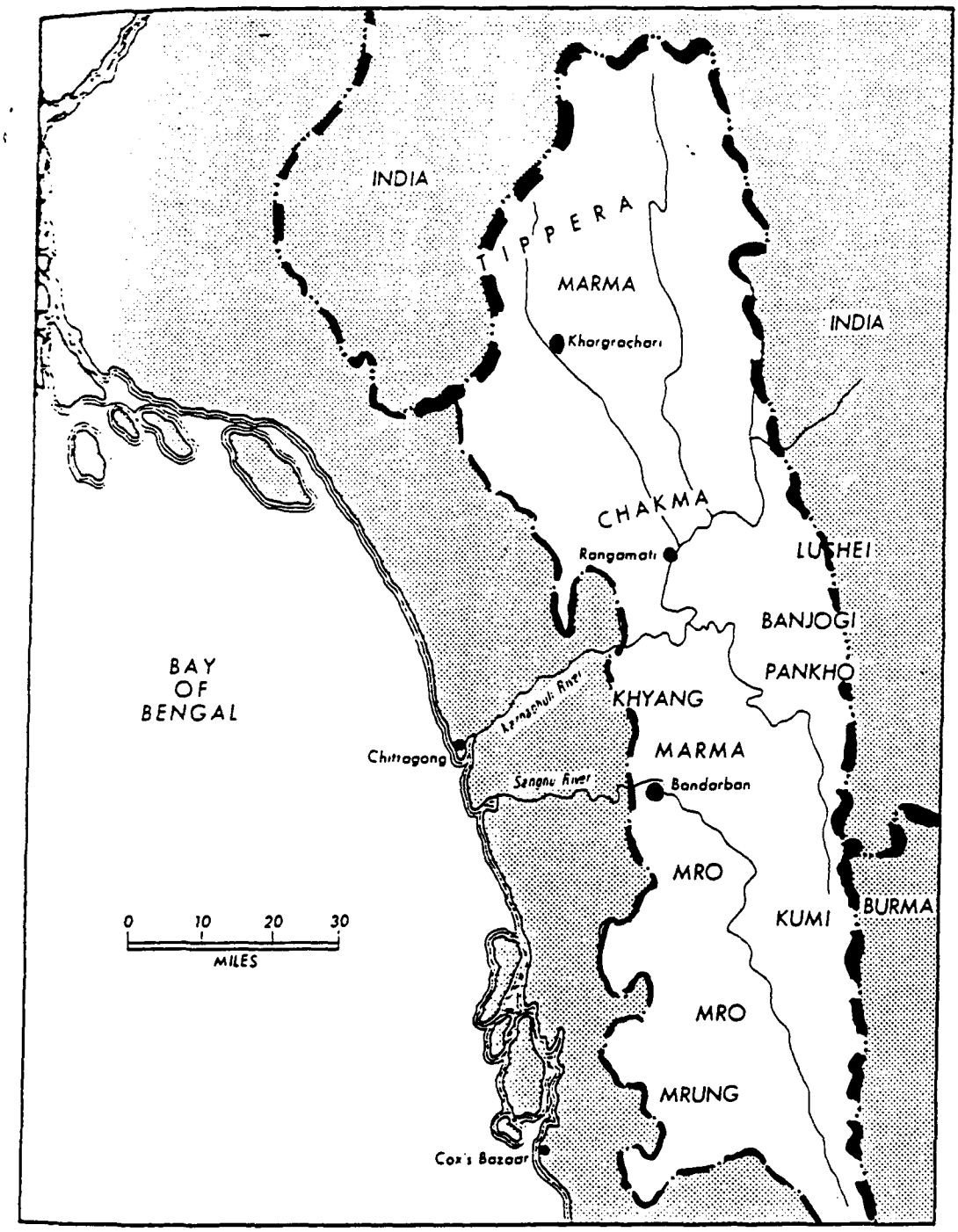
Source: Bangladesh: A Country Study, 1989.

Map 2: Administrative Map of Bangladesh, 1988



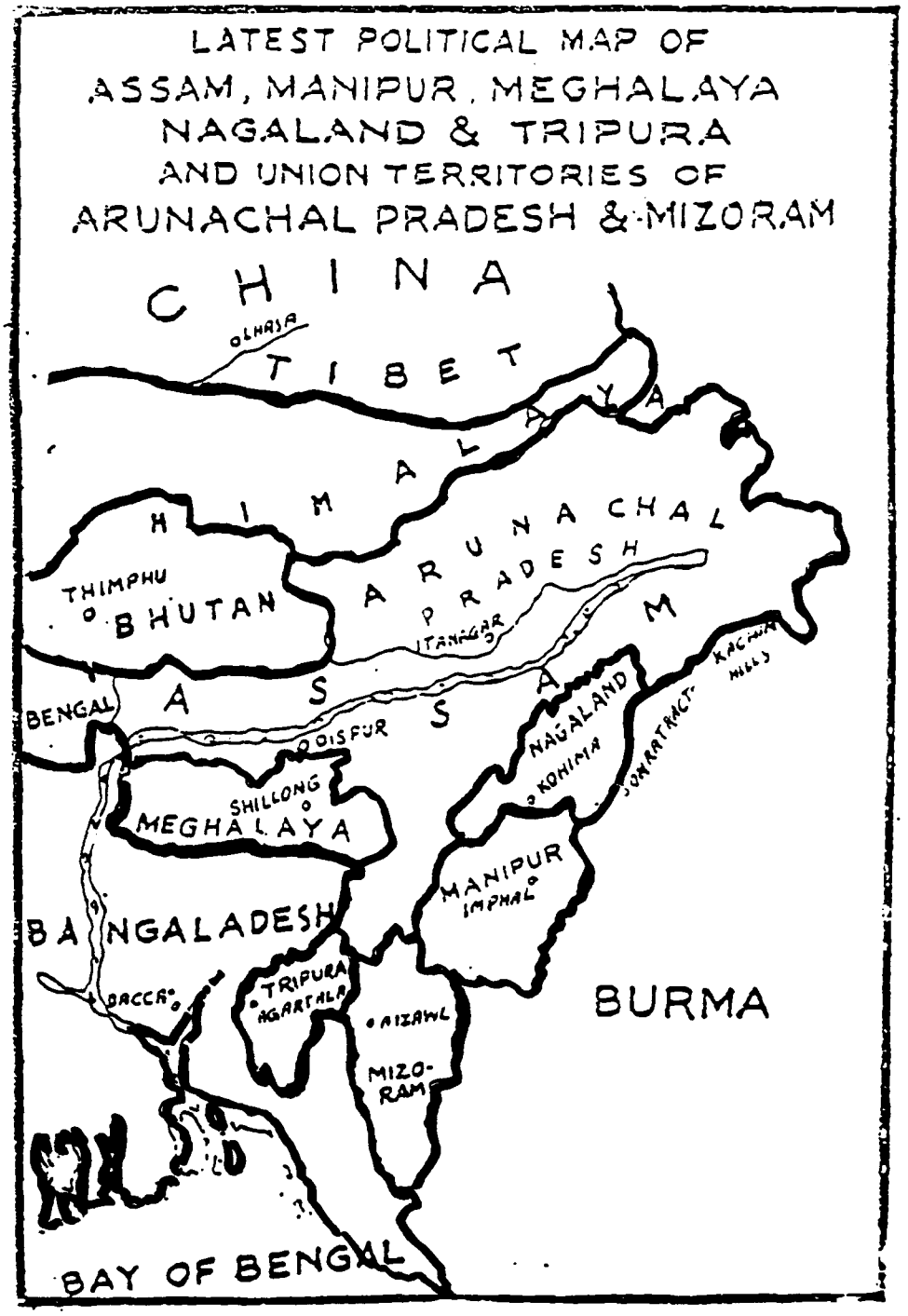
Source: Bangladesh: A Country Study, 1989.

Map 3: Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)
General Outline and Tribes



Source: Bangladesh Area Handbook, 1975.

Map 4: Northeast India Where Insurgencies Were/are Common



(Not to Scale)

Source: "Terrorism and Insurgency in India, 1990-1986" by Biswakesh Tripathy.