

# Negotiating Insurgencies The Naga Imbroglio

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## Endgame in Nagaland?

Is one witnessing the ‘endgame’ in Nagaland, the ‘withering away’ of a 50-year old insurgency? A timeframe of two years to resolve the Naga imbroglio is reported to have been arrived at during the latest round of negotiations at the highest level between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) leaders Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu in Osaka, Japan, on December 8, 2001.<sup>1</sup> The longevity of this insurgency and, more significantly, the phenomenon of persistent and high acceptable levels of violence, have made the Naga case unique among the various theatres of conflict in India. Even a cursory analysis of the Naga insurgency would indicate that certain specificities have led to consistent stalemates and consequently, to the intractability of the conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> “Solution to Naga impasse: PM, NSCN-IM set deadline in Osaka”, *The Assam Tribune*, Guwahati, December 9, 2001.

Bernard Crick, analysing the ‘high price of peace’, explored the possibility of a non-zero sum game in which all parties might gain, rather than one party’s gain automatically entailing the other’s loss.<sup>2</sup> This does not appear to be the trajectory of the cease-fire in Nagaland thus far. Each phase of negotiations has, in fact, led to the commencement of a complex confluence of factors and more critically, every abortive attempt at negotiating a durable solution to the Naga problem has tended to prejudice further negotiations, constructing greater resentment between the negotiating parties, as also a polarisation vis-à-vis the negotiating structure.

Both the Union government and the NSCN-IM have accused each other of being disinclined towards a durable solution, and have thus contributed to a negotiating framework incompatible to an early and final agreement. Effective political processes require that parties make concessions in order to hold or gain power. Yet it appears as though both the parties are adopting maximalist postures, projecting any kind of bargaining or concession as a ‘failure’ or ‘defeat’ among their respective constituencies. The NSCN-IM primarily perceives the cease-fire and negotiations as a new battle ground – a different arena of political pressure. But, for an endgame to transcend the present realm of a propaganda exercise, the NSCN-IM will have to significantly revise the concept of *Nagalim* (‘Greater Nagaland’)<sup>3</sup>. As Bowyer Bell, reflecting on the ‘concession framework’, expresses it, “everywhere the dream, however, must be adjusted, perceived

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<sup>2</sup> Crick said, “My moral is not peace at any price but the terribly high price and unpredictability of victory if it comes to winner takes it all.” See Bernard Crick, “The High Price of Peace”, in H. Gilliom and J. Graziano, eds., *The Elusive Search for Peace: South Africa, Israel and Northern Ireland*, Cape Town: Oxford university Press, 1990, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> The purported objective of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) is the establishment of a *Nagalim* (‘Greater Nagaland’), consisting of all the Naga-inhabited areas of the neighbouring States of Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and some portions of Myanmar, which it considers to be the rightful homeland of the Nagas. Slated to be an independent State, the *Nagalim* lies in the Patkai range between the 930 and 970 East longitude and 23.50 and 28.30 North latitude at the trijunction of China, India and Myanmar. The proposed *Nagalim* spreads over approximately 1,20,000 sq. km. in contrast to the present State of Nagaland that has an area of 16,527 sq. km. Source: [www.satp.org/India/nagaland/Nagalim.htm](http://www.satp.org/India/nagaland/Nagalim.htm). Also see [www.angelfire.com/mi/Nagalim/Table.html](http://www.angelfire.com/mi/Nagalim/Table.html).

differently if there is to be any negotiation. The zero-sum game must be replaced with an end-game.”<sup>4</sup> The critical point is that both the parties will have to explore new and more efficacious responses and engineer a move forward that escapes the traps of what has become the established orthodoxy.

The end game of a long-drawn-out insurgency is perhaps the most complex phase of transformation in an evidently complex process. In such a phase, conflicting parties need to avail themselves of the most appropriate process of dialogue to facilitate negotiations and also successfully negotiate a sustainable solution by constructing effective reward structures and political frameworks. The projected outcome must be one that would assuage both the parties: a potential win-win solution. In Nagaland, however, the stated positions of the two parties, thus far, have necessarily reinforced the intractability of the conflict and deepened the imbroglio.

However, while neither party is in the proximity of a possible consensus, they still deem it fit to ‘work together’ and this is certainly one positive element in the negotiations. Nevertheless, there are grave deficiencies in the present process, with both parties moving in a sphere that manifestly lacks negotiating space. Indeed, they appear discernibly to be negotiating *at* each other rather than *with* each other. The current dynamics proceeds within the parameters of what can at best be described as *low-escalation negotiations*, with an ever-present threat of renewed large scale violence. There is no emerging convergence or confluence of positions and, consequently, the process lingers on without any substantial and visible end product.

The negotiating ensemble has primarily involved recurrent extended cease-fires (see Table). These have not resulted in a cessation of violence, but appear to be acquiring the character of ends in themselves. In the long run, peace can be built only on the basis of a compromise and consequently, mutually exclusive solutions will have to be abandoned. At present, however, a negative scenario which precludes the necessary space for the transformation of the dynamics of the Naga peace process,

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<sup>4</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The Dynamics of the Armed Struggle*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998, p. 243.

prevails. 'Windows of opportunity' do not exist, or they have not been seized to further the transformation.

The Union Government has long fulfilled two of the NSCN-IM's conditionalities – talks at the highest level and outside India – but there have been no reciprocal concessions. Unless there is a clear move beyond an exclusive focus on competitive bargaining, and towards a greater degree of co-operation, the process will remain bogged down. There is, however, little evidence of any dilution of the NSCN-IM's intransigence. Unless negotiating parties co-operate to a certain degree to redefine possible solutions, exploring the negotiating ensemble to take advantage of existing windows of opportunity to remove stalemates, progress is not a possibility.<sup>5</sup>

The current negotiations can be utilised as a bargaining tool to terminate violence, but there exists an equal danger of resumption of open hostilities and an escalation of violence, with the NSCN-IM jettisoning the cease-fire and renewing its bush-war, as it has threatened to do from time to time.<sup>6</sup> In many ways, the cynicism of the question, '*Is war a safer bet than peace?*' hangs like Damocles' sword over Nagaland.

After nearly fifty years of insurgency, peace in Nagaland would admittedly be a journey into the unknown. That, in some measure, is perhaps why bargaining, concessions and trade-offs have come constantly undone in the past. There has, evidently, been a substantial loss of political control and cohesion, and a process of political reconstruction, quite naturally, will have to precede any eventual resolution of this tenacious predicament. The highest price of peace, says Crick, is likely to be the giving up of hopes of victory, a realisation of the limits of power.<sup>7</sup> How can inviolate sovereignty be kept and lost?<sup>8</sup> Bell argues that the "dream, never denied, need not be achieved whole, **at once, soon,**

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<sup>5</sup> G M Srivastava, presentation at seminar 'Addressing Conflicts in India's North east', June-25-27, 2001, New Delhi.

<sup>6</sup> "Separatist group in India's northeast threatens to resume insurgency if truce is reviewed", <http://home.nvcap.rr.com/nagaland/nnews46.html> Also see "NSCN(I-M) plans to resume war after talks with New Delhi fail", [http://www.thenewspapertoday.com/india/inside.phtml?NEWS\\_ID=23467](http://www.thenewspapertoday.com/india/inside.phtml?NEWS_ID=23467).

<sup>7</sup> Bernard Crick, "The High Price of Peace", p. \*\*.

<sup>8</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, "Ireland: The Long End game", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 21 no. 5, 1998, p. 7.

without discussion – achieved at the point of a gun. The dream, itself may have evolved – undergone a sea change underground; but most important is the perception of the rebels.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the dream must be receptive to adjustment and the dreamers’ perception must shift in ways congenial to negotiation.<sup>10</sup> Is it so in the case of *Nagalim*?

## Reward Structures

There is a discreet set of interactions which could facilitate negotiations, as freeing the negotiators and allowing them to move forward without serious harm to their perceived power bases. When parties have evidently been unable to arrive at a consensus vis-à-vis the modalities of an agreement in the existing paradigm, forward progress becomes contingent on agreements on an alternative range of options. However, who is to provide these alternate options and within what structure? Imperative in this context is the need to effectively assess the existing reward structures. The NSCN-IM has not, despite the threats, decided to back out of the cease-fire and ‘return to the jungle’ consequent upon the July 27, 2001, decision by the Union government to restrict the cease-fire to Nagaland.<sup>11</sup> Among other factors, this is primarily due to the fact that the IM realises that any jettisoning of the peace process would result in a loss or erosion of ‘legitimacy’ among certain significant sections of Naga civil society. Furthermore, the current reward structure is radically different from the pre-July 25, 1997, scenario.

There are, at present, a complex pattern of incentives and rewards for continuing violence in Nagaland, and neutralising these is not merely a matter of principle. The process of negotiations to terminate violence has expectedly been riddled with bottlenecks, and existing concessions to the NSCN-IM have proved insufficient for a durable solution to the Naga crisis. Furthermore, within the backdrop of fragmented responses and a

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<sup>9</sup> Bell, *The Dynamics of the Armed Struggle*, p. 243.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> See “Cloud lifts over North-East as Govt rolls back Naga ceasefire”, *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, July 28, 2001; “Centre’s decision unacceptable: NSCN(I-M)”, *The Hindu*, Chennai, July 31, 2001.

paradigm that is based on the fact that violence has an exponential reward structure, the negotiating dynamics are designed to fail. The process of negotiations has been complicated by insurgent groups that have appropriated attributes of crime and that circumvent the due process of law without any scruples. Substantive future enforcement action must be conceived in relation to an identification of the underlying and structurally deep aspects of the criminality of these groups, **as also the force structures that are imperviously capable of countering domains that emanate from crime.**

Any cost-benefit analysis undertaken by the Union government during the decision to revert back to *status quo ante* on the 'territorial extension of ceasefire' will plausibly have taken into account the fact that the NSCN-IM, pressurised by the Naga society's desire for peace, would be forced to continue with the peace process. Furthermore, there appears to be a certain degree of battle fatigue among the IM cadres. Many IM cadres, including senior members of the 'Naga cabinet', have gradually returned to leading normal lives ever since the cease-fire saw the security forces and the Naga outfit terminating military operations against each other.<sup>12</sup> The Union government's calculation is that, since the cadres have come overground, it may not be easy for them to go back to the hard life in the jungles and, consequently, if Muivah was to jettison the cease-fire at this stage, it would not be very easy for him to restore the original fighting strength and instinct among his cadres.<sup>13</sup> The cease-fire period has reportedly dented the fighting capability of insurgents who are more used to city life and less willing to go to the jungles.<sup>14</sup> With discipline among cadres of Naga outfits having reportedly deteriorated along with a lack of commitment to the 'cause', intelligence officials have revealed that most of the insurgent leaders have reportedly made "big money during the cease-fire period and amassed huge properties both in Nagaland and abroad... None of these leaders will be willing for the cease-fire to break and thus

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<sup>12</sup> "Govt banking on Naga pressure to prevent Muivah from shunning pact", *The Economic Times*, New Delhi, July 22, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> "'Cease-fire' in Nagaland extended BSF(G) has highlighted ominous developments", *Daily Excelsior*, Jammu, January 8, 2001.

lose everything.”<sup>15</sup> The existing reward structures, clearly, have not been engineered or created by the Union Government, and cannot, consequently, be unilaterally altered by it. They can only be altered or transformed through negotiated settlements.

The pressures for such a settlement are growing within the NSCN-IM. Muivah and Isak Swu are ageing and their younger cadres have lost the elan and fervour of jungle-hardened guerillas, preferring to creature comforts and easy money. There is evidence of several key figures in the NSCN-IM having acquired property in Meghalaya, particularly in Shillong, where many of its younger sympathisers are enrolled as students, which provides a cover for movement into Bangladesh.<sup>16</sup> In the present situation certain cadres have considerable freedom in maintaining their share of illegally acquired monies, so long as they do not deviate from the general parameters agreed upon. It is widely believed that there is a collusive relationship between underground elements, hankering after easy money and the comforts of overground life, and politicians who wish to have their own hit-men and servitors around.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, despite the fact that the cease-fire agreement between the Union government and the NSCN-IM has been in operation for the last four years, extortion by the group continues unabated in every district of Nagaland under the guise of taxes for the ‘Republic of Nagalim’.<sup>18</sup> In addition to the the NSCN-IM, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang (NSCN-K) has also adopted the system of collection of ‘taxes’ from every government employee, as also the trading community. 25 per cent of the gross salary twice a year has been fixed by the IM group as ‘tax’, while the Khaplang group has fixed 20 per cent as its share from each of the government employee and the business community depending upon their salary and income.<sup>19</sup> The collection of ‘taxes’ extends to the common citizens as well, and a

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Balwally, Darshan, May 1995, cited in B G Verghese, *India’s Northeast Resurgent: Ethnicity, Insurgency, Government, Development*, New Delhi: Konark Publishers, p. 100.

<sup>17</sup> B G Verghese, *India’s Northeast Resurgent: Ethnicity, Insurgency, Government, Development*, New Delhi: Konark Publishers, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> “No let-up in NSCN (I-M) extortions”, *Assam Tribune*, December 10, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

very high level of compliance prevails as a result of the fear that those who fail to co-operate would have to leave the State under threat of violence. Such collection of 'taxes' is a direct contravention of the Revised Ground Rules for Cease-fire between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM.<sup>20</sup>

Phunthing Shimrang, a senior NSCN-IM leader, when asked about continuing tax collections by the group despite the cease-fire said, "It's our right, ... Will the Government stop collection of taxes during the ceasefire? In 1998, every village household paid Rs 110 annually as 'house tax'. Before May 1998, the NSCN-IM also introduced a 'loyalty tax'; by paying Rs 1 lakh, businessmen became 'taxpayers'."<sup>21</sup>

The inability and disinclination on the part of the state to curb the criminal operations of the militant groups has adversely affected the peace process. As a senior officer of the intelligence organisation of Border Security Force (BSF-G) stated, "There has not been any check on flow of money to factions during 'cease-fire' period. Insurgency has become a sprawling business where no qualification is required to earn money. Different Naga outfits have been openly collecting taxes from villages, businessmen, Government officials, transporters and Government contractors in the name of national movement."<sup>22</sup> While disclosing that the

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<sup>20</sup> According to the Revised Ground Rules signed on January 13, 2001 between representatives of Government of India and the NSCN (IM), "the concern that forcible collection of money on essential supplies and intimidation of individuals including Government officials were taking place was denied by the NSCN. However, in the interest of promoting the peace process, the NSCN representatives agreed that the above activities would be prevented." For full text of the ground rules, see South Asia Terrorism Portal; Countries; India; States; Nagaland; Documents; Revised Ground Rules for Cease-fire between Government of India and NSCN-IM; [www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org). The NSCN (K) in a separate agreement with the Union government signed on May 28, 2001 also agreed to "refrain from extortions, forcible collection of money and supplies and intimidation of individuals including Government officials." See South Asia Terrorism Portal; Countries; India; States; Nagaland; Documents; Revised Ground Rules for Cease-fire between Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K); [www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org).

<sup>21</sup> "Nagas pin their hopes on talks to usher in normalcy", *India Today*, New Delhi, May 18, 1998.

<sup>22</sup> M C Mahapatra, Additional Deputy inspector General (DIG) of BSF(G), in a paper in BSF publication, *Borderman*, cited in "'Cease-fire' in Nagaland extended: BSF(G) has highlighted ominous developments", *Daily Excelsior*, Jammu, January 8, 2001.

NSCN-IM has been passing an annual budget to the tune of Rs 200 to Rs 250 million each year, he added that, closely linked with insurgency and gun-running, is the serious problem of narcotics, emerging from the 'Golden Triangle'.<sup>23</sup> Most of the militant groups, including NSCN-IM, adds the officer, utilise the money earned through the narcotics trade to purchase arms and also pay for training of their cadres in camps run by other outfits.<sup>24</sup> The cessation of operations during the cease-fire period has, according to him, made it easy for the NSCN-IM to indulge in the circulation of fake currency without being detected.<sup>25</sup>

The NSCN-IM in 1998 while issuing notices – in the name of self-styled principal secretary of the Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland (GPRN), L.B. Singh – to various banks, government departments and traders, saying that it needs funds to carry on its dialogue with the Union government, asked both Nagas and non-Nagas to contribute their mite for the interest of peace.<sup>26</sup> In July 2000, when Naga insurgent groups increased their extortion drive in the 'B' and 'C' sectors of the Assam-Nagaland border within Golaghat district, the people of Natun Raja Pukhuri, Ranipukhuri, Chetiagaon, Chandalachung and Dolipather within the Dhansiri sub-division alleged that the district administration was ineffective against the insurgents, who continued their campaign of killing, abduction and looting of non-Naga people.<sup>27</sup> According to Assam government sources, the NSCN-IM had commenced issuing extortion notices to the people residing in Upper Assam districts, which are included in the *Nagalim* map, and this was consequent to the Union government's acceptance, on June 14, 2001, of the long-standing demand of the NSCN-IM to 'territorially extend' the cease-fire to the Naga-dominated areas

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. The Golden Triangle comprises 38 million hectares of rainforest-covered mountains in Laos, Thailand and Myanmar (formerly Burma).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. The officer discloses that these outfits have established reliable contacts for arms procurement in Thailand and other South East Asian nations. And they have also well established links for transportation to Bangladesh and Myanmar.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "NSCN (IM) on fund raising spree: 94 cases of violation of ground rules reported", *Nenanews*, vol. 1, issue 28-29 December 7-December 21, 1998. GPRN is the political wing of the NSCN (IM).

<sup>27</sup> "Naga ultras step up extortion drive in border areas", *Assam Tribune*, July 31, 2000.

of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.<sup>28</sup> In July 2001, security had been put on maximum alert in the Pallel area in the Chandel district of \_\_\_\_\_ (State) in view of the extortion call issued by the NSCN-IM, and when the villagers of Kuraopkpi Tarung Louchan were threatened by the group to leave the place if they did not clear their 'tax dues'.<sup>29</sup>

Organisational longevity is largely a function of adaptability. The most durable insurgent groups are those that adjust to changing circumstances without jettisoning their support base. Such a reorientation occurs when large criminal revenues begin to accrue from secondary activities and operations of such groupings. There is growing cumulative evidence of increasing reluctance on the part of such groups to co-operate with peace initiatives, especially where these can lead to a complete termination of underground operations, when the rewards accruing to them as a result of criminal operations and the intractability of the conflict appear to be much higher than the those that may be offered by any peace settlement. Clearly, the issue of criminality assumes more potent dimensions in the context of a political authority that is sufficiently inept.

## Negotiating from strength

Many of the broad steps that need to be laid out and negotiated over time are essential ingredients of any successful and enduring structure of peace in Nagaland. Details are, of course, subject to changes – large and small – along the long road to a greater tranquillity than has been known through several rounds of peace processes. The Union government has evidently – specifically in the context of the recent cease-fire extension and rollback – done an extremely poor job of scrutinising the long-term solution to the Naga problem, and has settled on a strategy of making extreme demands on the short-term that the other constituents – detached from the negotiations – find completely

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<sup>28</sup> "Centre restricts truce extension to Nagaland", *The Deccan Herald*, Bangalore, July 28, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Each farmer was threatened to pay an annual tax of Rupees one thousand to the outfit. See "Security Alert in Pallel", *Hueiyen Lanpao News Service*, July 31, 2001, at <http://manipuronline.tripod.com/august1news.htm>.

unacceptable. Even as the June 14, 2001, agreement between the NSCN-IM and the Union government on the cease-fire extension 'without territorial limits' received approval among certain sections in Nagaland, including organisations such as the Naga Hoho, the apex tribal council, groups such as the Naga National Council-Federal (NNC-F) and the NSCN-K, the move was viewed as an intrusion upon the territorial integrity of the neighbouring States of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, leading to frayed passions and large-scale violence in those States, especially in Manipur.<sup>30</sup> The Union government was forced to review the decision of extending the cease-fire without territorial limits and it eventually ordered a roll-back to status quo ante. Given the intractability of the Naga conflict, the imperative as far as the Union government was concerned was to have ensured that its decisions would not result in *worse* injustice than the condition the insurgents oppose.<sup>31</sup>

Widespread protests in Manipur and the resultant violence may also be construed to have occurred due to the absence of an institutional apparatus and appropriate processes of containment and adaptation in the dynamics of State politics.<sup>32</sup> The proclivity to adopt *hypervigilant* decisions, while acting primarily on first information, and without considering appropriate alternatives or options, can have disastrous consequences, as was evident in the events in Manipur.<sup>33</sup> 14 persons lost their lives in large scale violence in Manipur on June 18, 2001, four days after the decision to extend the cease-fire beyond territorial limits of Nagaland,<sup>34</sup> bringing to mind Martha Crenshaw observation that

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<sup>30</sup> See South Asia Terrorism Portal; Countries; India; States; Nagaland; Assessment 2001; [www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org).

<sup>31</sup> See Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power*, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1983, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> The three-month-old Samata Party-led People's Front government was voted out on May 21, 2001 on the floor of the State Legislative Assembly with 17 members voting in favour of the confidence motion moved by the then Chief Minister Radhabinod Kojiam and 39 members opposing it. See "Kojiam voted out; Samata calls it BJP's 'final act of deceit'", *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, May 21, 2001; Also see "Manipur CM Kojiam loses trust vote", <http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/may/21mani2.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> Brad Mcrae, *Negotiating and Influencing Skills: The Art of Creating and Claiming Value*, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Shantanu Nandan Sharma, "The Naga Question: Violence and the Peace Process", *Faultlines: Writings on Conflict and Resolution*, New Delhi, vol.

“terrorism may produce further violence in a context of fragmented power.”<sup>35</sup> Unimaginative response mechanisms of the Union government towards combating insurgencies, more often than not, have a tendency to degenerate into a “destructive cycle of violence.”<sup>36</sup>

Among the most significant aspects of this dynamic is the detachment of ‘implementers’ (parties involved or the States in which the territorial extension was to have an impact) from the negotiations. Apart from the Union government and the NSCN-IM, all other concerned and affected parties are completely divorced from and ignored by the mediation process. This is crucial. Hypothetically, even if a ‘final solution’ is arrived at with the consensus of the State governments of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, it would still be immensely difficult to implement, and to reconcile the various insurgent groups operating in these areas. In the absence of such a consensus, any permanent resolution is manifestly impossible. Consequently, the inclusion of one or more additional concerned parties to the process of negotiation should be one of the early goals of the present process. Clearly, the affected State governments – or a commonly agreed upon representative – must be involved. The non-participation of the affected States cannot be justified merely on the fact that the NSCN-IM is demanding secession – something the Union government claims that it alone can handle.

In the context of the Union government’s roll back to *status quo ante* on the ‘without territorial limits’ issue, the NSCN-IM’s concept of *Nagalim* may still be in the realm of illusion. It was, however, perhaps for the first time, that the concept held *centrestage* in the discourse on the Naga insurgency. The immediate aftermath of the rollback and the current positioning of the NSCN-IM evidently gives indications of a long-term strategy. Thus, however partial the movement towards *Nagalim* may have been as a result of the developments in June 2001, and the consequent ethnic polarisation, the NSCN-IM has reason to

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10, January 2002, p. 99. Also see Pradip Phanjoubam, “Ethnicity, Identity and Conflict”, *Faultlines: Writings on Conflict and Resolution*, vol. 10, January 2002, pp. 23-35.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

regard this partial movement as a 'success'. Consequently, any increase – albeit limited – accruing to the outfit's influence over the negotiating process is 'meaningful' in the long run.<sup>37</sup> The NSCN-IM's acceptance of the roll back decision may, of course, have reduced its bargaining capacity in the short run; but it did, at the same time, demonstrate its support base, a crucial long run element. Another factor that came to the fore through this episode was the manifestation of unanimity vis-à-vis the NSCN-IM's unchallenged writ within its support constituency. Despite its *volte face*, the NSCN-IM has succeeded in increasing its power base despite an apparent 'weakening' as a result of its failure to realise its threat to 'return to the jungle'. This was substantially facilitated by the Union government's inconsistent response mechanism, reinforcing the symbolic effectiveness of *Nagalim* in the NSCN-IM constituency.

State responses are complicated and compromised further by the fact that, even as it initiates myriad forms of peace processes, certain manifestations that appear less straightforward have also emerged on the canvas [FOR EXAMPLE?]. These latent manifestations are as much a result of the proliferation of fragmented state responses as also a process of mutation of the insurgent groups' responses. This has tended to lead on to the more complex terrain of an *internal encirclement* of the negotiating framework [EXPLAIN INTERNAL ENCIRCLEMENT]. Prior to entering negotiations, the Union government ought to clearly set maximum and minimum goals, where the minimum is the very least with which it would be satisfied. The state should never compromise on this predetermined minimum. Experience, however, indicates that this is far from the case, and this is critical in view of the NSCN-IM's consistency in holding on to high demands and unwillingness to make concessions. The imbroglio over the cease-fire extension demonstrates, moreover, that *the Union government tends to compromise on its negotiating paradigm without any thought of future consequences*. This appears to reflect a consistent tendency on the part of the government to think short-range, presumably on the assumption that it is only the short range that is 'negotiable'.

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<sup>37</sup> Crenshaw, *Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power*, p. 25.

The long range, on the other hand, is regarded as being fraught with too many uncertainties, too many potential and unpredictable changes, to be properly considered.

The NSCN-IM, on the other hand, appears clearly to be visualising the long range: what will *Nagalim* be like in the future? Indeed, they appear to confront what must be a distressing possibility: Will it even *be* in the future? In drawing out alternative responses to these fundamental questions, they have demonstrated a willingness to sacrifice certain short-term gains (witness the 'agreeable' line to the Centre's decision to roll back to *status quo ante* in July 2001) on the basis of their long-term expectations, gradually pushing the idea of *Nagalim* closer to the centre stage.

This might put the Union government at a serious disadvantage in various ways, including the acceptance of the adversary's short-range concessions or apparent concessions at face value, without a proper assessment of unintended transformations in the negotiating paradigm itself. The temptation, more often than not, has been to press forward without any focus on the outcome. The necessity and pressure to reach an agreement – any agreement – becomes paramount, marginalising the qualitative elements of sustainability and durability. Long-term stability has often been sacrificed for short-term expediency, creating a tenuous ceasefire and a negotiating process that tends eventually to collapse in favour of actors who are steadfast in their goals.

Is there a 'threshold factor' that militates against the NSCN-IM's desire to hold on to its 'high ground' vis-à-vis the territoriality issue? A critical factor in this context is the *war of attrition* between the NSCN-IM and other insurgent groups operating in the so-called area of Greater Nagaland. Seven insurgent groups active in the area who oppose the 'Greater Nagaland' concept have constituted a platform called the United Liberation Front of Seven Sisters (ULFSS).<sup>38</sup> The seven groups,

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<sup>38</sup> The seven ULFSS groups are United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) of Assam, Dima Halim Daogah (DHD) of Assam, United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) of Assam, Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF) in Arunachal Pradesh, People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF). See "Joint militant forum against 'greater

while opposing the NSCN-IM's demand of 'Greater Nagaland', also decided to mobilise other insurgent groups of the region against the NSCN-IM. The United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), a front ranking insurgent outfit, has said that the NSCN-IM's claim of eight Assam districts as part of *Nagalim* has "neither credibility nor any historical basis."<sup>39</sup> Arabinda Rajkhowa, the ULFA's 'chairman', while calling upon the NSCN-IM to remove the eight Assam districts from its *Nagalim* map,<sup>40</sup> also claimed earlier that that the Naga insurgents were engaged in unauthorised entry into Assam territory, as also in the extortion of 'taxes' and the killing of people, "which the ULFA cannot tolerate."<sup>41</sup>

It is clear, consequently, that "the decision by the Union government, and the resultant exultation exhibited by the Naga bodies including the NSCN-IM, has begun to be perceived as a threat by the other terrorist outfits operating within the ambit of the proposed Nagalim."<sup>42</sup> Any 'land for peace' settlement will, therefore, perforce invite retaliation from other insurgent groups in the region. It was, in fact, the alignment of other such insurgent organisations, as also the severity of opposition in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, that influenced the NSCN (IM) recognise that opposition to the roll-back decision, at this point of time, would be counter-productive.

Substantial misgivings persist regarding the 'Naga peace process', certainly among neighbouring States, despite the Union government's assurance that the territorial integrity of Manipur would be protected and preserved.<sup>43</sup> In Manipur, there is a strong feeling that the territorial interests of the State were compromised

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Nagaland", *Nenanews*, vol. 4, issue 11-12, August 22-September 6, 2001 at [www.nenanews.com/OT%20Aug.%2022-%20Sept.6.01/oh1.htm](http://www.nenanews.com/OT%20Aug.%2022-%20Sept.6.01/oh1.htm).

<sup>39</sup> See "If referendum is required for peace in Assam, so be it", [http://www.thenewspapertoday.com/india/inside.phtml?NEWS\\_ID=22399](http://www.thenewspapertoday.com/india/inside.phtml?NEWS_ID=22399).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> "ULFA outrage over NSCN bid for Assam's Naga tracts", *Indian Express*, May 19, 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Bibhu Prasad Routray, "Naga-Cease-Fire Extension: Clash of Imagined Homelands", <http://www.ipcs.org/issues/articles/531-ne-bibhu.html>. According to him, "the comparative compulsions and the common feeling of isolation, as a result of a perceived expansionist policy of the NSCN-IM, presents a scenario when these outfits find themselves in a common forum in opposing the cease-fire."

<sup>43</sup> "Advani's assurance to North-Eastern States", *Hindu*, July 7, 2001.

by the June 2001 agreement with the NSCN-IM, and that, despite the subsequent roll-back, future negotiations and concessions would tend to impinge upon the legal and administrative jurisdiction of the State.<sup>44</sup> This sentiment is strengthened by the complex character of interdependencies between the various States in the Northeast, which creates a tendency for conflicts to overflow boundaries of particular States, and to rapidly diffuse and enmesh other States, or parts of States, in a spiral that often escalates well beyond the contours of the original intra-State conflict.

## **Broader negotiating structure**

The NSCN-IM has consistently pursued a ‘politics of exclusion’ with regard to other insurgent groups and organisations, and this has, more often than not, led to increasing fratricidal warfare. This approach has clearly been one of the significant detrimental factors to the processes of conflict resolution in Nagaland. While the group has, on the one hand, persistently demanded a ‘broadening of the structure of negotiations’ in terms of what can be placed on the table by the Government of India (GOI), it has, on the other hand, insisted on a deliberate narrowing of options through its demand that it be recognised as the ‘sole arbiter’ of all Naga interests.

The primary target of this exclusionary demand is the NSCN’s Khaplang faction. The NSCN-IM argues that the Khaplang faction cannot be included in the dialogue process by the GOI because S.S. Khaplang, a Konyak Naga, is Myanmarese by birth.<sup>45</sup> There is a curious contradiction here, since the *Nagalim* concept proposed by the NSCN-IM includes significant territories and populations in Myanmar. It is an inescapable fact, moreover, that the Khaplang group is quite active on Nagaland’s violent landscape.

The inclusion of all interests and especially of the hitherto excluded insurgent groups is, in fact, the key to a more durable

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<sup>44</sup> See Pradip Phanjoubam, “Ethnicity, Identity and Conflict”, *Faultlines: Writings on Conflict and Resolution*, vol. 10, January 2002, pp. 23-35.

<sup>45</sup> “Alienating the NSCN (I-M) will be a blunder”, *Hindustan Times*, May 16, 2001.

framework of resolution, and the absence of other parties has, in the past, created an incompleteness that undermines the possibilities of success of the peace process.<sup>46</sup>

Among the excluded groups, the NSCN-K, with the power to wreck any projected solution, will eventually have to be included in joint negotiations at one level or another. With a cease-fire with NSCN-K<sup>47</sup> in place, the next ideal step is naturally the definition of their status and circumstances of their inclusion in negotiations, irrespective of the IM group's opposition to such a development. The imperatives of such an inclusion are also linked to creating circumstances that will break through the existing stalemate and 'oil the wheels of negotiation'.<sup>48</sup>

The underlying rationale for broadening the negotiating structure is not just one among the myriad responses available to the liberal state. There are more practical justifications, as Liz Philipson expresses it in a general context, "the wider the domestic base of those involved in and committed to the settlement the harder it is to overturn and the more viable it is to sustain. Furthermore, the narrower the base of participation the greater the likelihood of any agreement requiring enforcement and intervention to coerce a settlement."<sup>49</sup> [CHECK PUNCTUATION]

Creating this 'broader base' for the negotiation, however, is not a simple matter, given the deep animosities between the IM

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<sup>46</sup> See "Naga Peace Talks: Another Setback", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Mumbai, July 31-August 6, 1999. Also at [www.epw.org.in/34-31/edit3.htm](http://www.epw.org.in/34-31/edit3.htm).

<sup>47</sup> Union Government announced a cease-fire for the first time with the NSCN-K for two months from November 15, 1998 to January 15, 1999; NSCN-K declared a unilateral cease-fire for 20 days on December 16, 1998; NSCN-K offered unilateral ceasefire for three months with effect from January 11, 1999 till April 11, 1999. The security forces also suspended operations against NSCN-K for three months effective from January 15, 1999; On April 8, 2000, NSCN-K announced a six-month long cease-fire and in response, security forces unilaterally decided to suspend operations for six months from April 16, 2000 to October 16, 2000; NSCN-K called for a formalisation of cease-fire agreement with the Union government and in response, on October 16, 2000, cease-fire with NSCN-K was extended for another six months; On April 28, 2001, for the first time, a year-long cease-fire was announced with the NSCN-K.

<sup>48</sup> Liz Philipson, "Breaking recurring themes in the cycles of war and peace in Sri Lanka", Research Paper no. 3, December 1999, The Centre for the Study of Global Governance, The London School of Economics, London, p.

<sup>49</sup> Liz Philipson,

and Khaplang factions, and the fratricidal campaigns they have carried out against each other. Thus, Muivah has described his arch rival Khaplang as a “man without discipline, involved in drug-trafficking and poppy cultivation, and willing to be utilised by the Indians.”<sup>50</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, Kitovi Zhimomi, NSCN (K) general secretary, while accusing Muivah of being a “power monger” has alleged that he is responsible for “eliminating various frontline Naga leaders... Why is Muivah masterminding the elimination of prominent Naga leaders? We don’t know what his ideology is. After all, it is easy to sit abroad and remote-control operations in Naga areas here. If we can lead our movement by remaining among our people, why can’t Muivah?”<sup>51</sup>

The NSCN (K) has clearly indicated that any solution to the Naga problem cannot be based on an agreement with the IM group alone. While pointing out that the Union government cannot ignore other groups, it has added that the Naga groups should hold talks with the GOI under a common banner. Holding forth on this aspect, Zhimomi stated that,

the NSCN-I-M led by leaders like Thuingaleng Muivah does not have the mandate of the Naga people... Unless the Naga revolutionary groups unite and hold talks with the Indian government together, there can be no political solution. And a piecemeal solution cannot restore lasting peace in the Naga areas. We have seen the ceasefire between New Delhi and the NSCN-IM for the past four years. The problems have continued.”<sup>52</sup> Criticising the negating tactics of the IM group, he observed that “ in keeping with the people’s desire, we have sent feelers to the NSCN (I-M) a number of times for a general ceasefire between our two groups. But, there has always been a negative response from Muivah. Our doors are, however, open for a broad-based truce as well as a possible unification by adopting the principle of forgive

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<sup>50</sup> Muivah quoted in Verghese, *India’s Northeast Resurgent*, p. 100.

<sup>51</sup> Wasbir Hussain, “Deal with NSCN (I-M) alone is no solution: Khaplang faction”, September 3, 2001, [www.thenewspapertoday.com](http://www.thenewspapertoday.com).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

and forget as initiated by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council.<sup>53</sup>

By contrast, Muivah rejects all such moves by the Khaplang faction, claiming that the NSCN-K has betrayed to Naga cause and that “they have accepted the Indian Constitution”.<sup>54</sup>

Evidently, the number of parties to be involved in the process of negotiations has been and remains a contentious issue. The NSCN-IM antipathy to participation by the Khaplang group is not only driven by a fratricidal history. The IM faction has long struggled to safeguard its status as the *sole arbiter* of the ‘Naga destiny’. Indeed, the IM group regards the possibility of the involvement of the Khaplang faction as a potential move that could actually *block* the ongoing peace process. Any move to broaden the base of negotiations by involving other parties is similarly interpreted by the IM group as an attempt by the GOI to dilute the NSCN-IM’s influence among the Naga people, and Muivah has made this clear on several occasions, arguing that “if you say that you will talk to us, then you have to honour it. Apart from that, if you take initiative to talk with anyone else we will not be party to that.”<sup>55</sup>

Thus, there emerges a web of complexity. One of the negotiating parties is not considered (both by Union government and even by certain sections of Naga civil society) as a single unified group, but as being comprised of at least four groups **IDENTIFY THE GROUPS IN TEXT OR FOOTNOTE** riven with mutual conflicts. This internal dissonance has particular significance for the demands for self-determination and secession. Clearly, the GOI’s interest and intent would be to dilute or preempt the insurgents’ stance on secession, and this is one possible motive for a broader negotiating structure in terms of the parties involved, since other parties may not subscribe, or may not be as committed, to the idea of self-determination. Here, while the fratricidal divisions between the groups may assist the government to the extent that they undermine the NSCN-IM’s

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Question of claiming territories doesn’t arise: Muivah”, [www.rediff.com/news/2001/jun/25naga.htm](http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/jun/25naga.htm).

<sup>55</sup> “Uncertainty looms large over Naga peace talks”, [www.axom.faithweb.com/news/oct1.html](http://www.axom.faithweb.com/news/oct1.html).

negotiating strengths, they also undermine the efforts and attempts to create the basis of a wider consensus between the various Naga interests. Feuds between the two principal Naga insurgent factions, consequently, continue to be a gray area for the negotiating process.

Is there a possible compromise formula that could unite the various groups? Or is it the case that the idea that is actually being tested is the isolation of the NSCN-IM by facilitating a measure of unity among all the groupings that oppose this faction? It is very clear that the NSCN-IM perceives the Khaplang group as a *spoiler*, and the GOI's gameplan can be understood and explained in terms of the Khaplang group being positioned as an effective counterweight to the IM. This can also be construed as the initiation of a process of 'competitive negotiation', through which the existing polarisation vis-à-vis the negotiations may gradually be dissolved.

None of these processes, however, appear to have strong probabilities of a forward movement unless the NSCN-IM shows some signs of diluting its consistently held position that questions the inclusion of Nagaland as part of the Indian Union, and rejects the framework of the Indian Constitution as an acceptable context of resolution. It is difficult, under these circumstances, to visualise how a semblance of unity can be induced within the other pole, or how a constructive dynamic can be evolved within the existing structures of negotiation.

Another aspect of the negotiating process that requires attention is the need to maintain a balance between certainty and uncertainty. Guarantees of post-conflict survival are necessary for the negotiating parties if later defection from the negotiated settlement are to be discouraged. For the NSCN-IM to maintain the allegiance of its cadres after a negotiated settlement, it must secure certain measurable rewards, including prisoner release and a dismantling of the existing security apparatus. These rewards are rarely immediate, and there is always a risk that the pendulum may swing back towards insurgent activities. There is, thus, a delicate problem of balance in the negotiating ensemble: How can cohesion among the various factions be increased without, at the same time, destabilizing levels of cohesion within the dominant groups – either through radical increase or decrease – to an extent

that would undermine the objectives of a broadened negotiating framework. It is significant, within this context, that the incentive to co-operate is, more often than not, out weighed by the incentive to defect. Both the parties – and elements within each – have chosen at times to defect rather than cooperate.

The endeavour to involve other groups is construed by the NSCN-IM as the Union government's plan to split the Naga secessionist movement, and the IM group has consistently held that the Khaplang faction is a surrogate of, and is propped up by the S.C. Jamir regime in Nagaland. It is, however, also a truism that, after decades of incessant violence, it would be impractical to expect that an agreement with a single group could terminate the intractable Naga conflict.

One positive development in this context is the increasing popular support for a political settlement and a final end to the politics of violence which may prove to be a very critical input towards ending the insurgency. Indeed, juxtaposing the NSCN-IM's perception of a divisive GOI policy against the rising popular mandate for peace, Major General R.N. Kapur notes that "if you involve more people in the talks, you are uniting, not dividing...therefore the apprehension of some people that the Centre is trying to derail the peace process by inviting the Khaplang faction to the negotiating table is unfounded."<sup>56</sup> This view is reinforced by chief Minister S.C. Jamir's argument that a meaningful peace process would have to include a cease-fire, not only between the Union government and NSCN-IM and other outfits, but also between the insurgent groups themselves. Reflecting on a 'real cease-fire', Jamir opines that meaningful talks between the Union government and insurgent groups can be possible only if all parties are involved – and this must not only include the insurgent groups but other significant political players in the State.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, the absence of the State government is one of the inexplicable elements of the current peace process. It is clear, however, that unity among the various insurgent groups is the minimum, though not sufficient, condition for the success of

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<sup>56</sup> "Fighting table: Muivah faction against involving Khaplang in talks", *The Week*, Kochi, May 13, 2001.

Also see [www.the-week.com/21may13/events3.htm](http://www.the-week.com/21may13/events3.htm).

<sup>57</sup>

any proposed solution to the conflict. Jamir is emphatic on this, insisting that negotiations with one faction cannot lead to a lasting solution, as any single faction alone cannot determine the destiny of the Naga people. Officials involved in the negotiations have also claimed that if the two NSCN factions ‘come together’, a peace agreement would be easier to accept and implement.<sup>58</sup> One senior official is reported to have stated that “we have a generous negotiating brief from the PM. Short of sovereignty and some key departments with the Centre, everything else is on the negotiating table.”<sup>59</sup>

The involvement of all the parties in negotiations has, however, remained a theoretical exercise in Nagaland thus far. The NSCN-IM, on many occasions, has stated that it does not regard either the Khaplang faction or the NNC as ‘freedom fighters’.<sup>60</sup> The IM has asked for an apology from Khaplang for ‘the mistakes he committed’ and also demanded that it must accept the leadership of Isak Swu and Muivah.<sup>61</sup> The NSCN-K at the other end, has said that it did not recognise the word *Nagalim* as coined by the IM.<sup>62</sup> Kughalu Mulatonu, a senior leader of the Khaplang group, has indicated that Muivah’s stance of withdrawing from the ongoing peace process if the Union government initiated talks with the NSCN-K, was sufficient evidence that he was “neither willing to unite the Nagas or represent the Nagas.”<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, V. Horam, a senior leader of the IM faction, reflecting on the IM’s antipathy towards Khaplang, stated, “the Khaplang faction should sit on the Indian side during negotiations... Khaplang was expelled from the NSCN for anti-national activities. There is one Naga nation, one sovereignty and we represent the Nagas.”<sup>64</sup> On the NNC Federal, another of the Naga factions, Horam adds: “Their representative unconditionally

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<sup>58</sup> “After 33 years, Naga rebel bosses return”, *Indian Express*, May 15, 1999.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> “NSCN (IM)’s rigidity a spanner in peace process”, *Nenanews*, vol. 2, issue 5-6, June 7-June 21, 1999.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> “NSCN(K) objects to Nagalim nomenclature”, *Imphal Free Press*, Imphal, October 20, 2000.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> “Fighting table: Muivah faction against involving Khaplang in talks”, *Week*, May 13, 2001. Also see [www.the-week.com/21may13/events3.htm](http://www.the-week.com/21may13/events3.htm).

accepted the Indian Constitution through the Shillong Accord of 1975... since then they have stopped resisting the Indian occupation of Nagalim.”<sup>65</sup>

Truce overtures made by the Khaplang group have not met with any effective response from the IM faction. In fact, the NSCN-K leadership has even expressed willingness to guarantee the safety of Muivah and Isaak Chisi Swu, IM leaders, “should they wish to return to the Naga Hills and assess the wishes of the people with regard to a long-term settlement of the Naga problem.”<sup>66</sup>

In an attempt to further consolidate the Naga peace process, the NSCN-K, on December 18, 2001, while offering a month-long ceasefire to the IM, also announced suspension of military operations during this period.<sup>67</sup> NSCN-K general secretary Kitovi Zhimomi said, “with the fullest acknowledgement of prime aspirations of the Nagas and implementing the sacred code of unity and peace [we] hereby declare a ceasefire amongst warring Naga brothers for a period of 30 days effective from December 19.”<sup>68</sup> However, the trajectory of Naga peace process thus far has been incompatible with the aspiration for unity among the various groups.<sup>69</sup> Cease-fires have not been able to terminate internecine killings, and these have contributed to a large extent in undoing peace agreements. The pattern reflects John Darby’s observation that, “even when political violence is ended by a cease-fire, it

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Kitovi Zhimoni, general secretary of the NSCN-K, declared in November 2001 that Muivah and Swu “should come to Nagaland. We will not harm the leaders, we will not commit the same crime as against Daly Mongro.” Mongro, a top Khaplang faction leader was killed allegedly by the IM group in year 2000. See “Khaplang’s Nagas want to smoke peace pipe”, *Indian Express*, November 5, 2001.

<sup>67</sup> “NSCN(K) offers month-long truce to rivals”, *Assam Tribune*, December 19, 2001.

<sup>68</sup> See “NSCN (K) offers truce to rivals”, <http://www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=9.9.191201.dec01>.

<sup>69</sup> Clannish divisions among the Nagas (Konyaks and Tangkhuls) resulted in the split of the NSCN in 1988. The Konyaks formed the NSCN-K (Khaplang) under the leadership of Khole Konyak and S S Khaplang. The Tangkhul faction, the NSCN-IM (Isak-Muivah), was led by Isak Swu and T. Muivah. The two groups are now violently opposed, and there have been a number of clashes, the worst of which occurred in April 1988, when NSCN-K cadres reportedly attacked the ‘General Headquarters’ of the IM faction and killed over a hundred cadres.

reappears in other forms to threaten the evolving peace process.”<sup>70</sup> Fratricidal or schismatic violence<sup>71</sup> is seen as being, more often than not, more avidly pursued than the ‘struggle for Nagalim’. The NSCN cadres have been more determined to kill their own rather than encounter the ‘avowed enemy’, “for their own can betray the dream while the enemy can only destroy the dreamer.”<sup>72</sup>

Past efforts towards uniting the two dominant factions on the Naga landscape have, consequently, failed. Appeals from the Naga Hoho, the Church and other civil society groups have never been reciprocated by the two groups. Indeed, a unique aspect of the Naga insurgency since the cease-fires with the groups began has been that “armed confrontation and clashes are not between the Indian army and the insurgents but among the different Naga groups... Extortions of professionals, government officials and businessmen by all sides has left a very unpleasant taste in the mouths of many Nagas who want to live in peace, without harassment either from the security forces or the militants.”<sup>73</sup> Reflecting on the frozen nature of the peace process, Niketu Iralu, one of the leading Naga thinkers said,

We are struck in a logjam, largely of our own making. No amount of complaining about Delhi will help...we have to deal with our logjam, that is, the inter-tribal or inter-factional rivalry or distrust, which has not been addressed. They were there originally even before the

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<sup>70</sup> John Darby, “The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes”, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/catalog/violence.html>.

<sup>71</sup> As per the Nagaland police, during the period of cease-fire since August 1, 1997 to March 22, 2000, total number of persons killed in factional fights are 317. The break up of 317 persons killed of various factions is: NSCN (IM) – 61, NSCN (K) –133, NNC/NFG –22, Civilian- 65, Government Servant –12, Police –3, SF/PMF –13 and unidentified –8. See Dinesh Kotwal, “The Naga Insurgency: The Past And The Future”, *Strategic Analysis*, New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, vol. XXIV no. 4, July 2000, p. 772; According to media reports on July 26, 2000, during the three-year-long ceasefire till then, at least 536 deaths were reported and 165 of them were killed in clashes between various insurgent groups, primarily between the IM and Khaplang factions. The IM justified its action against members of other groups by saying that the cease-fire was only with security forces. See “NSCN for extension of ceasefire”, *The Statesman*, Kolkata, July 26, 2000.

<sup>72</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The Dynamics of the Armed Struggle*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998, p. 52.

<sup>73</sup> “Suicidal fights”, *Indian Express*, April 14, 2000.

Naga struggle started. But that was just human frailty. However, with the complications of our political struggle, it became very destructive because, I believe, who'll control the struggle became the strongest issue... the so-called struggle for the Naga people and the talks with Delhi brought nothing. Because when you've frozen hearts against one another how can good politics come out? That's where the logjam is.<sup>74</sup>

Both parties, insistent on their stated positions, are currently boxed into a zero-sum definition of the problem. Within this paradigm, the demands of one can only be satisfied at the expense of the other,<sup>75</sup> and there is a distinct absence of options that hold the promise of mutual gain. The parties have been involved in negotiations for years now, and they have become entrenched in their respective positions. Adding to the complexity is the high levels of mistrust and the generation of emotional baggage, primarily due to historical reasons and the continuing incidence of violence. As one analyst expresses it, "as long as the gunman is tolerated, has a role and a clearly defined mission, and emerges from history, there is prospect of violence; and for a generation the violence has continued."<sup>76</sup>

The more hard-line "take it or leave it" approach has more often than not blocked any consequential movement towards a durable solution to the Naga imbroglio. In response to the Prime Minister's invitation to the NSCN-IM leaders to hold the next round of confabulations in India, Muivah replied, "...if you want us to come to Delhi, we told them you have to pave the way. We told them there are so many obstacles like warrants of arrest and also NSCN continues to be a proscribed organisation. How could we go back to India?"<sup>77</sup> All past concessions by GOI have secured

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<sup>74</sup> "Frozen hearts produce dangerous politics", *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, November 12, 2000.

<sup>75</sup> Herbert C. Kelman, "Interactive Problem Solving: The Uses and Limits of a Therapeutic Model for the Resolution of International Conflicts" in Vamik Volkan, Demetrios A. Julius and Joseph V. Montville, eds., *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Tools of Unofficial Diplomacy*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991, p. 157.

<sup>76</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, "Ireland: The Long End game", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 21 no. 5, 1998, p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> See Deepak Dewan's interview with Muivah, "Vajpayee invites Isak-Muivah to Delhi", *North East Sun*, New Delhi, January 15-31, 2002, p. 6.

only strategic manoeuvres on the part of the NSCN-IM, and this approach – bordering on adversarial tactics – has created little room for a compromise on the core issues at stake. Such an approach creates possibilities only of capitulation or a complete rejection of the available options.<sup>78</sup> The Union government has also, on many occasions sought to entrench itself in such ‘lock in’ arenas, where the only possibilities of an eventual compromise involve a critical loss of credibility, leading ultimately to what Roy Lewicki referred to as a “perpetual distortion in negotiation”.<sup>79</sup>

The peace process in its current form has been a game in which none of the parties can really win or lose, and the result is that the Nagas are caught in an unacceptable cycle of high levels of violence.<sup>80</sup> The pyrrhic war between the two factions and the unending process of negotiation-without-solution has created self-fulfilling expectations of persisting violence.

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<sup>78</sup> The incidents in June 2001 regarding the extension of cease-fire is an example of such capitulation or rejection.

<sup>79</sup> See Roy J. Lewicki, et al., *Essentials of Negotiations*, Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin 1997, pp. 135-38.

<sup>80</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, “Ireland: The Long End game”, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 21 no. 5, 1998, p. 22.