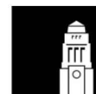
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Counterinsurgents' use of force and "armed orders" in Naga Northeast India

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Recent works have highlighted deeply political variations in Indian counterinsurgency across space and time, leading to the emergence of a diversity of "armed orders" ranging from outright clashes to openly cooperative state-insurgent relationships. However, we know little about how variations in counterinsurgency strategy, particularly in the levels of force employed, shape the functioning of these armed orders. Drawing on original case study evidence from the Naga insurgency, this article builds on existing works on state-insurgent orders by developing a typology of variations in the use of force, accounting for counterinsurgents' use of force to undermine, modify and uphold a patchwork of complex and fragile state-insurgent orders across space and time in India's Naga conflict. In doing so, it contributes to debates on the use of force in counterinsurgency and the study of order in conflict in India's Northeast.

Keywords: counterinsurgency, India, armed orders, Naga insurgency, Nagaland

Introduction

The dominant narrative underpinning accounts of India's rich post-Independence history of countering insurgencies is that its experience amounts to a fairly consistent "Indian way" of doing so. Underpinned by the ethos of an "iron fist in a velvet glove," this body of literature holds that minimum force has been employed to facilitate the co-option of moderates into mainstream politics, with "overwhelming force" used to combat "hardcore inimical elements."[2] Recent works have probed this narrative of consistency to reveal a much more varied and deeply political picture in which Delhi's divergent threat perceptions of ethno-

religious and ethno-linguistic separatists – a product of the political and constitutional legacies of Partition – shapes variations in Indian COIN strategy. In Jammu and Kashmir, ethno-religious insurgents are perceived as a direct threat, warranting unrelenting crackdowns and affording minimal space for negotiation.[3]

In peripheral areas such as the Northeast, however, lower threat perceptions of the tribal insurgencies in the region have allowed for the creation of a variety of what Paul Staniland labels "armed orders" – varying degrees of state-insurgent relationship ranging from outright hostilities to forms of containment, cooperation and incorporation – that would be considered "unthinkable" in Jammu and Kashmir.[4] The diversity of these orders in the Northeast and the varying degrees of violence contained within them implies that further degrees of variation in the patterns of counterinsurgency exist. We know little about these variations in COIN approaches and how they influence – and are influenced by – the political dynamics of these armed orders.

This article therefore argues that we need to locate the use of force in the politics of these orders. I propose a typology that building directly on Paul Staniland's codification of "armed orders" within India's COIN campaign in Naga Northeast India, outlines four broad patterns of "order" and the dynamics shaping the state's use of force in relation to these orders. The typology posits that counterinsurgents use force to *undermine*, *modify* and *uphold* order, contingent upon the interplay between internal political dynamics and threat perceptions, and the external dynamics of the insurgency environment.

This typology allows us to account for variations in the use of force across multiple forms of state-insurgent order in Naga-inhabited Northeast India. Within each, counterinsurgents, rather than implementing a consistent, centrally-designed approach, have faced a range of considerations that have shaped variations in the use of force. In each of the four scenarios of

state-insurgent order, the state's internal political considerations and threat perceptions have interacted with the external agency of societal and insurgent actors, in environments of high uncertainty and incomplete knowledge, to compel and shape variations in state response and the use of force. By connecting the use of force to the evolving political considerations driving state-insurgent relationships, the typology offers a novel way with which to understand variations in the use of force. It also demonstrates the dual role force plays in shaping – and being shaped by – these armed orders, highlighting the utility of integrating studies of COIN processes within the framework of "armed orders."

The typology is illustrated through a discussion of India's longest-running COIN campaign against the Naga insurgency in its Northeast. The Naga case is in many ways unique given its longevity, but offers a rich tapestry of evolving state-insurgent relationships across which patterns in the use of force can be mapped. Across sixty years of conflict in the region, Staniland maps significant in-case variations in the character of "armed orders" over time.[5] During the early stages of the insurgency, largely coded as "hostilities" by Staniland, the use of force sought to undermine order, when the Naga National Council (NNC) was at its most powerful and the Indian state at its most vulnerable. Yet as the immediate threat of disintegration subsided and the Indian state became embroiled in political crises and insurgencies in high priority regions, the late 1970s and 1980s saw a comparative degree of restraint from COIN forces, despite the continuation of "hostilities," and the emergence of a new, more powerful insurgent organization – the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). This was followed by a brief spike in violence during the 1990s as the Indian state sought to bring recalcitrant insurgents to the negotiating table. As the insurgent movements entered into sustained peace processes (Staniland's order of "limited cooperation") from the late 1990s onwards, state-insurgent order has increasingly become territorially fragmented as a result of complex federal politics and insurgent attempts to attain local leverage. In this

context, counterinsurgents have employed varying degrees of force as part of a complex process of modifying and upholding these tense, fragile orders.

Existing works have warned that COIN should not be conflated with state monopolization, but instead as a series of politically-motivated strategies of "violence management" ranging from aggressive state "Monopolisation," more restrained forms of "Containment," "Favoritism" through bargaining with cooperative groups and the "Purging" of former allies. These broad strategies can be identified over time and mapped onto armed orders (see Table One).[6] Doing so implies that the politics shaping these orders influences variations in the levels of force employed as counterinsurgents attempt to undermine, modify or uphold these orders, a dynamic that is not captured in the "violence management" approach. This makes the case an illustrative, if extreme, example of fluctuating armed orders that challenges conventional explanations of a consistent COIN strategy in the region. The Naga case therefore constitutes an ideal laboratory for further refining political approaches to variations in COIN by detailing the relationship between counterinsurgents' use of force and the emergence, maintenance and collapse of armed orders in the region. Building on and refining these existing insights using in-depth process tracing across time and space and within-case comparisons allows us to explore fluctuations in the use of force within the case study across different state-insurgent orders, allowing for the development of a typology that incorporates internal and external influences shaping these variations.[7]

[Insert Table One Here]

The article begins by reviewing the utility of Staniland's notion of "armed orders" as a foundational tool with which to explore fluctuations in violence.[8] Using a four-fold typology charting the evolution of state-insurgent orders, the article then illustrates identifiable shifts in micro-level patterns of counterinsurgency in relation to these armed orders over time. By

locating these variations in the context of the state-insurgent orders in which force is employed, the article further refines existing approaches to counterinsurgency across armed orders and highlights important implications for the study of the utility of force as an instrument of COIN.

"Armed Politics" and Counterinsurgency Variation

Much of the academic and policy literature on Indian COIN holds that New Delhi has adopted a broadly consistent approach to insurgencies since Independence. This literature can be broadly divided into two groups. On one side of this divide lie COIN and military affairs scholars. Most of these tend to acknowledge that, whether in the form of formal doctrine, grand strategy or broad operational patterns and principles,[9] a consistent Indian "way" of COIN exists,[10] often referred to as a strategy of an "iron fist in a velvet glove."[11] This body of literature argues that Indian COIN has been consistently underpinned by the use of "minimum force" tactics against misguided indigenous insurgents to afford the space for rehabilitation into the mainstream.[12]

Although India has rarely employed heavy weapons against insurgents[13] – a unique distinction compared with other counterinsurgents worldwide – the "quantum and intensity of [adherence to] minimum force," as one former Chief of Army Staff recommended, has been closely related to "operational necessity [..] to be decided by the commander on the spot."[14] Indeed, its 2006 doctrine recommends that although "minimum force" constitutes the guiding overall principle, "overwhelming force" should be employed against "foreign and hardcore terrorists."[15] This implies that a degree of ground-level judgement is required to determine whether an insurgent is "foreign" or "indigenous," or indeed "hardcore" or "misguided." The doctrine furthermore divides COIN operations into two phases, each with their own recommendations for the levels of force to be used but without clear indicators of how or

when the shift between the two is warranted. The first of these phases involves the "maximum application of attrition warfare" in which the "elimination of terrorists" is prioritized, followed by a "manoeuvre" phase underpinned by minimum force, rehabilitation and political solution.[16] This malleability reflects a recognition of situational nuances and their need for interpretation, indicating the possibility of significant variations in the use of force in COIN that are frequently overlooked in accounts of the "iron fist in a velvet glove" approach.

A contending body of literature focuses predominantly on the military's record of human rights abuses and acts such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which afford legal protection to the Army's use of force in insurgency-affected areas.[17] This literature seeks to highlight contradictions in the "iron fist, velvet glove" narrative but presents a similarly consistent picture instead focused on exposing abuses rather than exploring patterns in Indian counterinsurgents' use of force across space and time. We therefore need to re-situate the use of force in its political context, taking into account the internal politics of counterinsurgents themselves and the politics of the environment within which they are operating.[18]

A number of works on COIN and conflict management policy in India have recognized the role local or national politics plays in generating politically-informed threat perceptions that shape the intensity and vigor of macro-level state responses.[19] These insights have been built on by the recent emergence of studies of order in conflict. Typically defined as the existence of predictable behaviors and practices underpinned by an "agreed set of rules,"[20] exploring the rules and patterns shaping order can tell us a great deal about the functioning of power relations within society. Studies of order within conflict challenged the widely-held understanding that conflict and violence were synonymous with disorder by suggesting that

formal rules or informal understandings can exist within conflict settings to provide a semblance of "order" governing relations of conflict and cooperation between counterinsurgents, insurgents and civilians.[21] Studies of rebel governance have highlighted that rebels can employ violence to shape or maintain orders predicated on different degrees of rebel-civilian collaboration,[22] but in doing so run the risk of destroying the foundations of those orders if they do not understand the form of order effectively enough.[23]

Paul Staniland builds on this concept of order by outlining a typology of "armed orders," or patterns of state-insurgent interactions shaped to varying degrees by formal or informal rules. These "armed orders" include varying degrees of "hostilities," informal or "limited cooperation," and tighter forms of "alliance" between conflict parties.[24] Each of these orders may involve formal or informal rules governing the management of violence. Applying this to COIN strategy, Staniland highlights four broad strategies of "violence management" that counterinsurgents have employed to deal with insurgencies, contingent on the political interests and capacities of states and their opponents. "Favoritism" refers to tenuously frozen conflicts with limitations governing the use of force, while strategies of "monopolization" meanwhile constitute aggressive statebuilding campaigns that, in challenging the existing order, bring with them high levels of violence. "Containment" strategies involve "repress[ing] armed groups below an acceptable threshold of violence," while "purging" strategies target formerly allied pro-state militias.[25] The strategies adopted, he argues, are contingent upon states' political calculations, but crucially also emerge based on a dynamic interaction with the agency and interests of insurgents themselves.

This approach, while making clear and important steps towards re-situating the use of force in the politics of the state practicing COIN, focuses on broad strategy and does not delve into the specific ways in which the use of force actually shapes these orders. Staniland's strategy

of state "monopolization" for instance implies that state-insurgent relations are characterized by contestation, but leaves open how the use of force is employed within this strategy to deal with varying degrees of insurgent entrenchment and counter-violence. "Favoritism" and "containment" both imply that some limits are placed on the use of force, highlighting the existence of a "fascinating liminal space" of contestation and negotiation,[26] but do not tell us how counterinsurgents employ force within this space to police, probe or obtain leverage to shape these orders in their favor.

This paper therefore builds on this existing research by presenting a typology highlighting how variations in the use of force occur as counterinsurgents attempt to shape, and are shaped by, dynamics of order. I do this by situating COIN in relation to the forms of order in which force is employed, indicating that counterinsurgents have used force to undermine, modify and uphold particular forms of order. Each of these point to the existence of variations in the use of force within COIN campaigns that current approaches fail to adequately capture. In each, these variations are influenced by the interplay between internal and external ordering dynamics. Exploring these internal and external interplays allows us to build on the extant "armed orders" literature by exploring the ways in which counterinsurgents' use of force is influenced by, and subsequently influences the politics of these armed orders. Following a brief introduction to the Naga conflict, the salience of these internal and external considerations are introduced below with reference to the Indian and Naga contexts, providing a background upon which the case study discussion of the typology is based.

Overview: The Naga Insurgency

The Naga insurgency is India's oldest insurgency. Despite receiving growing attention in the literature on armed conflict as well as regional and Indian academic scholarship,[27] it remains comparatively understudied as a COIN case study. The conflict originated in pre-

Independence demands for separation from mainland India, escalating into insurgent violence in the early 1950s under the direction of the Naga National Council (NNC). Following a massive COIN response, attempts to resolve the conflict led to negotiations between the central government and a group of moderate Naga elites, culminating in the creation of Nagaland State in 1963. However, many Nagas perceived this as an attempt to divide the Naga population, given that substantial residual Naga populations remained dispersed across Assam, Manipur and what is now known as Arunachal Pradesh. This issue of the greater Naga population, in a territorial area that became known as "Greater Nagalim," was to dominate the later politics of insurgency and COIN during the 1990s and beyond, playing an important role in capping, limiting and enabling counterinsurgents' use of force in the different forms of order in these states.

Years of fighting and abortive peace processes eventually led to the signature of the Shillong Accord in 1975, but internal struggles within the NNC led to the formation of the breakaway, anti-accord National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in 1980. The NSCN split into two major factions – NSCN – Isak-Muivah (NSCN–IM) and NSCN–Khaplang (NSCN–K) in 1988. Both of these groups enjoyed support bases beyond the boundaries of Nagaland State, intensifying the question of the fate of the Nagas dispersed across "Greater Nagalim." Both have since suffered further factional divisions as in-group elite contestations and tribal alignments fluctuated over time, leading to the emergence of a highly fragmented insurgency environment characterized by inter-factional violence as each faction sought to consolidate control of areas in Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

During the 1990s, counterinsurgents increased pressure on the NSCN factions in an attempt to influence the trajectory of peace negotiations. The NSCN–IM and NSCN–K eventually signed bilateral ceasefires with the Indian central government in 1997 and 2001 respectively,

however these ceasefires have transformed the dynamics of the conflict rather than leading to real progress towards durable peace. The post-2001 period has seen tense, sometimes violent state-insurgent relations despite the ceasefire arrangements.[28] The Indian state's attitude and approach to managing the ceasefire and navigating the peace process has been fragmented by the question of "Greater Nagalim," generating anxieties amongst key political constituencies in states such as Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Pressures from the NSCN–IM led to the negotiation of a ceasefire "without territorial limits" in 2001, a decision that was quickly reversed after political pressure from the state governments and civil society organizations of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The emergent forms of order saw a deadlock in peace negotiations and the emergence of complex, ambiguous and territorially-bound rules governing the use of force between state and insurgent actors. In 2015, the NSCN–K rescinded its ceasefire agreement and resumed armed hostilities against state forces from its sanctuaries in Myanmar.

Internal considerations

Political dynamics in the Northeast have created an especially complex and varied operational environment for counterinsurgents. The Naga insurgency erupted during India's most vulnerable early years, amid the backdrop of Partition, war with Pakistan, the challenge of Princely State integration and the very real threat of disintegration. Consequently, the need to preserve sovereignty featured heavily in the political leadership's understanding of COIN operations against Naga insurgents, informing threat perceptions and influencing concerted efforts to decisively undermine the NNC insurgency.

Although the perception of a real threat to national integration subsided and violence levels have seen periods of sustained reduction, many of the decisions taken during this early period have had lasting impacts on the threat perceptions of subsequent state actors. The status of the

1958 Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which empowers non-commissioned officers, equivalent ranks and above to sanction the use of lethal force,[29] has been consistently renewed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and was extended as areas such as Manipur and eastern Arunachal Pradesh were increasingly affected by insurgency. Even today, policymakers remain reluctant to rescind these emergency powers on the basis that such a move would disempower armed forces vis-à-vis insurgent actors, illustrating the lasting legacy of heightened threat perceptions on subsequent armed orders in the region.

Although the region has remained militarized, threat perceptions have subsided to a great extent, particularly after East Pakistan's collapse deprived north-eastern insurgencies of external support, while other pressing political crises, of more immediate concern to Delhi, erupted across the country during the 1980s. This affected government threat perceptions of the Naga insurgents; during the early 1980s, for example, Ministry of Home Affairs reports refer to a state of peace brought about by the Shillong Accord, despite the rise of a new, powerful insurgent force operating during that period.[30]

Since the 1990s, the government's peace talks with Naga insurgents, owing to the complexities of the federal system, have sharpened cleavages in threat perceptions between the central and state governments. Since the creation of Nagaland State in 1963, the status of the residual Naga populations in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh has remained ambiguous. The dominant political constituencies of these states have, however, consistently expressed alarm at Naga armed groups' attempts to consolidate their influence in the Naga-inhabited parts of the state, seeing these as part of a broader Naga irredentist project.

Since the central government's shift towards peace talks with Naga armed groups from the 1990s, the governments of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh have consistently declared their opposition to ceding any part of their respective territories to a "Greater

Nagalim." This opposition has impacted New Delhi's ceasefire agreement. After the NSCN–IM and the central government announced in the 2001 Bangkok Agreement that the ceasefire was "without territorial limits," political pressure from state and societal forces in the three neighboring states forced the central government to backtrack from the agreement.

Consequently, the ceasefire's ambiguous territorial jurisdiction has led to variations in the formal and informal rules governing the use of force, leading to the emergence of several overlapping *fragmented orders*. Internal politics within the state have therefore intersected with the agency of Naga insurgent and societal actors to produce multiple, overlapping orders characterized by variations in the rules governing acceptable levels of force.[31] Outright violations of these orders, such as the NSCN–K's 2015 withdrawal from the ceasefire and subsequent attacks on Indian security forces, generate pressures on the Indian state to be seen to impose costs on attempts to undermine these complex and fragile orders.

External considerations

Clearly, decisions to employ force do not occur in an internal vacuum but take place in the context of counterinsurgents' negotiation of the wider socio-political environment and the range of actors that occupy positions in order. In the Indian context, the external dynamics of insurgents' own ability to shape the contours of armed order have interacted with the state's political considerations to produce variations in the intensity of the COIN response.

In the early years of the Naga insurgency, the size of the NNC and its extensive parallel governance structures in the Naga Hills, intersected with the political vulnerabilities of the early Indian Union and threat perceptions of the NNC's external backing to prompt a particularly heavy-handed response that included aerial bombardments and punitive operations.[32] Although the NSCN emerged as a powerful insurgency during the 1980s and

continued to wield considerable influence after the 1997 ceasefire, the state's threat perceptions have altered considerably to influence a response that is more tolerant of the presence of these groups in the absence of major ceasefire violations.

Additionally, order is shaped by a range of non-state actors such as traditional authority structures, influential local leaders, ethnic groups, civil society bodies and socio-economic actors.[33] State actors also engage with this array of ordering forces and their varied distribution across different, localized configurations of order as they attempt to renegotiate, uproot or destroy insurgents' position within these orders. Depending on how these local orders are configured, counterinsurgents' use of force against insurgents can produce both short-term and long-term impacts upon how these actors perceive, interact and negotiate with state and insurgent actors, which can in turn impact upon configurations of order.[34]

This underlines the importance of counterinsurgents' ability to understand the form of localized order in which they are operating and deploy force in such a way that it does not undermine broader processes of bargaining and negotiation with elements of the wider social order. However, achieving a full knowledge picture is a near-impossible end state to achieve, not least due to the agency of other actors and the constantly changing and evolving nature of order. In conflict settings characterized by high levels of distrust and uncertainty, this makes the collection and maintenance of knowledge of order an extraordinarily difficult task.

Despite recent infrastructural developments, many of the Naga-inhabited areas of Northeast India are notoriously difficult to access and have historically lacked the repeated, day-to-day interactions with state actors that allow for the creation of ordered relationships. Indeed, especially during the early period of COIN in the isolated hill areas of Naga-inhabited Northeast India, interventions by the armed forces during COIN operations constituted the first point of contact between the Indian state and local Naga forms of order.[35] The poor state

of physical infrastructure has meant that many counterinsurgent positions have been dependent upon air maintenance and fair-weather roads.[36] Such problems of accessibility and connectivity impede upon mobility, meaning it can take days to reach outlying locations, impacting the extent to which counterinsurgents can establish the repeated interactions required to generate a real-time, up-to-date knowledge picture.

With this in mind, the use of force takes place in the context of high levels of uncertainty and insecurity. This spectrum of knowledge and uncertainty plays a crucial role in shaping counterinsurgents' horizons, which in turn influence situational perceptions of the utility of force, creating the possibility for misperceptions and miscalculations. As Sudeep Chakravarti notes, in contested areas of Manipur such as Tamenglong, a range of armed groups operate amid a patchwork of different state-insurgent relations, ranging from outright hostility to limited cooperation and formal ceasefire arrangements. For counterinsurgents encountering these groups in difficult, inaccessible terrain, however, intense uncertainties combined with the potentially imminent nature of a security threat may influence decisions to fire first over potentially risky efforts to gauge the nuances of the group's ceasefire status,[37] leading to the emergence of tense standoffs and outright armed clashes between state forces and ceasefire signatory groups such as the NSCN–IM. Furthermore, micro-level actors may perceive the emergence of local-level opportunities or threats, which may in turn reinforce, alter or undermine local ordering dynamics and feed back into the broader patterns of state-insurgent order, highlighting the importance of multiple levels of order. Clearly, therefore, it is not simply the external environment in which counterinsurgents are operating that determines the use of force employed, but the interplay between this and how counterinsurgents across multiple levels of the state perceive this environment, demonstrating the links between external dynamics and internal state dynamics in influencing variations in the use of force.

A typology of order and the use of force

This complex interaction between internal and external dynamics of order have created varying forms of order that, through interactions with state counterinsurgents, produce variations in the use of force. Based on the above, I organize Staniland's "armed orders," which predominantly consist of two-party conflict dyads,[38] into four chronological clusters, capturing the main patterns and evolutionary trajectories across multiple state-group dyads during that period. This allows us to determine the context within which counterinsurgency operations were employed. Within each, the analysis reviews the internal political dynamics shaping both threat perceptions and responses to insurgency and their interaction with dynamics external to the state. I then plot patterns in counterinsurgency operations, exploring how the use of force interacted with armed orders and evolved in relation to them during that period. This approach facilitates comparisons both between multiple clusters of armed orders, as well as within them.

The first of these, labelled *Entrenched Threat* refers to forms of order in which insurgencies have established themselves as credible military and political actors before threat perceptions harden. In the case of the Naga insurgency, the NNC had already entrenched itself in the Naga Hills by the early 1950s. This entrenchment intersected with internal political vulnerabilities within the state to influence high threat perceptions, leading to the use of force in a manner that sought to undermine this form of order. Indeed, this is not uncommon in India; COIN campaigns in Assam, Punjab and Mizoram for example only began after insurgent movements were firmly established in the local political order. As violence levels spiraled out of control, internal state politics gradually aligned to harden threat perceptions of these groups, prompting intense military operations to break the back of these established insurgencies.

Strong Defector refers to forms of order that are rapidly in flux, as fragile orders of limited cooperation are superseded by the emergence of powerful insurgent challengers following factional splits, forcing counterinsurgents to adapt to this new reality. Armed group fragmentation, and defection from existing ceasefire architectures has been relatively common in Northeast India. Major factions in Western Assam's Bodo-inhabited areas defected from peace accords signed in 1993 and 2003,[39] undermining hopes of an emergent order of limited cooperation and leading to continued COIN operations against the emergent threat. In Naga Northeast India, the operations of the emerging NSCN, and its subsequent splinter factions, from 1975-1997, are particularly illustrative of this dynamic and its implications for COIN operations and their relationship to armed orders in the region. The rise of the NSCN shattered the post-Shillong Accord peace architecture and led to the emergence of two of the most powerful armed groups in the region. The 1980s were however a turbulent decade for India, and competing priorities elsewhere ultimately led to a comparatively restrained use of force, ultimately attempting to firstly uphold the post-Shillong order. Only in the early 1990s, when the post-Shillong order was all but shattered, did counterinsurgents re-intensify the use of force, however this was ultimately to modify the emergent order of "limited cooperation" being forged at the negotiating table. How counterinsurgents attempt to shape orders being contested by strong defectors, then, is contingent upon the interplay between these strong external actors and the internal political conditions facilitating or working against a response.

Fragmented Ceasefires are orders characterized by insurgencies that draw mixed threat perceptions from within the state, leading to the emergence of multiple state-insurgent orders with varying rules governing the use of force. In these highly uncertain environments, a number of different tools, ranging from outright clashes to low-level arrests, are employed to cap and control insurgent attempts to create *faits accomplis*, thereby constituting attempts to

modify order. This refers to Indian COIN during the order of "limited cooperation" with the two NSCN factions.[40] Both groups remained powerful armed factions, each with thousands of heavily-armed recruits. However, with the ceasefires ending large-scale central security forces casualties, Delhi's threat perceptions shifted towards favoring limited cooperation. Counterparts in Manipur, Assam and to a lesser extent Nagaland, felt the continued threat of these groups more acutely, at times actively resisting the central government's approach towards ceasefire negotiations and fragmenting the rules governing the ceasefire. Although this degree of fragmentation is somewhat unique, spatial variations in ceasefire dynamics – and modifications to the intensity and nature of counterinsurgency operations to police these different dynamics – are not uncommon. For example, state-insurgent interactions within the ceasefire in Mindanao, the Philippines during the 2000s were governed by formal territorial demarcations, but involved informal struggles over territorial control within the structure of the ceasefire.[41]

Finally, *Weak Defectors* refers to instances of major violation of and defection from an otherwise established state-insurgent order by an insurgent group that poses a threat to this order, but lacks the capacity to completely undermine it. In Northeast India, a comprehensive, layered ceasefire architecture has endured since the late 1990s,[42] leading to claims that insurgencies in Northeast India are on the brink of resolution. In 2015, the NSCN–K rescinded its ceasefire agreement with New Delhi and launched attacks on Indian security forces, compelling pressures to respond and use force to signal the costs of defection. Beyond the Naga case, the Indian response to large-scale ethnic violence in Bodoland in 2014 was an unrelenting COIN operation which, reportedly ignoring the National Democratic Front of Bodoland – Songbijit/Saoraigwra's (NDFB–S) requests for peace talks, brought to the group to the verge of total disintegration. Similarly swift operations have taken place in response to defectors from peace processes further afield; following the resumption of Real Irish

Republican Army (RIRA) activities in 2000, British security forces arrested the group's leader Michael MckKevitt and other key leaders, prompting a decline in the group's activities.[43]

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Within each of these clusters of state-insurgent order, counterinsurgents then acted either intentionally or unintentionally to *undermine, modify* and *uphold* these particular forms of order, as is illustrated in Table 2. These are not necessarily deliberate strategies that counterinsurgent actors can select and deploy but are conditioned by the interplay between internal state dynamics, the dynamics of the external order and the role of knowledge and uncertainty in shaping the dynamics of interaction between the two.

The typology provides a framework for capturing the ways in which patterns of COIN have fluctuated both between these clusters of armed orders as well as within them. In doing so, this demonstrates the micro-political nature of COIN as it interacts with, responds to and attempts to shape the dynamics of armed orders. In doing so, this refines existing approaches to macro-level strategies of "violence management," while also building on the armed orders approach by offering an insight into the ways in which counterinsurgents both shape and are shaped by the dynamics of these orders.

The Entrenched NNC Threat – Undermine Order (1956-1975)

The use of force is typically considered a fundamentally disordering function. Indeed, the destructive capacities of violence have clearly been utilized by warring parties throughout history to attack and destabilize the social order upon which insurgents may draw strength. For counterinsurgents, the exercise of power through violence can indeed serve to undermine the ties that sustain an insurgent group's position in order. However, its destructive power can also produce unintended consequences for the state's position in order if this violence is

indiscriminate or overlook key nuances within that order.

This was evident, for example, in the early period of COIN against Naga insurgents from 1956. The politics of the nascent independent Indian state clearly influenced internal perceptions of a very real threat to national integrity in the immediate context of the trauma of Partition, war with Pakistan over Kashmir, the challenges of integrating the Princely States into the Indian Union and a series of low-level communist insurgencies in Telangana and Tripura.[44] In these tumultuous early years of the Union, central legislators had drawn up the Constitution with a view to maintaining internal unity, granting extensive central powers to prevent the further breakup of the country. As a result, secessionism constituted a clear "red line" for New Delhi,[45] influencing its threat perceptions of and responses to the Naga insurgency.

Externally, the NNC, led by A. Z. Phizo had spent several years consolidating its position as a key actor in the local orders of the Naga Hills. Phizo negotiated with prominent social forces, securing the support of key tribal and village elders. By 1954, the NNC had created an extensive parallel government in the Naga Hills, boasted a membership of 15,000,[46] and had entrenched its position in order. The central and Assam governments, hampered by the state's minimal presence in the region, had only minimal knowledge of the extent of developments in the region. This meant that when Phizo formally initiated guerrilla operations in 1955, the Indian state was taken completely by surprise.[47]

While it is commonly cited that Nehru had issued guidance to army commanders that Nagas were "fellow countrymen" and that minimum force was to be adopted, he also urged that, during the early stages, the army should "hit hard and swiftly,"[48] given that any other approach "may be construed as a sign of weakness."[49] Counterinsurgents were thus rushed into the Naga Hills in 1956 but, lacking in appropriate intelligence or in-depth knowledge of

the socio-political environment,[50] found themselves confronted with a hostile external environment for which they were ill-prepared.

In this context, the Army applied itself "with full-blooded vigor" in an attempt to roll back the NNC.[51] Armed confrontations at times resembled pitched battles; Rajesh Rajagopalan for example describes an assault on an NNC position in Khekiye, involving an entire army division and seven Assam Rifles platoons.[52] Limited connectivity meant that outlying positions required air support, resulting, at Purr in 1960, in one of the two occasions Indian Air Force units have ever used aerial firepower against insurgents.[53] Nari Rustomji, a former civil servant with experience in the region suggests that patterns in the use of force in the early period of COIN were predicated upon "fierce and relentless revenge" as counterinsurgents sought to "soften up the recalcitrant Naga."[54] Village relocation policies and punitive village-burning operations[55] directly attacked and undermined local sociocultural orders by separating villagers from land considered to be the spiritual, cultural and socioeconomic lifeblood of the community. The destruction of these traditional villages literally uprooted and undermined local cultural orders and the patterns of land use that were predicated upon them.[56] This generated widespread resentment of the Indian security forces; undermining order therefore unintentionally created opportunities for the NNC and successive insurgent groups to successfully exploit.

The forceful nature of the Indian response, although generating considerable fallout for the state's relations with key players in the local social order, nonetheless established the Indian state as a powerful local actor. This gave the Indian state the space to forge a form of "limited cooperation" during the 1964-1968 Peace Mission in an attempt to negotiate from a strong position. Although this order collapsed after 1968 amid high levels of distrust, the period created opportunities to further destabilize the insurgency's ties to the social order and to test

the NNC's internal cohesion, contributing to the sharpening of internal cleavages within the movement.

The sustained Army presence in the region during the Peace Mission allowed counterinsurgents to gradually build an intelligence picture of growing internal insurgent fissures, based on grievances within the Sema tribe over the dominance of the Angami tribe in the NNC's leadership. Consequently, when these fissures led to a split in the NNC in 1968, counterinsurgents exploited the formation of the RGN by withholding violence and even tacitly cooperating with the defecting group. With this wedge already driven into the movement,[57] the advantage was further pressed when COIN operations were intensified in the remaining pockets of the NNC's Sema membership in the Phughoboto range, influencing further surrenders in negotiation with tribal elders and undermining the ties previously forged by the NNC.[58]

Force in this context was thus based upon knowledge of the external order and the nodes connecting it to the insurgency, employed in a targeted manner to undermine the group's position in the wider social order. Internal dynamics had therefore initially precluded an ability to properly generate knowledge picture of the order in which counterinsurgents were intervening into. As a result, the early use of force displayed indiscriminate tendencies and led to the heightened likelihood of abuses and miscalculations, which while undermining order provided insurgents with opportunities to exploit and re-fashion order in their favor. Yet variations in the quantum of force to target particular factions of the NNC, demonstrating improved knowledge of the external order, undermined the increasingly strained ties between social forces and the NNC, contributing to broader processes of social fragmentation. These processes of fragmentation would ultimately undermine the Shillong Accord signed with between NNC representatives and the government in 1975.

A Strong NSCN defector: Uphold/Modify Order (1975-1997)

The Shillong Accord was widely hailed as the end of the Naga insurgency. This optimism was, however, short-lived. The accord itself, reportedly signed with the consent of a faction within the NNC, was neither endorsed nor immediately rejected by the group's leader Phizo, who was in exile in London.[59] Turmoil ensued as pro-accord and anti-accord factions tussled for control over the NNC, leading to the group's fragmentation and the formation of the NSCN in 1980, which immediately condemned the "treacherous impasse" brought about by the Shillong Accord.[60]

Most accounts of the Naga insurgency are exceptionally light on details during this period. Yet triangulating government reports and regimental histories with local accounts indicates that during the early 1980s, an approximately 1,500-strong NSCN focused on conducting cross-border operations from bases in Myanmar.[61] Attacks on security forces generally did not create instability within Nagaland, but involved bold ambushes against army personnel in the border regions, such as in May 1981, when over 100 militants attacked a post along the international border at Fakimile.[62] Throughout the 1980s, the group extended its violent activities across Nagaland (including increasingly into urban areas),[63] Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. The group's split in 1988 prompted both NSCN factions, though initially weakened, to consolidate in their respective areas of influence. By the early 1990s, both were the main insurgent players in the Northeast India region; the Shillong Accord, and hopes of an order underpinned by state-insurgent cooperation, were in tatters.

By the 1980s, the threat of national disintegration had subsided to a great extent. However, the 1980s and early 1990s were a notoriously difficult period for Indian politics, as the central government grappled with political crises in Delhi and multiple insurgencies in Punjab, Sri Lanka, Kashmir and Assam. The military response to this gradual escalation in violence was

muted for much of the 1980s. COIN operations, although ongoing during the period, did not pursue the NSCN with significant intensity, despite the escalation in NSCN violence during the period.[64] This illustrates that counterinsurgency during this period, although categorized as "hostilities" by Staniland,[65] primarily centered around upholding the order New Delhi had forged with the NNC through the Shillong Accord, despite the fact that this order was being fundamentally challenged and re-shaped by the NSCN and its factions throughout the 1980s.

The use of violence is typically considered a disordering tool, yet it does not necessarily undermine order. Indeed, force can create short-term disruptions to ordered relationships that create the space for actors to attain a degree of leverage, altering the terms of order without fundamentally undermining it altogether. This was evident in patterns of COIN operations during the early-to-mid 1990s, as peace talks with the NSCN–IM began to shape an emerging order of "limited cooperation."[66] While clandestine meetings were held between the parties from 1995, violence intensified as both parties sought to create battlefield realities and in doing so shape the contours of the emergent order in their favor. The NSCN–IM, having largely recovered from the 1988 split, sought to strengthen its claims to "Greater Nagalim" by consolidating its position in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Counterinsurgents sought to force the group into an early ceasefire by intensifying military operations, deliberately targeting and arresting the *kilonser* (ministerial)-level leadership of the organization, which reportedly destabilized the group's mid-level organizational structures and played a critical role in bringing the group to the negotiating table.[67] At the same time, however, these operations, now taking place in dense urban environments due to the NSCN's expansion over the preceding decade, created intense uncertainties, leading to miscalculations and abuses that impacted perceptions of Indian forces. In March 1995, for instance, the tire on a Rashtriya Rifles convoy burst in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland. The

perception that the convoy was under attack led to a sustained period of firing, including mortar and grenade fire, that killed seven civilians.[68] The incident contributed to already fraught relations between security forces and local populations,[69] demonstrating the potential for efforts to modify order vis-à-vis insurgents to spill over into consolidating insurgent support.

The Fragmented 1997 Ceasefire: Modifying Order

The conclusion of the 1997 ceasefire with the NSCN–IM, and the 2001 equivalent with the NSCN–K, led to a significant reduction in direct state-insurgent clashes.[70] Indeed, the Indian central government prioritized the reduction of these clashes over strict adherence to the ceasefire guidelines, withdrawing the bulk of its coercive capacities from Nagaland and reaffirming the Nagaland State government's responsibility for dealing with law and order.[71] In this context, the NSCN–IM exploited this improved space to consolidate its position in order, competing with rival armed groups for control over lucrative sites of extortion revenue and creating a *fait accompli* within the context of the ceasefire that would require a costly and most likely violent expenditure of state resources to address.[72] With New Delhi unwilling to undermine this emergent order, state actors have instead acted in and around the rules governing the ceasefire to probe boundaries and use limited force in the form of arrests, blockades of insurgent patrol routes, flag marches in contested areas and even simply a "rap on the knuckles,"[73] each of which serve to check NSCN–IM influence and modify the terms of micro-level state-insurgent patterns of interaction.

Furthermore, armed clashes, though limited, can take place in the context of intense uncertainties and reduced horizons. In 2010, for example, Assam Rifles personnel discovered and raided an NSCN–IM hideout in Mon district, killing one NSCN–IM militant.[74] These dynamics are more pronounced beyond Nagaland State, which is the only state in which the

ceasefire formally applies and therefore has formal channels of communication and negotiation.[75] In Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, for example, the ceasefire rules governing the use of force with NSCN–IM do not technically apply and are thus subject to a greater degree of interpretation, while the presence of several non-ceasefire signatory armed groups heightens ground-level uncertainty. While ongoing peace talks have prevented major escalations, armed clashes are not uncommon as counterinsurgents patrol to convey presence and remind the group of its coercive capabilities,[76] underlining the ceasefire's function in providing an "alternative arena for armed conflict."[77]

For example, while most COIN operations in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh are directed against other groups such as NSCN–K and insurgents from Assam and Manipur, Indian security forces and NSCN–IM militants have actively launched operations against one another in these contested areas. During 2018, for example, four NSCN–IM militants and two Army personnel were killed during clashes between the two parties, with five of these fatalities occurring in Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh and the other in Noney district of Manipur. In another series of clashes from 30 June, up to 25 NSCN–IM militants ambushed an Assam Rifles party in Changlang district, leading to an assault on an NSCN–IM camp in the area four days later.[78]

These incidents came despite the signature of a "Framework Agreement" between the parties in 2015, designed to outline a roadmap for the final phase of negotiations. Yet these standoffs and confrontations reflect longer-term patterns of localized but violent interactions between state and NSCN–IM forces. These have fluctuated in scope and intensity as the parties continue to exert leverage on one another in a bid to apply further pressure onto the opposing party in the talks, and have in fact increased as frustrations over lack of progress in the post-Framework Agreement peace talks.[79] Serious clashes have frequently compelled state and

insurgent actors to engage in 'pullback' and 'climbdown' processes dependent upon a strong degree of understanding between the senior leadership of both parties in recognizing the compulsions and room for flexibility of the other.[80] This highlights the centrality of informal norms and mutual understandings in limiting and capping levels of violence, while at the same time demonstrating that this violence remains an integral part of the rulebook for state-insurgent interaction. It also highlights the importance of bargaining and rule-making processes beyond the use of force, illustrating the utility of placing the use of force within the context of the political bargains that make up state-insurgent orders.

The use of force to modify order has thus taken place within a broader framework of an agreed set of rules. Internal political dynamics at the national level, which favor the preservation of the ceasefire and lack of major armed clashes over the rigid policing of the ceasefire guidelines, condition the overall state-insurgent order, but the internal dynamics of each state's position on the ceasefire have fragmented the rules governing violence. The use of force in COIN in this context therefore constitutes attempts to obtain leverage at the micro-level to cap insurgents' efforts to extend their own leverage. This, combined with the intense uncertainties of operating in these environments, has at times led to outright armed clashes that have disrupted, but not undermined, the broader state-insurgent order.

Upholding order in the face of the NSCN–K's defection

In many ways, the use of force to uphold order reveals the complexities and ambiguities of violence and its relationship to order. The use of force and its relationship to order is subject to the interpretation of the parties involved, meaning attempts to uphold a given order may be perceived as efforts to modify or undermine order by other parties, leading to the tense standoffs and pullbacks discussed in the previous section. The boundaries between undermining, modifying and upholding order in complex orders such as that between the

Indian state and the NSCN–IM are therefore ambiguous, fragile and subject to considerable degrees of interpretation.

Although state-insurgent order in Naga-inhabited Northeast India is fragmented territorially, these orders are based on the existence of ceasefires and understandings between states and insurgents. When insurgent groups have violated or altogether defected from these orders, state forces have used demonstrative force to police transgressions and demonstrate the costs of backing away from peace processes. This was the case when the NSCN–K abrogated its 14-year ceasefire with the Indian government, defecting from the broader ceasefire architecture in both the Naga areas and Northeast India more broadly and becoming part of a small cluster of hostile armed groups. The NSCN–K itself had suffered two major splits – the first in 2011 and the second upon its decision to reject the ceasefire in 2015 – nonetheless remained one of the strongest armed groups in the region.[81] However, the gravity of this defection from an entrenched regional ceasefire architecture, does not compare with that of the NSCN's defection from the post-Shillong order in 1980.

Thus, when in June 2015, NSCN–K-led militants crossed into India from their camps in Myanmar, killing 18 Army *jawans* in what was then the biggest attack on Indian Army personnel since the Kargil War, then Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar recalled that a response was drawn up within hours of the attack.[82] Within days, Army personnel had reportedly crossed the border into Myanmar to strike multiple insurgent camps. The retaliatory strike was reported to have killed 20 insurgents in two different camps.

While these were relatively low-level targets in what was dubbed a "minor operation,"[83] the "secret" operation nonetheless received wide publicity and was followed by a spate of army and political statements, allowing state actors to convey a clear message that major transgressions would be matched in kind and that the NSCN–K's "camps across the border

were not safe for anyone,"[84] including any other groups enjoying sanctuary across the border,[85] thereby setting and upholding the rules governing major violations of the emergent *status quo*. The use of such strikes to communicate such a message nonetheless carried its own uncertainties, which were evident when the surgical strike triggered external tensions between New Delhi and Naypyidaw.[86] This implies that the use of force combined with signaling processes can simultaneously influence the bargaining terms of multiple state-insurgent orders.

Conclusion

This article has contended that COIN operations against Naga insurgents since Independence have displayed dynamic variations in the use of force as they have intersected with the dynamics of evolving "armed orders" throughout the insurgency's long history. During its early period, domestic political vulnerabilities combined with the pervasive parallel government structures the NNC had established. These considerations compelled large-scale COIN operations that saw high levels of violence as armed forces attempted to roll back the insurgency. Although the NSCN emerged as a strong contender to the tenuous order brought about by the 1975 Shillong Accord, threat perceptions by this point were much lower and more pressing crises were enveloping elsewhere. This led to a muted response wherein counterinsurgents primarily sought to uphold the state-NNC order, allowing the NSCN factions to entrench themselves in order; force was then used to in an attempt to modify this dominance while talks to forge a "limited cooperation" order were held. Political tensions within the federal system, in the context of the NSCN–IM 's consolidation of influence in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh fragmented the state's approach towards its ceasefire with the NSCN–IM, leading to the emergence of multiple state-insurgent orders. The ambiguity that this fragmentation created led to local variations in the use of force, ranging

from simply conveying presence, to arrests and operations spiraling into armed clashes as state actors attempt to probe and limit insurgent attempts to consolidate local NSCN–IM influence. The extent to which these variations disrupt or uphold order is dependent upon the perceptions and boundaries established by both actors, demonstrating the tense and at times unpredictable nature of these forms of order. Finally, retaliatory strikes such as the 'surgical strike' against NSCN–K militants in June 2015 demonstrate clear attempts to uphold and reinforce broader patterns of order by sending a demonstrative message to both the NSCN–K and other armed groups within India that outright defection from the overarching framework would not be tolerated.

The typology, by allowing us to better chart variations in its employment, refines and further strengthens the widely-accepted notion of Indian COIN's political flexibility.[87] Building directly on existing frameworks for understanding "armed orders" and strategies of "violence management," the article developed a fourfold typology of variations in the use of force by aggregating Staniland's typology of "armed orders" in this conflict into four distinct phases of COIN and mapping how the use of force interacts with these orders. By exploring variations in the use of force within orders of "hostilities" across key phases such as during the rise of the NNC (*Entrenched Threat*) and the NSCN (*Strong Defector*) respectively, and indeed by illuminating spatial variations in the use of force in the post-ceasefire orders of "limited cooperation," the typology allows us to refine our understanding of the state's varying relationship to these armed orders, revealing differences in the political considerations driving interactions with them.

The longevity of the insurgency and the dramatic variations in "armed order" across the duration of the conflict raise important caveats regarding generalizability. Yet while the Naga conflict represents a particularly dramatic picture of variations of both "armed order" and the

use of force to shape those orders, there exists some scope for generalizability to other cases in which the state's relationships with insurgents have evolved and shifted over time, utilizing the three-fold framework of the use of force to *uphold*, *modify* and *undermine* orders. Such work could enrich our ability to capture the politics of conflicts oscillating between different degrees of repression and ceasefires. Case studies to further build the typology could include the multifold patchwork of fluid armed orders dotting Myanmar's political landscape, as well as complex ceasefires such as that between the Phillipines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao.[88] In-depth cases into a single dyad could, in turn, allow us to better hypothesize how particular actors understand order, attempt to shape it and respond to others' efforts to shape them.

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Notes

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[48] Jawaharlal Nehru, "Telegram to Bisnuram Medhi, Chief Minister of Assam, 28.02.1956," in *Documents on North-East India: An Exhaustive Survey*, ed. S. K. Sharma and Usha Sharma, vol. Volume Nine-Nagaland (New Delhi: Mittal, 2006), 157.

[49] Jawaharlal Nehru, "Telegram to Bisnuram Medhi No. 1116-PMH/56, Chief Minister of Assam, 13.05.1956," in *Documents on North-East India: An Exhaustive Survey*, ed. S. K. Sharma and Usha Sharma, vol. Volume Nine-Nagaland (New Delhi: Mittal, 2006), 163.

[50] V. K. Anand for example notes that "the Indian jawans were perplexed when on being rushed to Nagaland they discovered that about 15 tribal dialects, each different from the other, and their own numerous languages were being spoken there." See V. K. Anand, "Governing Principles of Counter-Insurgency," *United Services Institution of India Journal*, September 1981, 239.

[51] Nari Rustomji, *Imperilled Frontiers: India's North-Eastern Borderlands* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 31.

[52] Rajesh Rajagopalan, "'Restoring Normalcy': The Evolution of the Indian Army's Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 11, no. 1 (2000): 46–47, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592310008423260.

[53] Das, *Insurgencies in North-East India*, 66, 80.

[54] Rustomji, *Imperilled Frontiers: India's North-Eastern Borderlands*, 31.

[55] S. C Dev, *Nagaland, the Untold Story* (Calcutta: Gouri Dev, 1988), 46–47.

[56] In Mokokchung district, for instance, villages were often burnt multiple times in the prelude to village regrouping operations. See Nandini Sundar, “Interning Insurgent Populations: The Buried Histories of Indian Democracy,” *Economic & Political Weekly* 46, no. 6 (2011): 51; Rustomji states that 'land, whether it be homestead land [..] or land for cultivation, constitutes the lifeblood of a tribal community [..] particular locations are considered to be the dwelling-place of spirits, good and evil, that have to be periodically placated.’ See Rustomji, *Imperilled Frontiers: India’s North-Eastern Borderlands*, 49–50.

[57] Nibedon, *Nagaland: The Night of the Guerrillas*, 156–230.

[58] This strategy was adopted to deliberately sever the Sema connection to the insurgency, as former administrator S.C. Dev argues. See Dev, *Nagaland, the Untold Story*, 99.

[59] Nibedon, *Nagaland: The Night of the Guerrillas*, 89–90.

[60] A. S. Atai Shimray, *Let Freedom Ring: Story of Naga Nationalism* (New Delhi: Promilla, 2005), 105–23; National Socialist Council of Nagaland, “Solemn Declaration of the Existence of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, 31.1.1980,” in *The Naga Chronicle*, ed. Wetshokhrolo Lasuh, First Edition (New Delhi: Regency, 2003), 362–64.

[61] R. D. Palsokar, *Forever in Operations: A Success Story: A Historical Record of the 8th Mountain Division in Counter-Insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur, and in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan Conflict 1963-1989*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Headquarters, 8 Mountain Division, 1991), 175–90; Chandrika Singh, *Naga Politics: A Critical Account* (New Delhi: Mittal, 2004), 175; Ministry of Home Affairs, “Annual Report 1981-1982,” 9–10; Ministry of Home Affairs, “Annual Report 1983-1984,” 8.

[62] Palsokar, *Forever in Operations: A Success Story: A Historical Record of the 8th Mountain Division in Counter-Insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur, and in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan Conflict 1963-1989*, 1:175; Sashinungla, “Nagaland: Insurgency and Factional Intransigence,” *Faultlines* 16 (2005), http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume16/Article4.htm#69.

[63] V. K. Nayar, *Crossing the Frontiers of Conflict in the North East and Jammu and Kashmir: From Real Politik to Ideal Politik* (Delhi: Shipra, 2005), 44.

[64] Ministry of Home Affairs, “Annual Report 1987-1988” (New Delhi: Government of India, 1988), 8; Ministry of Home Affairs, “Annual Report 1988-1989” (New Delhi:

Government of India, 1989), 6; Ministry of Home Affairs, “Annual Report 1992-1993” (New Delhi: Government of India, 1993), 11.

[65] Staniland, “Armed Politics and the Study of Intrastate Conflict,” 462.

[66] Staniland, 461.

[67] G. K. Pillai, interview with author, July 2016. Pillai was former Joint Secretary (Northeast) in the Ministry of Home Affairs (1996-2001) and Home Secretary (2009-2011).

[68] “Army in Nagaland: Findings of an Enquiry Commission on Killings, Rape and Arson” (New Delhi: People’s Union for Democratic Rights, 1996), http://www.unipune.ac.in/snc/cssh/HumanRights/02%20STATE%20AND%20ARMY%20-%20POLICE%20REPRESSION/B%20Assam%20and%20the%20north%20east/8.pdf.

[69] Nzanbeni Patton, “Human Rights and Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958: A Study of Its Uses and Abuses in Nagaland” (PhD Thesis, North-Eastern Hill University, 2004), 169–71, http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/handle/10603/60432; “NPMHR Remembers Oinam Incident,” *Kangla Online*, April 17, 2011, http://kanglaonline.com/2011/04/npmhr-remembers-oinam-incident/.

[70] Bethany Lacina, “The Problem of Political Stability in Northeast India: Local Ethnic Autocracy and the Rule of Law,” 2009, 1015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/as.2009.49.6.998.

[71] G. K. Pillai, “Correspondence between G. K. Pillai, Joint Secretary (North East), Ministry of Home Affairs and Chief Secretary, Nagaland, 6.8.1997,” in *The Naga Chronicle*, ed. Wetshokhrolo Lasuh, First Edition (New Delhi: Regency, 2003), 469.

[72] Bethany Lacina, “Does Counterinsurgency Theory Apply in Northeast India?,” *India Review* 6, no. 3 (2007): 168. Lt. Gen. V. K. Singh (Retd.), interview with author, September 2016. As former chairperson of the Ceasefire Monitoring Group (2013-2016) that oversees implementation of the ground rules, Singh noted NSCN–IM ’s attempts to extend its leverage by creating faits accomplis.

[73] Brigadier Rumel Dahiya (Retd.), interview with author, October 2016. Dahiya explained that a “rap on the knuckles” formed one such part of the broader toolkit for responding to ceasefire violations.

[74] “Nagaland Chronology,” Centre for Development and Peace Studies, 2016, http://cdpsindia.org/nagaland_incident.asp.

[75] Such channels include the Ceasefire Monitoring Group, which although lacks in formal legal power, serves as an important localised channel of communication in Nagaland State. Gurinder Singh, "A Decade of Ceasefire in Nagaland," *Strategic Analysis* 31, no. 5 (December 12, 2007): 817, https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160701662302.

[76] Chakravarti, *Highway 39*, 111–17.

[77] Jelle J.P. Wouters, In the Shadows of the Naga Insurgency: Tribes, State and Violence in Northeast India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), 88.

[78] Tongam Rina, "A Question of Fair Engagement between Military and Rebels," *The Arunachal Times*, July 16, 2018, https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2018/07/16/a-question-of-fair-engagement-between-military-and-rebels/; International Institute of Strategic Studies Armed Conflict Database, "South Asia", in *Armed Conflict Survey 2019* (London: IISS, Forthcoming).

[79] M.A. Athul, "Naga Talks: A Rising Desperation," *South Asia Intelligence Review* 18, no. 7 (August 12, 2019), https://satp.org/south-asia-intelligence-review-Volume-18-No-7#assessment2.

[80] Brigadier Rumel Dahiya (Retd.), interview with author, October 2016. Dahiya recalled how the NSCN–IM leadership has demonstrated an understanding of the army's requirement to respond to major violations, while suggesting that the government has also been understanding rather than dogmatic in its enforcement of the ceasefire guidelines. A later interview with a retired government official experienced in peace negotiations highlighted that the intensity of 'pullbacks,' which constitute a temporary cooling of relations, is dependent upon the nature of the incident. Unnamed government official (Retd.), interview with author, 2016.

[81] For a detailed account of factionalism in the Naga insurgency, see Namrata Panwar, "From Nationalism to Factionalism: Faultlines in the Naga Insurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 28, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 233–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1233642. A third pro-talks faction split from the main, increasingly Myanmar-based group, in 2018.

[82] "Soldiers Should Kill the Enemy, Not Lay down Lives: Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar - Times of India," *The Times of India*, December 14, 2015, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Soldiers-should-kill-the-enemy-not-lay-down-lives-Defence-minister-Manohar-Parrikar/articleshow/50170804.cms.

[83] Sanjoy Majumder, "Indian Raid in Myanmar Raises Regional Tensions," *BBC News*, June 19, 2015, sec. India, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-33193275; Ajit

Kumar Singh of the Institute for Conflict Management for example suggests that the strikes had little impact on the actual capacities of the armed groups. Ajit Kumar Singh, "Border Perils," *South Asia Intelligence Review* 14, no. 47 (May 23, 2016), http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/sair14/14_47.htm#assessment1.

[84] Praveen Swami, Vijaita Singh, and Pranav Kulkarni, "Myanmar Strike: Seven Dead Bodies Recovered, Less than a Dozen Injured, Say Official Sources," *The Indian Express*, June 12, 2015, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/myanmar-cross-border-strike-7-bodies-less-than-a-dozen-injured/.

[85] "Myanmar Surgical Strike a 'lesson' to All Militant Groups, Says Government," *First Post*, June 10, 2015, https://www.firstpost.com/india/myanmar-surgical-strike-a-lesson-to-all-militant-groups-says-government-2289360.html.

[86] Singh, "Border Perils."

[87] Staniland, "Armed Politics and the Study of Intrastate Conflict;" David P. Fidler and Sumit Ganguly, "Conclusion," in India and Counterinsurgency: Lessons Learned, ed. David P. Fidler and Sumit Ganguly (New York: Routledge, 2009), 226.

[88] Malin Åkebo, "'Coexistence Ceasefire' in Mindanao," Peace and Change, 2019, http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:umu:diva-162997.