

Mizo Hills

Revisiting the Early Phase

ALI AHMED

Abstract

Mizoram is rightly taken as one of India's counter insurgency success stories. This article revisits the early experience in Mizoram for its considerable learning value. It dwells on the first two phases of counter insurgency in the Mizo Hills district of Assam in the late sixties. The initial breaking of the siege laid by the Mizo National Front in March 1966 comprised the first phase and the grouping of villages comprised the second.

Introduction

The Mizoram experience deserves special attention since India faced its gravest challenge in that remote corner of India. That the outcome was 'win-win' for both stands to India's credit. This paper aims to illumine the meagre historical record and looks at the first two phases of counter insurgency in Mizo Hills. The first phase was the rolling back of the gains made by the Mizo National Front (MNF) under its Operation Jericho in March 1966. In breaking the siege, offensive air power employment in internal security duty was witnessed for the first and only time in independent India. The second phase involved grouping of villages as a strategy to seal off the sustenance base of the MNF among the people. Subsequent phases until the mid eighties involving the peace process and counter insurgency are not covered here. The paper is laid out in two parts, with the operations being covered in the Part I and an analysis of these in Part II.

Part I – The Early Period

The setting

The Mizo insurgency is dated to the rat famine, *Mautam* that occurred at the turn of the sixties.¹ Noted military historian, Maj Gen DK Palit (Retd), writes, 'Shillong's initial indifference and subsequent delays in activating relief measures caused serious discontent among the people even alienating some of the more liberal leaders, unmitigated by any effort from the state government to organise local preparations and management. And when Assam government's publicity machinery attempted to play down the extent of the disaster, the disillusionment was complete.'² Taking advantage of the neglect by the Assam government under which the District Council of the Lushai Hills district functioned, the Mizo National Famine Front, led by Laldenga, transformed into the Mizo National Front. Laldenga's bid to capture the District Council, dominated by the conservative Mizo Union, led to his reaching out to East Pakistan for support in 1963.³ The 'preparatory phase' of the insurgency went on through the mid sixties till Operation Jericho, the military takeover of the district, was launched on 28 February 1966. That year's *Annual Report* of the Ministry of Defence, best describes New Delhi's appreciation of the situation:

'Extremist elements in the Mizo Hills District posed a serious threat to the maintenance of law and order by the civil administration in the beginning of March 1966. Well planned, widespread and coordinated attacks were made by armed gangs on various administrative centres and outposts in the district. In the outlying areas, after some time these gangs succeeded in obtaining control of the outposts, killed and kidnapped some government personnel including police and Assam Rifles personnel and looted and destroyed government property'.⁴

The shock of the challenge in the remote corner of India perhaps led to the ferocity of the Indian reaction, including the use of airpower.⁵ After the siege laid by Mizo insurgents was broken by Army operations, the guerrillas melted into the rugged terrain. The *Annual Report* recalls the operations in these words:

'The Army went to the aid of civil authorities, quickly cleared road blocks, restored communications and relieved the situation in administrative centres that were threatened. The besieged posts were supplied food and ammunition by air. By the middle of March 1966 the law and order situation

had improved considerably and all the main administrative centres and outposts were free from extremist control or threat. The hostile elements then took to the interior and for their maintenance resorted to raiding of villages and extortion of money and rations besides indulging in atrocities. Mobile columns were, therefore, dispatched for intensive patrolling and for searching and destroying hostile hide-outs. The hostiles have since been on the run.’⁶

The combination of high literacy, warrior qualities and political motivation made the Mizos formidable guerilla fighters.⁷ The scheme for grouping of villages that followed military action was to slice off sustenance and support for these insurgents. It was thought up and implemented in 1967 to 1970. This proved to be ‘undoubtedly a harsh tactic’,⁸ amounting to a blemish on India’s otherwise remarkable record.⁹ The ‘lesson learnt’ has been that it has not been followed subsequently in the other counter insurgency campaigns.¹⁰ The view in New Delhi of the situation then is summarised in the *Annual Report*:

‘As the hostiles have been raiding and committing atrocities on outlying villages, the Army assisted the civil administration in transferring the population, in certain areas, along with their belongings to bigger villages in the vicinity of the main road so as to ensure better protection for the inhabitants and also to isolate hostile elements. The Army provided considerable assistance, provision of water supply etc., in order to promote the grouping of villages and the orderly resettlement of the transferred population’.¹¹

Breaking the siege

A history of the Assam Rifles, responsible for security in Mizoram at the time, dwells on the preparatory phase of the insurgency in these words: ‘The situation had deteriorated to such an extent that the Government at last decided to send reinforcements to the Mizo Hills. In February 1966, orders were issued for the induction of 18 Assam Rifles (AR), a development that alarmed the MNF leadership. For them it suddenly became a question of now or never; and they decided to start the revolt before 18 AR could reach Aizawl.’¹² Operation Jericho was launched by the rebels to take over Mizo Hills. It has received praise from a military writer, who describes it as a ‘masterstroke’ with ‘near complete military preparation’ amounting to an ‘expression of confidence and clinical planning not

witnessed hitherto fore in the Indian subcontinent.’¹³ Vivek Chadha explains the military precision as being a result of ‘the fact that a large number of volunteers who joined in the armed struggle were either ex-servicemen or dismissed personnel of the Assam Regiment battalions for lack of discipline.’¹⁴

The official history of the Assam Rifles records, ‘At the time 1 AR and 4 companies of 5 Border Security Force Battalion were in Mizoram. The main stumbling block in the MNF design in gaining simultaneous control of Aizawl, Lunglei and Champhai and cutting the Silchar road by capture of Chhinluang was 1 AR...’¹⁵ That surprise was complete is evident from the fact that the Commanding Officer of 1 AR was away to Shillong for a conference.¹⁶ If Laldenga’s move is seen as a preemptive attack, the strategic intelligence cannot be taken as faulty. However, tactical intelligence was a failure. This is a veritable hallmark of India’s counter insurgency cycle.

A participant in the relief operations to evict the MNF was Brig (later Lt Gen) Mathew Thomas. His recall of events was, ‘When 61 Mountain Brigade was pushed in with 8 SIKH in the lead and 2 PARA behind them, 8 SIKH could not get into Aizawl because of the fact that Assam Rifles were still holding out, but the Mizos were all around... We had to bring in the Air Force. It strafed them and it was only after that we were able to push in and get into Aizawl... the situation was very volatile.’¹⁷ Heliborne reinforcements were attempted but the ‘sniping was too close to the camp and too heavy for the choppers to come down’¹⁸ Therefore, ‘at last at 1130 hrs, came the air strikes, IAF fighters strafing hostile positions all around the battalion area. The strafing was repeated in the afternoon and it soon became apparent that the hostiles were beginning to scatter....’¹⁹ At the end of air action, Aizawl town caught fire. Later, ‘from 9 to 13 March the IAF strafed the hostile’s positions, forcing them to scatter, and brought some relief to the hard pressed garrison (Demagiri).’²⁰ It is interesting to note that the MoD *Annual Report* makes no mention of offensive air action at all.²¹

While seemingly a military over-reaction, a Welsh missionary records that, ‘Five minutes before we were due to start an aeroplane came overhead machine gunning... They were not firing at random, but trying to aim at the rebels position as it were...’²² This must be seen alongside the preexisting position on the issue of use of air power. The Army had once suggested Air Force for air support but the idea had been rejected by Nehru.²³ So serious was the crisis, that there was also a para-drop at Lunglei to retrieve the situation at the earliest.²⁴ Reflecting on the uncharacteristic reaction, Chadha reasons that, ‘it was probably an angry reaction caused due to the virtual loss of the town... It did little for the people

who had already been alienated by the state government and only caused more damage – both mental and physical – to the town....²⁵

Once the guerrillas dispersed, the insurgency settled in. In an interview, Lt Gen Mathew Thomas recalled: 'In the initial stages the Army was not liked at all, because of the fact that we had to take very harsh measures to cull the rebellion. We were just three battalions and the fourth battalion came later and it was a huge area that one had. We had to open all axes from south to north and had to clear all the major villages along the central route. In so doing, people were alienated to a certain extent, due to the fact that we were not very sure how to go about things. None of the battalions that were from 61 Mountain Brigade had any experience of counter insurgency...but we learnt on the way, we learnt very quickly I would say.'²⁶ The *Annual Report* for the year describes the outcome in the following words:

'On the whole the situation in Mizo Hills is well in hand and with intensification of rounding up measures now made possible by grouping, it is expected that the lawless activities of the rebels will be substantially reduced in the near future.'²⁷

At this stage, Laldenga, subject to India's military resolve on display, had afterthoughts and sent out feelers for a compromise. These were rebuffed,²⁸ prolonging the insurgency as events were to prove by two decades. This issue needs underlining since initiation of the peace process is slovenly in the Indian circumstance. The need to reach a military position of strength first usually forecloses the political option. The then Home Minister, YB Chavan, is reported to have said, 'Let them give up arms. After that we can talk'; reasoning that 'I have to punish my children severely if they behave badly.'²⁹

Grouping of villages

The scheme for the grouping of existing villages was begun on 3 January 1967. These were named 'Protected and Progressive Villages' (PPV) under Rule 57 of the Defence of India Rules. Due to paucity of troops to implement the scheme, it was done in four phases. The later two phases were interrupted by stay orders from the Gauhati High Court.³⁰

The strategy had origin in South East Asia, in Malaya and then in Vietnam. On the strategic hamlets programme in Vietnam, the judgment was unanimous even by 1964 that it was a failure.³¹ Despite limitations of the strategy, it was replicated

in Mizoram. A military writer, Maj Gen VK Singh (Retd), attributes the idea to Maj Gen (later Lt Gen) Sagat Singh who at that time was in command of 17 Mountain Division, responsible for the Mizo Hills. VK Singh records:

To reduce the feeling of neglect by providing food, medical care and other facilities, and also to improve security, Sagat decided to group the villages astride the only road in the region that ran between Aizawl and Lunglei. There were strong objections from the civil administration on legal and administrative grounds. Fortunately, Sagat's excellent rapport with Assam's Chief Minister, BP Chaliha, and the Governor, BK Nehru, enabled him to have his way and he could carry out the grouping as planned.³²

Since civil administration had collapsed, the military had a larger role to play in the relocation of villages. Sood, who was on staff of the Army Commander, Lt Gen Sam Manekshaw, describes the operation, writing, 'Army engineers and pioneers were deployed to help the regrouped villages in becoming self-sufficient at the earliest....This helped in curbing free movement of the insurgent and cutting down on the use of trained troops on guarding duties.'³³ Sam Manekshaw's perspective is summed up by him as:³⁴

In order therefore to secure the villages against harassment by the insurgents while at the same time denying them their sanctuaries, information and so on, and securing the axis of maintenance of the SE, a plan to regroup many small hamlets lying close to the axis into larger groups was conceived by Sam.³⁵

The consequences appear predictable in retrospect. Palit observes that, 'it is unfortunate that the regrouping scheme was also striking at the heart of the tribal economy, cutting the farmers off from their traditional *jhooms* (shifting cultivation). The curfew imposed on these areas restricted movement to and from the grouped villages to their farming areas....Hunting had already been denied because of the confiscation of fire-arms. Since theirs was not a market economy, the disruption in the lives and norms of the villages was considerable.'³⁶ An interesting effect was that 'stealing or theft very uncommon in the Mizo Society became quite natural.'³⁷ Contrary to this appreciation, the laconic Ministry of Defence *Annual Report 1967-68* approvingly stated:

After the successful completion of the transference of the population of the villages on either side of the road from Vairengte to Lunglei to the newly established protected villages and other facilities such as supplies, housing and water supply etc., the army transferred the administration of the new villages to the civil authorities.

BG Verghese visited Mizoram as an official in the PM's secretariat. He carried the impression back with him that, 'the insurgency continued from sanctuaries in East Pakistan, but the grouping of villages - bringing small hamlets together in more viable roadside units - though originally resented had worked well, and sections of the Mizo National Front appeared willing to come to a settlement.'³⁸ BG Verghese writes that 82 per cent of the population was 'herded' into these villages. While 'the policy of resource denial to the rebels worked, but the effect on the civil population was harsh. There was above all deep resentment...'³⁹ Therefore, in the analysis of the strategy, it needs to be gauged against not only a military, but also political and civilisational parameters. The return of relative peace owed to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, and consequent loss of sanctuary there. The Union Territory was established in 1972. By 1973-74 as greater peace came, people started de-grouping.⁴⁰

Part II – Analysing the Operations

Higher Decision Making

While the issue has local and institutional roots, the national level needs factoring in. It bears recall that in early January 1966, there was a change of guard in Delhi when Indira Gandhi was unexpectedly thrust into office following Prime Minister Shastri's death.⁴¹ Mrs. Gandhi's first test in high office was the Mizo insurgency. Noted historian Ramchandra Guha writes, 'Her first months in office were if anything as troubled as her father's. Nothing much happened in February, but in March a major revolt broke out in the Mizo Hills.'⁴² Nagaland insurgency, that had preceded the Mizo one by a decade, had shaped perceptions. Counter insurgency efforts in Mizoram were often linked with those in Nagaland.⁴³ BK Nehru gives out the status of Mizoram writing: 'The Lushai Hills (Mizoram) was being handled by the Government of India direct. Though nominally the government of Assam continued to have jurisdiction over the district and there was a Deputy Commissioner always in residence, the real power was wielded by the army under the direct control of Delhi. The Governor was therefore not in any

way responsible for the administration of Mizoram, though I did once visit the area to see what was happening.⁴⁴

BG Verghese records that the issue of reaction to the insurgency was discussed with the Chaliha government by Indira Gandhi at the Gauhati airport. He was present in his capacity as the media adviser to the PM. Also, present at the meeting were Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, Dev Kanta Barooah and Chaliha. They had earlier met Sam Manekshaw in Calcutta from where the delegation flew to Gauhati. At the Gauhati meeting, the Intelligence Bureau Director said that the intelligence was forthcoming as a result of which two battalions of the Assam Rifles had been earmarked for move to Mizo Hills. Laldenga, perhaps getting wind of this, acted preemptively.⁴⁵

The Military Dimension

The military reaction to the insurrection in Mizo Hills is understandable. India had only recently lost a war with China. It was contending with an insurgency in Nagaland that was being supported by China. The presence of East Pakistan and ever helpful Pakistani intelligence across a permeable border was not lost on decision makers. The area was at the end of a long and tenuous line of communication. A communist insurgency was raging in the close vicinity in South East Asia. The influence of the counter insurgency practices was being felt: the use of air power in the Vietnam War being a significant one. This was of a piece with the Army's counter insurgency legacy from the British times both in North West Frontier Province and also in the pacification expeditions targeting tribes in the Naga Hills. It was believed that the success of counter insurgency in Malaya by the British owed in part to the application of the technique of grouping of villages of Chinese squatters there. These factors converged to influence Indian strategy.

Insurgency is taken as a professional problem having a repertoire of practices to address, amongst which is grouping. Some in the military viewed it as a useful strategy. A representative opinion is that of Maj Gen Onkar Kalkat, who expresses satisfaction at the precedent in Nagaland, noting that, 'In an attempt to bring a speedy end to the hostilities, villages were grouped and the people concentrated in effectively guarded stockades located near Army posts. This enabled the Army to operate freely in the jungles and deprive the hostile of his means of sustenance, the villagers.'⁴⁶ Yet he admits, 'The villagers found it unsatisfactory, as their movements were restricted to certain timings; and as they could not get to the fields without protection. The produce had to be carried back

to secure places and due to the limited hours its quantity declined...'⁴⁷

Kalkat lays the onus on the people to bear with the inconvenience. To him, 'Measures to prevent the insurgents from access to the local population are liable to be unpopular with the latter as it interferes with their traditional liberties, and makes inroads into their earnings....these measures must therefore be explained and justified to the people, who must be made aware that the battle against the hostiles is a joint one, in which they must participate as a part of their duty to the nation and in their own interest.'⁴⁸ Since such measures would attract criticism, he recommends that such criticism be discredited, stating: 'The suggestions regarding degrouping, relaxation of curfew and reducing army influence over the population can only be termed as mischievous...Such statements (degrouping of villages) made for cheap popularity have far reaching repercussions.'⁴⁹

Consequently, the precedent already existing in Eastern Command in the Nagaland experience was not influential. Rajesh Rajagopalan writes that 'One fundamental lesson that the Indian Army derived from these (Malayan campaign) was the importance of isolating guerrillas from the population and maintaining control over the population...The grouping scheme began in early 1957 in Sema Naga area.'⁵⁰ The experiment, though successful in Malaya, failed in Nagaland.⁵¹ Chadha opines that, 'the Indian government's policy post-independence, of relocating the Nagas, was viewed by them as an attempt to impinge on their right to live with their age old way of life. It succeeded in alienating them from not only the government, but also the Army. And rather than stopping the flow of support for the militants, it only strengthened the case of the insurgent groups, and enhanced animosity towards the Army, which adversely affected the ability to collect intelligence and amalgamate the Naga into the national mainstream.'⁵² Complaints and logistical difficulties put a stop to the programme there by end 1958.⁵³

Judging critically through liberal lenses from today's vantage would be unfair to the two leading military protagonists who gained additional fame in the 1971 War.⁵⁴ Sagat Singh observed that there were lack of intelligence, lack of attunement of the infantry battalions to insurgency situations, and ill-treatment of the locals by a few post commanders. He set about to remedy this by devising his own intelligence system; adjusting training of infantry battalions to suit the peculiar circumstances for which an *ad hoc* training camp was started that was later to become the famous Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School at Vairengte;⁵⁵ and by issuing strict orders against harassment and ill treatment of the population, while meting out exemplary punishment to erring post

commanders.⁵⁶ Clearly, these were military professionals doing the best they could under the geopolitical, political and military constraints. Manekshaw's aide, 'Shubhi' Sood's judgment is that,

Manekshaw's approach to the insurgencies in Nagaland and Mizoram was very mature and realistic. He was clear that these were 'political' problems and the military could only create conditions in which political solutions could be found by holding talks and so on. It was the task of the army to achieve ascendancy over the armed insurgent. In establishing ascendancy, the Army had to be alert and not entrapped into taking casualties through complacency. It had to ensure that measures to win the hearts and minds of the people were put into place simultaneously.⁵⁷

Yet, the military results of the grouping scheme were not of a spectacular order as to retrospectively justify it. That the casualty ratio in operations between 1 March 1966 and 31 December 1967 was 491 Mizos killed versus only 12 security forces.⁵⁸ An alternative figure on casualties is given by Vijender Singh Jafa.⁵⁹ The casualty ratio suggests that the situation was well under control after the MNF were dislodged in merely ten days in March 1966. That they had an estimated strength of 10,000 thereafter suggests that the MNF got a boost from the strategy of grouping. Further, grouping could not be sustained beyond a few years. The strategy was also out of sync with the normative template. The Nehru-influenced template, available in the form of the COAS Special Order of the Day (extract below) on the outbreak of the Naga insurgency, had it that,

'You must remember that all the people of the area in which you are operating are fellow Indians. They may have different religions, pursue a different way of life, but they are Indians and the very fact, that they are different and yet part of India is a reflection of India's greatness. Some of these people are misguided and have taken up arms against their own people and are disrupting peace of this area. You are to protect the mass of the people in the area from these disruptive elements. You are not to fight the people in the area but to protect them'.⁶⁰

Conclusion

India has much in its doctrine and practice of counter insurgency that is useful for the rest of the world. However, possible shortfalls in Indian practice have

lessons to be learnt. The Mizo experience is taken as a successful one⁶¹ in light of the happy outcome of preservation of territorial integrity, strengthening of democracy and the negotiated nature of conflict termination. This paper has tried to revisit the early period for its lessons, in particular those stemming from the grouping scheme. The positive aspect is that chief lesson from Mizoram, of avoiding imposition on the population's way of life, has been well learnt. The second lesson of non-use of air power in internal security operations has also been internalised.⁶² The more important lesson has been that of preventing situations arising of such extreme challenges. A fourth lesson is that political solutions need to be progressed early and with commitment.

Ali Ahmed is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. He is a doctoral candidate in International Politics at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Notes

1. Vivek Chadha's view is that the outbreak of insurgency had more complex motivations. Aspects of India's pre- and post-Independence history are equally important. See his 'India's counter insurgency campaign in Mizoram', in Sumit Ganguly and David Fidler (eds.), *India and Counter Insurgency: Lessons Learned* (New York: Routledge, 2009.)
2. DK Palit, *Sentinels of the North East* (New Delhi: Palit and Palit, 1984), p. 255.
3. Subir Bhaumik, *Insurgent Crossfire: North East India*, (New Delhi: Lancer Publication, 1998), pp. 141-453.
4. Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report 1966-67*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Defence, 1967), p. 21.
5. It is characteristic of India's counter insurgency cycle that it first neglects to prevent the problem from occurring, then neglects intelligence input on the insurgency in its preparatory period and finally cracks down with considerable vigour. Thereafter the insurgency settles into a long haul with peace talks coextensive with counter insurgency operations. This has been witnessed in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir.
6. *Annual Report 1966-67*, p. 21.
7. DK Palit, *Sentinels of the North East*, p. 254
8. BG Verghese, *First Draft: Witness to the Making of Modern India*, (New Delhi: Tranquebar, 2010), p. 88.
9. For instance, during the same period, in Vietnam, the US was undertaking Operation Rolling Thunder to bomb Vietnam into submission. Over the past decade, it has been engaged in a brutal counter insurgency, first in Iraq and now in 'AfPak'. Likewise, Russian operations in Chechnya have nothing to recommend them. The Pakistan Army's sweep of Swat and South Waziristan resulted in over two million displaced people.
10. The closest example has been the prevention of Gujars and Bakkarwals from going into their traditional pastures during the summers of 2003-05 as a consequence of Operation Sarp Vinash in Surankote Tehsil of Poonch district in J&K. The area was Hill Kaka in which a

terrorist camp had been set up. The military launched an operation to destroy the camp in 2003-04. The people inconvenienced were given compensation in this case and the operation was necessary in their own safety and for national security.

11. *Annual Report 1966-67*, p. 21.
12. DK Palit, *Sentinels of the North East*, (New Delhi: Palit and Palit, 1984), p. 258-59.
13. Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India*, (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), p. 388.
14. *Ibid*, p. 337. The issue of ex-servicemen joining militant ranks is disputed by SK Pillai (*Assam Vikram: Unique Valour – History of the Assam Regiment 1947-2002*, (New Delhi: MacMillan 2004), p. 28-30. He writes: 'Some books on Mizo insurgency have attributed the disbandment of 2 Assam as one of the causes for growth of insurgency in the area. This is overstating the case as out of the 145 men sent home, the number of Mizos were 45.'
15. *Guardians of the North East: The Assam Rifles, 1835-2002*, (New Delhi: DGAR, 2003), p. 80-81.
16. Palit, *Sentinels of the North East*, p. 261.
17. Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis*, p. 340.
18. D. K. Palit, *Sentinels of the North-East: Assam Rifles* (New Delhi: Palit & Palit), p. 264.
19. *Ibid*, p. 264.
20. Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis* (New Delhi: Sage Publications) copyright USI 2005, p. 262.
21. Depinder Singh notes that the yearly Annual Report is not meant to be very informative, writing that, 'Until then the Report had always been a study in ambiguity, shrouded in secrecy, telling the intelligent reader almost nothing.' See his, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw: Soldiering with Dignity, (Dehra Dun: Natraj Publishers, 2003), p. 96.
22. Ram Chandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Pan Macmillan), p. 406.
23. Rajesh Rajagopalan, *Fighting Like a Guerilla: The Indian Army and Counter-Insurgency* (Routledge,2008) p. 148.
24. Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis* (New Delhi: Sage Publications) copyright USI 2005, p. 340.
25. *Ibid*, p. 342.
26. Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis* (New Delhi: Sage Publications) copyright USI 2005, p. 342.
27. Vivek Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflicts in India: An Analysis* (New Delhi: Sage Publications) copyright USI 2005.
28. Subir Bhaumik, *Insurgent Crossfire North-East India* (Lancer Publishers and Distributors, 1996), p. 155. Also see the narration on peace initiatives of the Church led by Zairema in Nirmal Nibedon, Mizoram: *The Dagger Brigade*, (New Delhi: Lancers, 1980), p. 117-18. The precedence given to the military prong over the political prong persists, see 'The govt sabotaged talks with Maoists', *Mail Today*, 4 Aug 2010, on the killing of Maoist leader engaged in ceasefire talks with Swami Agnivesh recently.
29. Nirmal Nibedon, *Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade*(Lancer Publishers, 1980) p. 117-118. .
30. Nirmal Nibedon, *Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade* (Lancer Publishers, 1980), p. 139.
31. Michael Maclear, *Vietnam: The Ten Thousand Day War*, (London: Thames Methuen, 1981), p. 88.

32. VK Singh, *Leadership in the Indian Army*, (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), p. 314-315. Also see, SC Narang, *Military Generals of India*, (Delhi: Prashant Publishing House), p. 236-7.
33. S Sood, *Leadership: Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw*, (Noida: SDS Publishers), p. 52.
34. Manekshaw himself did not pen his memoirs; a major loss for military historians in light of his featuring prominently in India's post Independence military engagements ranging from 1947 to the 1971 War.
35. Shubhi Sood, *Leadership: Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw*, SDS Publishers, 2006 - Biography & Autobiography p. 51.
36. D. K. Palit, *Sentinels of the North-East: Assam Rifles* (New Delhi: Palit & Palit) p. 272.
37. Lianzela, 'Internally Displaced Persons in Mizoram' in C. Joshua Thomas (ed), *Dimensions of Displaced People in North-East India*. (New Delhi: Regency, 2002), p. 247.
38. BG Verghese, *First Draft*, p. 131.
39. *Ibid*, p. 142.
40. Nirmal Nibedon dates the beginning of the trickle back to 1971, *The Dagger Brigade*, p. 158.
41. Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of World's Largest Democracy*(Pan Macmillan, 2011), p. 405.
42. *Ibid*, p. 405.
43. Vivek Chadha, 'India's counter insurgency campaign in Mizoram', in Sumit Ganguly and D. Fidler (eds.), *India and Counter Insurgency*, p. 28.
44. *Ibid*, p. 526.
45. BG Verghese, *First Draft*, pp. 88-89.
46. *Ibid*, p. 60.
47. *Ibid*, p. 60.
48. *Ibid*, p. 81.
49. *Ibid*, p. 91.
50. Rajesh Rajagopalan, *Fighting Like a Guerilla: The Indian Army and Counter-Insurgency* (Routledge, 2008), p. 150.
51. Chadha, *Low Intensity Conflict in India*. p. 288. Incidentally, MA Zaki, later Lieutenant General, was a company commander in Nagaland in 1958-61. His company, Bravo Company of 19 Maratha LI, implemented grouping in its area of responsibility on orders along with a company of 4 Sikh LI under 2 Lt Nair, in 1959. The veteran's comment on the policy was, 'It was wrong and it failed.' The villages in particular were Iphonomi, Kilaghotomi, Iganomi and two neighbouring villages. These were concentrated at Kilami in Sema area. The process involved a head count every morning that would end with 'Jana Gana Mana'. For fraternization, Zaki recalls that he bought the people volleyball from his own money so that the people and his troops could play together (Interview at Hyderabad, India, on 10 December 2010).
52. *Ibid*, p. 289.
53. Another attempt in 1964 in the Kohima-Mokokchung area failed though some villages were regrouped as a punitive measure (Rajesh Rajagopalan, *Fighting Like a Guerilla: The Indian Army and Counter-Insurgency* (Routledge,2008), p. 151).
54. It is interesting that Depinder Singh indicates that the two, Manekshaw and Sagat Singh, had strained relations. He writes, 'There was always some degree of friction between him and General Officer Commanding 4 Corps, Lieutenant General Sagat Singh (*Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw: Soldiering with Dignity*), p. 228.'

55. Subhi Sood, *Leadership: Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw*(SDS Publishers 2006), p. 53. A veteran of Mizo Hills, Mathew Thomas, was the first Commandant.
56. VK Singh, *Leadership in the Indian Army: Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*(New Delhi, Sage Publications), pp. 314-15.
57. Subhi Sood, *Leadership: Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw*(SDS Publishers 2006),, p. 53.
58. Nirmal Nebedon, Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade, (New Delhi: Lancers, 1980), p. 124, note 5.
59. VS Jafa ('Counterinsurgency Warfare: The Use & Abuse of Military Force', Faultlines, available at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume3/Fault3-JafaEhtm>, accessed as on 7th October) writes that 'Between March and December 1966, the SF lost 95 men and 60 weapons.' He gives the logic of the grouping as resulting from, 'The high casualties and the inability of the SFs to effectively check MNA depredations were viewed with some concern. There was only a semblance of Indian authority in the Mizo Hills during 1966, and with the reported arrival of fresh MNA reinforcements from East Pakistan with more arms, it was feared that the situation would not be qualitatively better in the days to come unless a longer-term view was taken of the counterinsurgency operations and its strategic/logistic requirements.'
60. Rajesh Rajagopalan, *Fighting Like a Guerrilla: The Indian Army and Counterinsurgency* (Routledge, 2008), p. 147.
61. Namrata Goswami, 'The Indian Experience of Conflict Resolution in Mizoram', *Strategic Analysis*, 33:4, pp. 579-589
62. Ali Ahmed, 'Offensive Air Power in J&K', *Prativedrohi* (September 2005), pp. 35-37. Limited resort to air power has been in use of helicopter gunships in Sri Lanka by the IPKF, as part of UN Chapter VII peacekeeping in DRC and elsewhere, and to a limited extent in Operation Sarp Vinash in Surankot.