

THE MIZOS

1891: The British capture control of the Mizoram area and merge it into Assam province.

April 1946: A political party, the Mizo Union, is formed to express opposition to the domination of chiefs in the tribal society. It favors inclusion in an Indian Union (Maxwell 1980, 9). The Mizo Union maintains close ties with the Congress Party and retains popular support until the 1959 famine .

1947: Following India's independence, the Mizoram area becomes a district of the state of Assam.

1954: The institution of the chieftainship is abolished in Mizoram. The loss of the special privileges and powers of local chiefs raises resentment (Bhaumik 1996, 142).

1959: A major famine occurs in Mizoram resulting in thousands of deaths. Many Mizos believe that New Delhi and the Mizo Union are indifferent to their plight. Their animosity leads to a decline in the Mizo Union's popularity and membership (Ali 1993, 38).

PHASE I. CONVENTIONAL MOBILIZATION

(see Appendix A for a description of the internal conflict phase scheme utilized in this chronology).

1961: The Mizo National Famine Front is formed by Laldenga reportedly in response to central government indifference to the famine. Laldenga is a former army officer who recently worked in the administration of the local District Council. (It is customary for Mizos to use a single name).

October 1962: The Mizo National Famine Front is renamed the Mizo National Front (MNF).

PHASE II. MILITANT MOBILIZATION

1963: Under Laldenga's leadership, the MNF wins two of the three assembly seats in the Lushai hills area of Assam. At the district level, the MNF receives the second largest number of seats, making it a threat to the victorious Mizo Union. As the MNF starts pressing claims for an independent Mizoram, Laldenga and his close advisers secretly visit Dhaka and reportedly receive assurances of arms and training supplies from the Pakistani secret service (Bhaumik

1996, 145-147; The Independent, 07/13/90).

1965: The second Indo-Pakistani war over Kashmir.

October 30, 1965: MNF leader Laldenga writes a memorandum to Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri asserting the distinctiveness of the Mizo nation. He also argues for the "right of the Mizos to decide their future destiny" (Bhaumik 1996, 144, 148).

PHASE IIIb. HIGH-LEVEL HOSTILITIES

February 28, 1966: The Mizo National Volunteer (renamed the Mizo National Army in early March), the military wing of the MNF, seizes and holds the capital of Aizawal for eight days. The 1000-odd fighters also capture control of other key towns in the Mizo hills and raid government treasuries and arms depots. By the middle of March, the government is able to restore its control over key population centers. This is the first insurgency that is subject to bombing and strafing by the Indian Air Force (Times Mirror Company, 02/25/87). By the end of the year, military control is secured over the major towns and road links although many villages remain under MNF control (Ali 1993, 38). The Mizo insurgency is reportedly inspired by a similar rebellion in the nearby territory of Nagaland (New York Times, 06/26/86).

Bhaumik indicates that by the time of Operation Jericho -- the campaign to liberate the Mizo hills and wage insurgent warfare against Indian forces -- the MNF has a well-defined military and political structure including a senate and a house of representatives. Until the early 1970s, the organization's political leadership is largely comprised of college graduates or drop-outs (1996, 150). Operation Jericho does reportedly limit Laldenga's ability to simultaneously attempt a political settlement as the MNF's military wing opposes such efforts (Bhaumik 1996, 156).

Ali reports that by this time the MNF is being supported by Pakistani and Chinese intelligence. The intensity of Indian military operations leads Laldenga to flee to the Chittagong Hills and seek shelter with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The ISI reportedly establishes camps for the MNA in the region while the Chinese provide arms that allow the MNF to continue its hit-and-run campaigns (Ali 1993, 38-39).

PHASE IIIa. LOW-LEVEL HOSTILITIES

August 1966: Pakistani President Ayub Khan denies that his government is aiding the Mizo rebels. Reports indicate that large number of Mizo youths crossed over into East Pakistan during the summer and are allegedly being housed at training facilities (Bhaumik 1996, 158).

January 1967: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launches a large-scale reorganization of villages in the Mizo Hills. Following the practices of the British in Malay, villagers are ordered into newly

barricaded areas, their houses and grain stocks burnt, and their ability to earn a livelihood from agriculture markedly reduced. The villagers become reliant on government handouts. The Indian reorganization is referred to as “internal colonialism” by Bhaumik (1996, 159).

The MNF leadership actively seeks international political recognition of its movement. However, no state is willing to publicly support the Mizo campaign. While Westerners expressed sympathy, they are committed to backing India, in light of its loss in the 1962 Sino-Indian War. The Mizos do however form ties with two other rebel groups -- the Federal Government of Nagaland (FGN) and the Arakan National Liberation Front (ANLF). The two organizations supply the Mizos with sanctuaries and logistical aid (Bhaumik 1996, 163).

Later in the year, the MNF reorganizes and starts to launch symbolic violent attacks against government targets. They are supplied with food and safe sanctuaries from Mizos in Manipur and Tripura (Ibid., 160). Divisions between the civil and military wings of the MNF also openly erupt with the civil faction favoring negotiations while the military arm remains committed to fighting for independence (Ibid., 164).

1966-68: The Presbyterian and Baptist churches attempt to peacefully resolve the conflict. In a 1966 letter to MNF leader Laldenga, Reverend Zairema asserts that India will not give up the territory and that the continuing violence is taking a harsh toll on the civilian population. Zairema meets with Laldenga later that year and strongly repudiates the use of violence. In February, 1968, the two leaders gather again; however, Laldenga rejects Zairema's plea to open negotiations with New Delhi (Bhaumik 1996, 165).

June 1968: The MNA launches major attacks against towns in Burma's Chin Hills. They obtain weapons and money and then retreat as Rangoon deploys counterinsurgency units. Reports indicate that Laldenga is not initially told of the plan as he had previously rejected the idea of incursions into Burmese territory (Bhaumik 1996, 166).

1969: The government launches another relocation program in the border areas of the Mizo Hills. Around 245 villages are reorganized into 57 or so grouping centers. The program is abandoned in early 1970 following opposition from local political parties (Bhaumik 1996, 168).

Armed attacks by the MNA decline to around 9 this year from 15 the previous year, 32 in 1967, and the high of 58 a month in 1966 (Ibid.).

1971: During the Indo-Pakistani war over Bangladesh, the MNF is caught in the dispute. The "Blue Group" of MNF strategists surrenders, robbing the MNF of its intellectual cadre. Laldenga flees to the Arakan province of Burma, then Karachi (Pakistan), and finally returns to the

Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh (Reuters, 07/09/86).

1972: Following the Bangladesh war, the Indian army launches sweeps through the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), capturing Mizo and Naga rebels, occupying suspected camps and securing areas of tactical importance. The 1972 Simla Agreement allows India to call upon Dhaka for its cooperation in relation to cross-border counter-insurgencies. Once the Indian troops withdraw from Bangladesh, they leave military helicopters in the CHT to ensure that the MNF will not return (Ali 1993, 39).

1972 onward: The union territory of Mizoram is created out of Assam state. This is part of a major reorganization of India's northeast in which three states are created (Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura) and another union territory, Arunachal Pradesh, in order to satisfy demands for greater autonomy (Maxwell 1980, 10).

The Mizo Union, the oldest party in the region, wins subsequent elections. Soon after it merges with the local Congress (I) party (Inter Press Service, 10/10/84).

In 1972, the hardline faction of the MNF changes its tactics to concentrate on urban terrorism. A number of former MNF personnel (the intellectual cadre, the Blue Group) are assassinated. There are nine MNF attacks reported this year; this rises to 19 in following years (Bhaumik 1996, 174).

After the MNF insurgents were driven out of Bangladesh, they appear to have sought refuge in the Arakan State in Burma. The loss of Pakistani aid leads the Mizos to increase their reliance upon China. Ali reports that in 1973 and 1975, the Chinese provide military training and weapons for a medium-intensity guerrilla campaign. But after Mao's death in 1976, Beijing refuses to support insurgencies linked to a tribal-feudal framework. Assistance from China is now only granted to revolutionary groups. While many MNF members support such principles, their leader, Laldenga, does not. As a result, Chinese aid to the MNF is severely reduced (Ali 1993, 39-40).

November 1973: Laldenga sends a representative to open a dialogue with Indian officials in Kabul. Meanwhile, in Mizoram the newly-merged Mizo Union and Congress party urge the MNF to open talks. Negotiations are not held as the Indian government asserts that the violence must first stop (Bhaumik 1996, 174).

Brigadier Thengpunga Sailo, the highest ranking Mizo officer in the army, retires and returns to Mizoram where he forms a Human Rights Committee. The committee requests a judicial inquiry into 36 documented cases of excesses by the security forces, including rape, torture, and group execution (Ibid, 175).

1975: The Shillong peace accord between the Indian government and Naga rebels is a blow to the Mizos as they lose a valuable source of moral and material support (Ali 1993, 40).

March 1975: Brigadier Sailo forms a new political party, the Peoples' Conference.

June 1975: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declares a National Emergency which lasts until 1977.

August 1975: Laldenga meets with a senior official of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in Geneva and asserts his desire to begin negotiations (Bhaumik 1996, 177).

January 1976: Laldenga arrives in New Delhi from Europe.

February 1976: A secret agreement is signed between MNF and government leaders in which the MNF acknowledges that Mizoram is an integral part of India and that any settlement will abide by the country's constitution (Bhaumik 1996, 178).

March-April 1976: The MNF hold a congress in Calcutta where Laldenga attempts to gain support for the agreement he has recently signed with New Delhi. He has been in exile for the past five years (Ibid, 179).

July 1976: A joint communique is released in New Delhi outlining the major points of agreement reached between the MNF and the government at February's secret meeting. Among the points is the rejection of violence and the surrender of arms by the rebels. However, before long it becomes clear that Laldenga is unable to ensure that all rebel forces will follow the disarmament plan. Talks between the two sides are temporarily suspended when Indira Gandhi loses power during the March 1977 federal elections (Bhaumik 1996, 180-81).

May 1977 - March 1978: Talks continue between the MNF and the newly-elected Janata Dal government led by Moraji Desai. As Laldenga is close to ensuring the surrender of all rebel arms, the government decides to call an election in Mizoram. Laldenga allegedly attempts to ensure himself a high position in an interim government as an election would likely lead to a victory by Sailo's Peoples' Conference. On March 20, the federal government breaks off talks (Bhaumik 1996, 182-83).

Ali reports that the federal government is able to divide the Mizos by setting up powerful new patron-client relationships with 20 key families in the territory. These relationships operate through the local Congress Party which holds power throughout the period of direct rule, minus the Janata interregnum (1977-1979). The 20 leading Mizo families control the local economy; they are the largest source of private sector employment, capital, and investment (Ali 1993, 40).

May 1978: Brigadier Sailo's Peoples' Conference wins 23 of 30 seats in elections. Divisions

within the MNF deepen as Laldenga is temporarily stripped of the leadership. However, he regains power by October. The MNF resists any violence within its ranks as a result of intra-party disputes (Bhaumik 1996, 184-85).

November 1978: The Peoples' Conference suffers nine defections, allegedly brought around by Laldenga. President's Rule is imposed (Ibid, 185).

January 16, 1979: Radio Moscow asserts that China is providing insurgents in Nagaland and Mizoram with military training, weapons, mobile radio transmitters, and anti-Indian materials. China's actions are alleged to be part of a plan to make India's northeast region secede (BBC, 01/16/79).

July 1979: Laldenga is arrested in New Delhi. The Peoples' Conference wins subsequent elections in Mizoram. The MNF launches another armed campaign against non-Mizos, largely Bengali migrants, and government military targets. These continue through 1980 (Bhaumik 1996, 186).

August 9, 1979: More than 60 members of the Mizo National Front (MNF) storm a police station and loot shops in the neighboring Indian state of Tripura. One shopkeeper is killed and another wounded. The insurgents reportedly crossed over into India from the Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh, where they are alleged to have sanctuaries. MNF attacks have increased since last month when the organization's leader, Laldenga, was arrested in New Delhi and charged with conspiracy and desertion (Reuters, 08/09/79).

April 2, 1980: MNF leader Laldenga states that the entire northeast region of India is in turmoil, as movements seek to struggle for their survival and the preservation of their identity. Laldenga has been released on bail on charges of inciting rebellion in Mizoram. Fears of being submerged by outsiders are widespread in the northeastern states of Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Assam, and Tripura. The migration of Bangladeshis into many of these border states is viewed as a major threat to their cultural survival and has led to violent anti-foreigner movements in parts of these areas (Washington Post, 04/02/80).

Since January, 18 deaths have been reported in battles between the MNF and security forces in Mizoram. Authorities contend that China is supplying weapons and training to Mizo and Naga insurgents and indicate there are also reports of rebel camps in neighboring Burma (Washington Post, 04/02/80).

April 4, 1980: MNF leader Laldenga holds talks with newly-elected Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Laldenga has all charges against him dropped; he orders an MNF ceasefire and publicly disavows terrorism.

May 20, 1980: The Bangladesh government denies that any illegal immigration has occurred to

the neighboring Indian states of Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, and West Bengal (Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 05/20/80).

June 15, 1980: MNF insurgents reportedly kill three government officials in Mizoram in an effort to press their demands for the expulsion of immigrants. The three killed were Assamese (New York Times, 06/15/80).

June 26, 1980: Bangladeshi authorities vehemently deny a report by an Indian government minister that Mizo youth are being sent to Bangladesh for training. The Indian State Minister for Home Affairs made the allegations in the upper house, the Rajya Sabha, stating that this could undermine friendly relations between the two countries (BBC, 06/26/80).

August 1, 1980: An agreement that was reached between the Indian government and the Mizo National Front in April to implement a ceasefire has gone into effect. The MNF will stop all underground activities while the government will suspend operations by its security forces. As part of the deal, Laldenga again acknowledged that Mizoram is an integral part of India and that a solution will be sought within the framework of the constitution. Talks between the two sides continue until January 1982 (Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 08/01/80).

August 15, 1980: At least nine people die in recent weeks as members of the MNF reportedly reactivate their campaign by launching attacks against police forces and non-Mizo civilians (Reuters, 08/15/80).

January 22, 1982: The Indian government bans the Mizo National Front, arresting more than 90 MNF supporters in its crackdown on the organization. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi says that the organization's leader, Laldenga, is using talks with the government as a cover for building up his underground organization and increasing attacks on government officials. Negotiations between the two sides have continued since a ceasefire agreement was implemented in August. Laldenga allegedly wants an advisor position in an interim government as a condition to the eventual achievement of statehood. He is not arrested in the crackdown (UPI, 01/21/82; Reuters, 01/22/82).

April 21, 1982: MNF leader Laldenga is ordered to leave India. He plans to take up residence in London. In January, talks between the MNF and the government broke down and the organization was again banned. Laldenga blames the breakdown on the Indian government's desire to use military force to end the dispute (Reuters, 04/21/82).

Over 150 Mizos have been arrested since a security crackdown began in January while other MNF volunteers have resigned due to heavy pressure from the government's military forces. Bhaumik attributes the failure of talks to Laldenga's unrealistic demands, his lack of control over the MNF, and frequent changes of leadership in New Delhi and Aizawal which have hampered the chances of a settlement (1996, 187-88).

May 24, 1982: The Financial Times reveals that while the MNF's support in Mizoram might be nominal, it does run a parallel administration whose reach is reported to be greater than that of the local government, run by Chief Minister Brigadier Sailo. The MNF is able to extract money from non-Mizos as they enter the territory through the only route from Silchar. The Mizo insurgency is alleged to be deepening following the expulsion of MNF leader Laldenga from India. Demands for secession are growing and the MNF is now being aided by the Mizoram Zirlai Pawl (MZP), a student organization. The newspaper also reports that while the Mizos have cross-cutting loyalties to different tribal groups, they are united in their resentment against the "alien Indians". Government officials only travel in the union territory under the protection of security forces (Financial Times, 05/24/82).

It is also reported that the Indian government has made little effort to win over activists in the northeastern states. While these areas qualify for special treatment in the form of grants, the benefits are allegedly accrued by select politicians and contractors. The Indian government eventually hopes that it will be able to reach out to moderates in Mizoram, especially as the insurgents are no longer receiving training and support from China (Ibid., 05/24/82).

July 22, 1982: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi says that talks with the Mizo National Front cannot succeed due to the impossible demands of the rebel group. Gandhi indicates that the MNF had demanded the dismissal of the currently-elected government of Mizoram and that acquiescing to such a demand would set a bad precedent. She does however state that all the other demands of the MNF have been accepted (BBC, 07/22/82).

January 23, 1984: The Mizo National Front and its military wing, the Mizo National Army, are declared as unlawful again by the Indian government. The declaration is issued under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1967 (BBC, 01/23/84).

March 23, 1984: Three MNF members die in a clash with security forces in southern Mizoram (BBC, 03/23/84).

April 25, 1984: More than 150 members of the MNF are detained and around 5000 paramilitary troops are deployed in preparation for today's elections in Mizoram. Earlier, clashes between the MNF and security forces resulted in the deaths of two paramilitary policemen. There has been little rebel activity reported in the territory during the past two years although separatism is still considered to be an electoral issue (Reuters, 04/24/84, 04/25/84).

April 29, 1984: The Congress (I) party wins an absolute majority in state elections in Mizoram (20/30 seats). It captures power from the Peoples' Conference for the first time since Mizoram was carved out of Assam and declared a union territory in 1972. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi says that she is now ready to negotiate with the MNF. During the past two years, around 800 MNF members have surrendered, been killed or arrested (Reuters, 04/29/84).

September 6, 1984: The Union Territory of Mizoram is declared a disturbed area for another period of six months (BBC, 09/06/84).

October 10, 1984: Talks between the MNF and the government are expected to be held later this month. The resumption of negotiations follows the MNF's agreement to two conditions put forth by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. These are that the MNF cease its violent campaign and profess its commitment that the territory will remain a part of the Indian union. It is expected that the government will then grant Mizoram full statehood. Officials claim that the MNF has reduced its activities due to a lack of public support and rising popular sentiment against violence and instability. They also question MNF leader Laldenga's ability to rein in his followers who reportedly operate from bases in Burma and Bangladesh. Laldenga asserts that his control over the MNF will be demonstrated at upcoming talks. Officials also indicate that each attempt at negotiations has led to an increase in insurgent activities. They contend that in 1974, three top police officials were gunned down as Laldenga called for talks and that an agreement reached in 1976 was followed by a revival of attacks (Inter Press Service, 10/10/84).

The Mizoram Congress (I) government led by Lalthanhawla, a former Laldenga aide, has allegedly pressed for talks between the two sides since its election earlier this year. Lalthanhawla has also called for the encouragement and preservation of Mizo culture based on Christian principles, an end to violence and corruption, and the deportation of foreigners, including Chakma refugees from the Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh. He has even offered to give up his position as Chief Minister in the interests of a settlement (Bhaumik 1996, 189; Inter Press Service, 10/10/84).

October 20, 1984: The Indian government begins construction on a barbed-wire fence along its border with Bangladesh in an attempt to stop further immigration. The influx of Bangladeshis into India's northeastern states is a major grievance of insurgent groups in the region. Further, groups such as the MNF and the Tripura National Volunteer (TNV) reportedly operate from sanctuaries in Bangladesh. The MNF is alleged to have trained members of the TNV (The Economist, 10/20/84).

October 30, 1984: Laldenga returns to India from exile in England. The MNF leader is expected to seek support from his followers for negotiations with the government. Diplomats state that Laldenga agreed to negotiate as Mizoram is firmly under the control of security forces, and the MNF, reported to have around 250 members, has only launched infrequent attacks (Reuters, 10/30/84).

October 31, 1984: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. Her son, Rajiv Gandhi, takes over the reins of power.

November 23, 1984: Formal talks between the MNF and the government begin (Reuters, 11/24/84).

December 20, 1984: Talks between the MNF and the government appear to have led to a broad agreement. Some issues that require policy decisions need to be referred to the Prime Minister before further talks are likely held next month. These include the composition of an interim government (BBC, 12/20/84).

December 31, 1984: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi wins a record-breaking majority in national elections.

February 19, 1985: A meeting is held between Prime Minister Gandhi and MNF leader Laldenga to settle the remaining points in contention (BBC, 02/19/85).

March 5, 1985: Mizoram is declared a disturbed area for another six months under the 1955 Assam Disturbed Areas Act (BBC, 03/05/85).

April 7, 1985: MNF chief Laldenga asserts that the Mizo insurgency cannot be resolved through military means. He says that he will seek constitutional safeguards to preserve the Mizos' ethnic identity in negotiations with the government which are set to resume tomorrow. Analysts contend that the approximately 400 armed MNF rebels have changed their objectives from separatism to obtaining political power in Mizoram. The two sides have agreed to the provision of full statehood. But points of contention include MNF demands to participate in an interim administration before elections are held and a declaration of amnesty for those convicted of rebel activities. About 100 MNF members currently face charges while 10 to 20 are reported to be in jail. Another 320 have surrendered since 1975 (New York Times, 04/07/85).

September 5, 1985: Mizoram is declared a disturbed area for another six months. Meanwhile, talks between the two sides resume (BBC, 09/05/85, 09/06/85).

September 8, 1985: Local press reports indicate that talks between the MNF and the government have reached a final stage. Indian officials expect that an agreement will be signed within a week or ten days (Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 09/08/85).

October 31, 1985: An understanding on the laying down of arms by Mizo insurgents is reached in talks between MNF chief Laldenga and Union Home Secretary R.D. Pradhan. This is expected to be finalized in talks in the next couple of weeks (BBC, 10/31/85).

February 24, 1986: Following talks between the MNF and the government, it is agreed that further negotiations will be held in mid-March (BBC, 02/24/86).

April 5, 1986: Talks resume between MNF chief Laldenga and federal government representatives (Reuters, 04/05/86).

June 3, 1986: According to the Indian government, an accord will soon be signed with the Mizo National Front. Discussions are now focusing on the issue of an amnesty for MNF rebels. Meanwhile, Mizo student organizations hold a 24-hour strike to urge an early settlement (Reuters, 06/03/86).

June 5, 1986: Meetings are held in New Delhi between the MNF and the government (BBC, 06/05/86).

June 21, 1986: A draft agreement is finalized between the MNF and the central government to end an over two-decade old insurgency. It is expected to be signed soon (Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 06/21/86).

June 25, 1986: India's Cabinet gives its approval to a peace agreement with the Mizo National Front. This is the third agreement negotiated by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's government -- the other two are in Assam and the Punjab (UPI, 06/25/86).

June 26, 1986: The head of the MNF, Laldenga, formally renounces the Mizo insurgency and makes plans to take over as interim Chief Minister. The agreement between the two sides follows a year and a half of negotiations. Laldenga, who is 60 years old, has spent much of the last 20 years in jail or exile. He calls upon his forces to lay down their arms once the agreement is signed. Estimates indicate a rebel force of 400 to 700. Over 1500 people have died during the over 20 year insurgency (New York Times, 06/26/86).

July 2, 1986: A Memorandum of Settlement is signed on June 30 in New Delhi between Union Home Secretary R.D. Pradhan, MNF leader Laldenga, and the Chief Secretary of Mizoram, Lalkhama. The key points of the agreement include:

- 1) the MNF will end all underground activities and bring out all personnel, arms, and equipment to ensure a return to civilian life.
- 2) the MNF will amend its constitution to conform to the provisions of the law. It commits itself to abjure violence and to help restore normalcy.
- 3) the MNF agrees not to provide any support in the form of training, arms, or protection to any insurgent groups including the Tripura Tribal National Volunteers and the People's Liberation Army of Manipur.
- 4) the government will take steps to promote the rehabilitation of underground MNF personnel.
- 5) the federal government will begin the process of granting full statehood to Mizoram.
- 6) elections will be held soon after statehood is conferred. In the interim, MNF leader Laldenga and the MNF will govern Mizoram in a coalition with the local Congress (I). Laldenga will hold the position of Chief Minister (BBC, 07/14/86).
- 7) the government does not provide a commitment to the MNF demand for the unification into Mizoram of Mizo-inhabited areas in other states (BBC, 07/02/86).
- 8) constitutional safeguards will be enacted to preserve the Mizo culture and religion (Christianity). Other Indians will be required to have special passes to enter the area (Reuters,

07/09/86).

9) amnesty will be granted to those MNF insurgents who voluntarily come overground. But the issue of those in jail will be reviewed later (BBC, 07/14/86). Ali says this was done to avoid a repeat of 1976 when the accord did not materialize and Laldenga and his followers went underground and continued their campaign (Ali 1993, 41).

MNF leader Laldenga denies conventional wisdom that the Mizo insurgency broke out as a result of a crippling famine in Mizoram in 1959. This was the year that he set up the Mizo National Famine Front, the forerunner of the MNF. Laldenga asserts that Mizoram was never historically a part of India -- having no cultural or linguistic affinity with the broader India (Reuters, 07/09/86).

Ali says that two decades of war had not achieved much so the chance to reach a settlement provided a welcome alternative. He says that Laldenga later admitted that the movement was losing its Christian character at the expense of Communist radicalism (Ali 1993, 41).

Bhaumik says this settlement differs from others — for example, the Shilling Accord between the government and the Nagas — in that New Delhi waited before giving its final approval to ensure that no MNF factions were left out of the negotiating process. He states that other accords have failed as all the factions of a group did not sign onto the agreements (Bhaumik 1996, 191).

PHASE V. POST-HOSTILITIES PHASE

July 14, 1986: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi says that the center will undertake all possible efforts to promote peace and development in Mizoram. But he rules out the idea of a Greater Mizoram, a proposal that was previously rejected by the chief ministers of the northeastern region (BBC, 07/14/86).

July 16, 1986: Prime Minister Gandhi and Bangladeshi President Ershad will cooperate to check the movement of rebel Mizos and Chakmas across their common border. Ershad also promises a quick repatriation of an estimated 20,000 Chakma refugees located in India's northeast. The refugees fled Bangladesh where the Chakmas have been involved in an autonomy/secession struggle for the past couple of decades (Inter Press Service, 07/16/86).

July 31, 1986: India's Home Minister Buta Singh assures Parliament that Mizoram will not be granted any special status under a recently negotiated peace agreement. Singh also reiterates that there will be no Greater Mizoram. Members of Parliament have expressed concern that Mizoram will be allowed to have border trade with neighboring countries. However Singh says daily trade in perishables already occurs between some Indian states and neighboring countries (BBC, 07/31/86).

August 2, 1986: MNF leader Laldenga says that all MNF insurgents have come overground and turned in their arms and equipment (BBC, 08/02/86).

PHASE VI. SETTLEMENT PHASE

August 7, 1986: Mizoram is declared the 23rd state of the Indian Union on August 5. The Constitution 53rd Amendment Bill is also passed to ensure protection of the social customs and laws of the tribal peoples. Authorities also report that some 535 MNF personnel have come overground (BBC, 08/07/86).

August 20, 1986: The ban on the Mizo National Front is lifted. The federal government repeals the measure following notification that the MNF has discarded its constitution and abrogated the March 1966 declaration of independence of Mizoram (BBC, 08/20/86).

August 21, 1986: MNF leader Laldenga is sworn in as the Chief Minister of the state of Mizoram. His cabinet will be comprised of three MNF members and five ministers from the Congress (I) party. Elections will likely be held within the next year (UPI, 08/21/86).

August 25, 1986: Chief Minister Laldenga announces a general amnesty for all MNF members who have come overground (BBC, 08/25/86).

November 21, 1986: The All-India Congress (I) Workers' Convention, a group of private individuals, expresses concern that the Mizo accord will encourage separatist forces in the country. It also indicates that the results of the Punjab and Assam Accords are disappointing (BBC, 09/18/86).

January 14, 1987: The first elections since Mizoram attained statehood will be held on February 16. Voters will pick candidates for an enlarged 40-seat legislature (BBC, 01/14/87).

February 19, 1987: The Mizo National Front captures a majority in state elections, becoming the first insurgency movement to be elected to rule an Indian state. An estimated 60% of the half million population vote in the polls and no violence is reported. The MNF wins 24 out of the 40 seats in the state assembly, followed by the Congress (I) with 13 and the People's Conference with 3. (Ali says that the MNF share of the vote is 36.5% while that of the Congress is 33% [1993, 41]). MNF leader Laldenga will assume the Chief Ministership. Indications are that both the government and the MNF have lived up to the conditions of the peace agreement they signed last summer. Laldenga promises a major program of social reform, along with the promotion of self-reliance and vigorous support for the agricultural and communication sectors (UPI, 02/16/87; Washington Post, 02/19/87; Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 02/20/87).

February 25, 1987: A former MNF leader says that their fight was not for independence but for the social, political, and economic preservation of the Mizo community. Mizo fears of being overwhelming by outsiders are partly based on the situation in neighboring Tripura where Bangladeshis now outnumber the tribals. Further, Mizoram is fairly sparsely populated and rich

in mineral and hydroelectric potential which raises concerns that as India's population density increases there will be a movement to the state. Under the peace agreement negotiated last June, all outsiders, foreigners and other Indians, are required to obtain special passes to enter Mizoram. Foreigners have only been allowed in Mizoram since last year, following 20 years of being denied entry (Times Mirror Company, 02/25/87).

March 30, 1988: Eight people are killed and 30 injured when Indian troops confront a mob that breaks into their camp in Mizoram. The mob accuses the Assam Rifles of assaulting a police officer. Assemblies are banned in the state capital, Aizawal, but a workers' strike is held (Reuters, 03/30/88).

April 4, 1988: The Assam Rifles are withdrawn from Mizoram following incidents in which 9 are killed and another 36 injured (BBC, 04/04/88).

August 30, 1988: A split within the ruling Mizo National Front reduces Chief Minister Laldenga's faction to a minority in the state assembly. Nine of the MNF's 25 legislators form a new party called the Mizo National Front (Democratic). The split occurs over Laldenga's unilateral suspension of two party members. The new MNF faction reportedly wants to form a government with the Congress (Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 08/30/88). Ali asserts that the Congress party engineers the split as it wants to weaken the MNF administration (1993, 41).

September 7, 1988: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi declares President's Rule in Mizoram. The announcement is reportedly in response to infighting in the ruling MNF party (UPI, 09/07/88).

During this time, the Congress allegedly attempts to gain the support of the local population by providing grants and other economic development programs. Ali says that the ultimate irony is that while the MNF gained politically what it could not militarily, it is unable to cope with the challenges of multi-party democracy (1993, 42).

December 13, 1988: The Election Commission says that state elections will be held in Mizoram on January 21, 1989 (UPI, 12/13/88).

January 24, 1989: Prime Minister Gandhi's Congress (I) wins a majority in state elections in Mizoram. The Congress captures at least 22 of the 40 assembly seats. The Mizo National Front wins 14 seats and its leader, Laldenga, even loses his seat. Charges of corruption are hurled by both sides (Reuters, 01/24/89).

January 26, 1989: A coalition Congress (I) and Mizo National Front (Democratic) cabinet is sworn in. Lalthanhawla of the Congress (I) assumes the Chief Ministership (BBC, 01/26/89).

November 30, 1989: Rajiv Gandhi steps down as India's Prime Minister following general

elections. The Congress (I) receives the largest number of seats, 190 out of 543 seats, but is still short of a majority. The National Front coalition captures 140 seats and the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party 90. The National Front under Vishwanath Pratap Singh will form a coalition government (Los Angeles Times, 11/30/89).

July 7, 1990: Laldenga, insurgent leader and politician, Chief Minister of Mizoram (1986-88), dies of lung cancer in London. He is referred to as the Father of the Nation by many Mizos. As President of the Mizo National Front (MNF), Laldenga secured statehood for Mizoram after a 25-year struggle for the ethnic identity of the Mizo people whose territory was annexed by the British and made part of the state of Assam. After years of active involvement in the insurgency (since the early 1960s), 10 years of exile in neighboring Dhaka and Karachi, years of house arrest in New Delhi, and decades of tough bargaining with three successive Indian Prime Ministers, Laldenga won the battle in 1986. Mizoram became India's twenty-third state. Laldenga also persuaded warring Mizos to lay down their arms, initiated the MNF into the national mainstream as a political party and ensured his election as Chief Minister (The Independent, 07/13/90).

In 1988 the ruling Congress-I party led by former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi brought about defections in the MNF resulting in Laldenga's dismissal as Chief Minister. Since then he had been a potent, yet powerless figure in Mizoram (Ibid.).

May 23, 1991: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is assassinated in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu by a female suicide bomber. It is suspected that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are seeking an independent state in Sri Lanka, are responsible.

September 11, 1992: Student protestors clash with police in Aizawal as they attack shops and vehicles of "outsiders". The students are upset that the children of outsiders have been admitted to local medical colleges at the expense of natives. More than 70 people are injured and a curfew is imposed in the capital (Reuters, 09/11/92).

December 18, 1992: The central government plans to issue identity cards to all residents in the northeastern states (Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 12/18/92).

1993: S. Mahmud Ali says that the People's Conference Party is still demanding a Greater Mizoram that would unite all the Mizos in Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, and Assam and those in the Arakan and Chin Hills of Burma into a single political unit. Brigadier Sailo, the party leader, appears to have some support among Mizo youth who are members of his unarmed Zoro Reunification Organization. Ali asserts that a Greater Mizoram movement could be much more disruptive than the MNF ever was (1993, 43).

August 11, 1993: Transportation services are shut down in six northeastern states including

Mizoram as part of a 12-hour strike called by student organizations. The students are attempting to press the federal government to stop the influx of people from Bangladesh and Nepal. The students estimate there are 3 million people from Burma, Bangladesh, and Nepal in the northeastern states. They assert that these people are protected by political parties who register the illegal immigrants as voters to strengthen their political bases (Reuters, 08/11/93).

December 5, 1993: India's ruling Congress-I party and a local ally, the Mizoram Janata Dal (MSD, Peoples' Party), win a majority in the 40-seat state assembly elections held on November 30. Official results show Congress winning 16 of the 40 seats, with its ally, the MJD, taking 8. "With more than 80 percent literacy in the state, Mizos are conscientious voters", a senior Congress official told Reuters (12/05/93). But the Congress loses 7 seats that it had won in 1989. The party's local leader, Lalthanhawla, calls the losses "unexpected setbacks". The victory of the two-party coalition in Mizoram will further boost embattled Indian Prime Minister Rao's political fortunes. The MNF captures 14 seats and pro-MNF independents win 2 (Ibid.).

February 2, 1994: Some 30 families claiming to be descendants of the lost tribe of Manasseh are waiting in Mizoram for final approval to immigrate to Israel. This follows the immigration of 90 Mizo Jews to Israel two years ago. Scholar Mrs. Zaithanchhungi suggests that the Mizos are one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel who drew God's wrath for disobeying him and are currently dispersed over 72 countries. The nearly 5,000-strong Mizo Jewish community is spread over the regions of Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland in India and north Myanmar (The Jerusalem Post, 02/21/94).

February 17, 1994: C. Silvera is appointed as a federal Minister of State for the Health and Welfare Ministry. He is the first person from Mizoram to become a federal minister (Reuters, 02/17/94).

August 1994: The prospect that up to 300 million Indians could claim to be Israelites and seek entry into Israel has raised alarm bells among Israeli officials. Thousands of Mizos claim that they are descendants of the tribe of Manasseh, one of the ten tribes of Israel that have been lost for the past 2400 years. But Israelis are not convinced that the Mizos, among other Indians, are actually Jewish. Under Israeli law, all Jews and their families are entitled to settle in Israel. Recently, 57 immigrants from Manipur and Mizoram arrived in Israel and another 60 have applied for visas (Xinhua News Agency, Aug. 28/94; Deutsche Press-Agentur, 09/03/94).

July 8, 1995: The Indian government lifts a long-time ban on the stay of foreigners in the country's eastern states. The move is expected to help promote foreign investment (Xinhua News Agency, 07/08/95).

December 13, 1996: The northeastern states will soon have a separate export policy to expand

their ties with Southeast Asian states. Export promotion industrial parks and export processing zones are planned in Manipur and Mizoram. The moves follow the formalization of border trade between India and Burma (Business Standard, 12/13/96).

January 5, 1997: Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh are reported to be the only peaceful states among the Seven Sisters, the term used to refer to India's seven northeastern states (Reuters, 01/05/97).

India and Bangladesh sign a pact to combat cross-border terrorism. The move comes amid Bangladeshi efforts to reopen talks with the Chittagong Hill Tribals (also referred to as Chakmas) to reach a peace settlement. The influx of Bangladeshi migrants into India's northeastern states remains an issue of contention in Mizoram (Asia Times, 03/12/97).

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Appendix A: Internal Conflicts Phase Scheme

Phase I. Conventional mobilization. A political/communal group organizes in pursuit of collective objectives, relying on conventional and nonviolent strategies of political action.

Phase II. Militant mobilization. A political/communal group organizes in pursuit of collective objectives, developing capacities for disruptive and violent strategies of political action.

Phase IIIa. Low-level hostilities. A political/communal group makes limited, localized, selective use of disruptive and violent strategies; the regime makes limited and selective use of reactive force.

Phase IIIb. High-level hostilities. A political/communal group, or the regime, or both use intense, widespread, and organized armed violence against their opponent.

Phase IVa. Talk-fight. Discussions and negotiations are pursued, or cease-fires are declared, while substantial armed violence continues. Fighting may be done by the principals themselves (for example as a bargaining tactic) or by factions that reject dispute settlement.

Phase IVb. Cessation of open hostilities. Fighting largely ceases but one or both principals remain prepared to resume armed violence if settlement efforts fail.

Phase V. Post-hostilities phase. Interim or partial settlements are in place and accepted by most parties and factions; demobilization, disarmament, and stand-downs are underway.

Phase VI. Settlement phase. A final settlement or agreement is accepted by most parties and is being implemented.