

**POLICIES AND
PRACTICES**

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Government of Peace

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Introduction

In the liberal science of government the phenomenon of resistance becomes an occasion for reforms and the continuity of the liberal way to rule, which means ultimately combining security with freedom and coercion with normal ways of administration and governance. In this way liberal way to rule becomes the original form of politics. It becomes the original form because it appears to rise above and subsume the physicalities of partition, colonialism, war, borders and boundaries; conflicts, and struggles, and suggests the liberal combining of freedom, order, and security as the permanent way to conduct governance and rule. By definition then, such rule shows awareness of an original dilemma of governance, namely, how much to govern and how much to leave to society; likewise, how much to coerce and how much to produce consent of the subjects and rely on that consent in order to rule. The question of *ratio* is thus at the core of the problematic of liberal governance.

There is no scope here of reciprocal gestures of life vis-à-vis death and destruction, also no scope of making dialogue the principal instrument of governance. Therefore, there is only premature closure of alternative histories and possibilities of existence through self-government. Ironically this means also a closure of the language of politics, forcing separation between subjects and subjectivities, and an attempt to expel the subject from the system of rule and governance, while accommodating mellowed yet separate subjectivities as the epiphenomena of liberal life. The liberal science of government therefore ideally likes to appear as plural, inherently trans-boundary in its practice, seamless in approach and reach, efficacy and life.

Notwithstanding this appearance the liberal way to rule has a long contentious history it likes to hide. One of the ways in which this seamlessness becomes an important feature of liberal governance is through the appearance of this rule as *the government of peace*, by which I mean a special type of governance that makes social conflicts disappear or at least manageable, contradictions a matter of imagination or at least temporary, and schisms of society a guide to or at least an occasion for social development. This is the origin of social governance. Social governance aims at making the society the stakeholder of ways of governance, therefore its policies are aimed at identifying and involving the stakeholders (beneficiary groups, groups locked in conflict, etc.). In execution of policies, though, its claim is taller, namely that the stakeholders are also involved in policy framing. We can easily see how this presents a crucial dimension of the liberal way to rule. Earlier liberalism took war and peace as necessary phases of political and social life. And, though Immanuel Kant spoke of perpetual peace as a necessary pre-condition for liberal life and constitutionalism as a pre-condition for perpetual peace,¹ yet it has taken in Europe more than 150 years of experience of raging wars, conflicts, and contradictions in society for liberal rule to expound the norms and strategies of social governance. In India, the first rules of social governance evolved in the context of widespread agrarian and labour unrest in the country in the sixties and seventies of the last century,

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taking on its current dimensions, as conflicts raged in the Northeast and several other parts subsequently. In the Northeast social governance has been mostly rudimentary, yet the effect of its introduction has been magical. Insurgency crumbled, if not disappeared with expansion of government. Money became more available, the salaried sector increased, trade developed, and society became more attuned to market-oriented life. The development of a trading class accompanied by other non-productive sectors of society became among others pronounced features of a conflict-torn society.

This of course is the story of growth of capitalism everywhere, yet in the Northeast and other conflict areas it has left a significant impact on old patterns of conflicts and insurgencies. Social governance has turned out to be one of the crucial features of the government of peace.

Colonial Foundations of Peace-Building

In this context it will not be exaggeration to say that modern governance structures emerged in India as part of the broader imperative of colonial peace-building, simply because the society that was to be governed was ridden with conflicts and contradictions characteristic of colonial rule and thus marked with violence and an absence of social peace. Governing meant governing conflicts. Thus from the beginning the main challenge to this specific grammar of governing a colonial country was in finding adequate forms of coping with various reactions and responses of the suppressed groups in society, who faced the problem of power of an alien sovereign. Hence bereft of legitimacy and representative character, sovereign power had to always find a model of governance, which would inhere military efficacy, yet would retain civilian character. This sort of an enigmatic character of governance produced the permanent need for a special type of power, perhaps to be described in Michel Foucault's words, a phenomenon... "at once visible and invisible, present and hidden, ubiquitous",² that could not be exhausted by the nineteenth and twentieth century theories of government and peace building.

What gave power then to the recalcitrant population? How did this recalcitrance produce a sort of counter-power, and in what sphere/s? Thus, even though a government knew with reasonable certainty as to who were the rebellious, its mechanisms could not tell it: what did the recalcitrant population want? Therefore governmental reason oscillated between policies of domination and of producing consensus among the elites in the society. Yet it this paradoxical requirement of rule that in the long run led to the awareness among governing circles about issues of social governance. Conquest spoke of race, domination, war, suppression, mutiny, revolt, etc – all of which played key role in producing structures of governance; yet governance needed consensus. Caught in this paradox the grammar of rule could be based on neither continued suppression nor full cooption. Instead it had to be based on the practices of governing conflicts, which came to be accepted as permanent features of a colonised society. Recalcitrance could not be erased; it could not be effaced. Hence it had to be controlled and governed with restraint and necessary violence. In the eyes of the government recalcitrance was a matter of highly suspicious practices, potentially dangerous. Recalcitrance was thus a matter of *conduct* that had to be controlled, governed. As we shall see in the following pages this line of reasoning would lead soon to a twofold permanent strategy for governing the disaffected groups – one, the strategy of representation, and second, shaping the civilian way of doing things in the same orderly way in which military affairs were conducted. Indeed the civilian would begin at every stage of government from the military roots, and if possible with the military model in mind. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, the entire nineteenth century development of constitutional government in India (including the enactments such as the Indian

Evidence Act, Indian Penal Code, establishment of Governor-General's Council, Indian Criminal Procedure Code, Indian Police Act, etc.) depended at every stage or phase on a successful resolution of a conflict by armed means.³ All these built up in time certain foundations of post-colonial rule: To list them briefly these were:

- (a) The state had to be strong, sovereignty could not be shared under any circumstances, and administrative and police measures if appropriately formulated would work;
- (b) It meant a thin boundary between punitive, suppressive measures and civilian measures of governance;
- (c) Therefore conflicts could be allowed to linger till the proper mixture of the civilian and the repressive measures produced peace; thus the adversary of the state had to be softened up enough through a mix of strong responses and almost deliberate delay in addressing demands; and this was the way in which all negotiations between the colonial state and the nationalist movement went;
- (d) And thus, the assumption that suitable time must arrive before peace building measures were initiated;
- (e) Limited grant of autonomy was the best solution; that was the main message of the India Act of 1935; the Act provided two more messages as norms of governance - constitutionalism and rule of law were planks to retain stability of rule, and faith in the effectiveness of a policy of territorial reorganisation including methods of partition and boundary-making exercises towards reinforcing control;
- (f) Finally the colonial experiences of statecraft also resulted in the classic governmental assumption that struggles for justice were in essence inter-group conflict for parity.

These were the premises of what can be called the principle of ratio determination, and these premises are significant equally for our time. The colonial history of peacekeeping, pacification (recall the colonial origins of extra-ordinary legislations), limited franchise, techniques of negotiations, divide and rule, and finally constitutionalism – all these help us to understand the core period of the development of colonial governmental techniques of maintaining peace. I am referring here to the period from the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (better known as the Morley-Minto Reforms) to the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935. These techniques still act as guidelines of modern peace building efforts in India.

What were the salient developments in this period towards peace building? We shall speak here of four such.

First, there was the idea of the responsible government. Thus even though under the 1935 Act some measure of autonomy to the provinces of British India was granted, the Act provided final powers for the Union Government in the event the provincial government conducted irresponsibly. People were to be responsible for their conduct that is to say they had to behave responsibly as subjects of rule of law; provincial government had to discharge responsibility to the union government so that constitutional order could maintain itself; the union government had to be responsible to the Queen so that the liberal empire could serve its historical mission; and finally the Queen had the mission to look after the development and welfare of the subjects till they grew into citizens. In this discriminatory history of responsibility lay the roots of liberal peace building.

Second, provinces were reorganized (for instance, Sind was separated from Bombay, and Bihar and Orissa were separated from each other, Bengal was temporarily divided), thus making territorial reorganization as potent tool to tackle dissent.

Third, direct elections were introduced as the basic premise of liberal order (the introduction of direct elections thus increasing the franchise from seven million to thirty-five million people), so that resolution of any conflict was to be found in elections – and we can now find its echo in Nagaland, Kashmir, etc. and in many other conflict ridden countries.

Fourth, a federal court was established. With it developed the idea of a heavenly source of mandating the principles of rule of law and responsible conduct.

One can mention other principles. However, in brief, we can say that we have inherited a colonial constitutional culture that does not mitigate conflicts or encourage dialogues, but gives a long rope to arbitrariness. Equally this colonial history tells us how the lessons of managing Irish dissent was implemented in India by colonial officials, and vice versa; similarly Indian lessons in the colonial era were taken to rule Kenya. The principles mentioned above became in time norms for the operation of post-colonial governmentality as a mode of managing conflicts. Techniques introduced and honed in one theatre of conflict were used with increased effectiveness in another theatre. Premises and processes were mixed in this process. In fact we should not look too much for premises of governance, that is, in original motives or moments, but closely examine the processes of post-colonial governance. In the post-colonial situation, available forms of self-government (franchise, limited autonomy, decentralisation, public hearings, etc.) gradually became sites of contentions and the next round of the perennial conflict between those who govern and those who are governed. Yet we must remember that not only these principles were re-affirmed in post-colonial time (such as, elaboration of norms of responsible politics through rounds of administrative, fiscal, financial, and legal reforms), reorganising the component states, establishing the protocol of vote as the alternative to dissent, insubordination, and rebellion, and finally, affirming rule of law through judicial mechanisms), they became the basis of other technologies of ratio determination.

The colonial roots of liberal peace building are therefore important to remember, more because in studying the origins of modern governmentality the colonial roots often go unnoticed. Yet these colonial roots tell us the reason behind the perennial search of the government to find the right mix of violence and persuasion, civilian mode and military mode, statistical mode and the cultural mode, and the representative mode and exceptional mode. They also remind us of what Charles Tilly wrote nearly thirty years back in his famous essay, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime”,⁴ that the task of protection is the nodal point on which the two axes meet - those of war making and state making. Social governance emerges from this intersection. Tilly mentioned three actors in this process: citizens in general, a single self-interested monarch, the managers themselves.⁵ These three actors are still present in the theatre of conflicts, namely the population to be governed, the sovereign, and the bureaucracy. What he did not include in this analysis, is the social consequences of this process, namely that the task of protection would eventually assume the form of social governance. Government protects the population from conflicts in society; it provides them security by various means; it stabilizes them by providing them territory; and yet these are never enough for to protect them. They must be helped to become “social citizens”, that is individuals with social dignity existing as subjects of governance. The story of Marshall,⁶ we must admit, is not that far from the one sketched out by Tilly, the only difference being that while Marshall found out that with the achievement of trade union rights and other social rights people became proper citizens, in the post-colonial countries people have to be enabled to become actors in the modern market, rational actors who would abjure the path of violence and rationally act on the choices that the system offers. This is guaranteed by social governance, which brings in its wake an enormous expansion of governmental and financial machinery to offer “protection” to the people endangered by conflicts and the ravages of economy and disease.

There are at least two consequences of this style of governance. First is the loss of the dialogic culture of society. The Indian society, like all societies, had (and still has) dialogic aspects of its culture of conflict resolution, though these dialogic aspects are not institutionalised in governance structures, or are so to only limited extent. Second, in place of conflicts over rights, claims, and justice, we witness conflicts in the market buoyant with loose money (promoted by crony capitalism and massive expenditure by governments on infrastructure) and the entry of new economic actors, who are mainly salaried groups, contractors, and bosses of the formal and informal credit market. With this double transformation economics becomes the core of politics, in other words politics is conducted in an economic way; resource question becomes “development” question, which now becomes the proxy name of accumulation; capital and globalisation become the critical factors in the metamorphosis; and finally popular politics becomes at times “neo-racist”. In that sense government of peace is the modular form of governance. Even though conflicts will return after some time, and the economic development this governance has promoted will create the new *sans culottes* of the society – large chunks of impoverished people without land, jobs, and access to resources and depending of governmental programmes for survival. The earlier self-sustaining or self-producing economy that had propelled conflicts now gives place to post-colonial capitalism, which transforms the nature of conflicts. Government of peace at the heart of which is social governance is the mode of such transformation. We shall come back again to these issues in the course of this essay.

We can make one more remark before we move on to an examination of the dynamics of post-colonial governance and peace building. Between the colonial premises of peace building and the post-colonial political governance of peace there will be a series of continuities, supports, relays, conjunctions, parallels, and discontinuities, so that these would be treated in political history as two distinct forms of exercise of power to maintain peace; and the colonial form would be regarded as absolutely specific to a country like India. While the modern agenda of peace building has an inherently colonial dimension to it given its global dimension, it remains an enigma, as to why and how has the colonial form been treated as distinct and not universal, as if the two forms of exercise of power to maintain peace have completely separate physiognomies? I think if we are talking of the ratio, then the relation between these two forms also puts forward the question of ratio – between the reason of sovereignty and government, regulations and law, conflict and economy, and between the mode of acquiring power and governing. As if, the end of the colonial period is telling us that the art of governing and maintaining peace is no longer a question of how power was acquired. The problem of origin is over, and we are already in a world of government. As we shall see, with this posture, the post-colonial state has already got an advantage over its adversaries. It is no longer a matter of state and sovereignty, but of governing well in the interest of peace.

The problem then of studying post-colonial governance and peace will be: What sense do we make of the repeated claims by the rebel groups in the Northeast that they would not submit to the sovereign power of Delhi, while Delhi will keep on saying that sovereignty of the nation cannot be compromised. I suggest, and I think that the following material will lend support to my argument, namely, that behind this battle over sovereignty another, perhaps a more fundamental, process will be on, namely, the settlement of the question as to who will govern these societies, what will be the structures, how indeed the state will be constituted here, what will be the nature (the extent of the mix) of the population and the organisation of the territory. These diverse questions, direct legacy of the colonial rule, reflected the diverse practices of the government there. They will form, if you like, the silent agenda of the growing political knowledge behind the din of battle over sovereignty.

Peace Accords as Part of Post-Colonial Governance and Peace Building

So there are specifics in the ways the colonial foundation of the government of peace. has maintained. Let us now speak of the discontinuities and the new developments in the field of governance and conflict management and resolution. The post-colonial history of conflict management shows that social governance is always accompanied or preceded by peace accords. The significance of this dual strategy was beyond colonial intelligibility, because the colonial mode of governance was based primarily on a policy of extraction. However post-colonial governance has shown surprising awareness to the potentiality of this dual technique. In case of acute conflicts the government pursues the practice of peace accords, which form one of main features of the conflict resolution scenario in India, the middle ground in a no-war-no-peace situation. Such a ground needs to be thoroughly investigated because on one hand it represents the desire for peace in society, on the other hand it shows how forms of peacemaking are governmentalised no sooner are they invented. In fact they appear as governmental logic. They become the other aspect of a state making agenda if war making is its one aspect. Peacemaking becomes the alternative form of state making. These peace accords become barring some exceptions the occasions for the next rounds of conflict. To be truthful, government initiated institutional sites conceal many of the dialogic practices, which remain as subaltern practices of peace making. They are like minor knowledges or insurgent knowledges of peace, suppressed by the dominant forces, and whose formal traces are mostly erased. Therefore we have seen how peace campaigners in Kashmir or the Northeast have been persistently attacked and in many cases killed and removed from the scene of contention.⁷

In Northeast the classic instance however is the fate of the Peace Mission in Nagaland after it submitted the 17 point note in 1964. It will be worthwhile to listen to some of what the Mission said.

In the note it said of the impact of peace talks and ceasefire, “Today, people are returning to their normal occupation. Families are being reunited, the biggest harvest for many years has been gathered and there is a feeling of hope in Nagaland which makes every delegate engaged in the peace talk only too conscious of the tasks that are taken. In all this, it is fair to pay tribute not only to the Government of India for their humanity and imagination but also to the leaders of the Baptist Church for whom this initiative was the result of much thought and prayerful consideration of the good India and Nagaland.” The Peace Mission further noted that differences of opinion between the Nagas and the Indian government still remained over the legitimacy of the Naga demand for sovereign statehood, but continued dialogue over possible common ground had to continue. Then it said,

Though the two positions appear to be far, the peace Mission believes that, with good will and understanding on both sides, a situation acceptable to both can be found. ...The Peace Mission further believes that the Governments concerned and people concerned share and subscribe to this view.

While the Peace Mission fully agrees to endorse the principle that all subject people have the right to self-determination and that no group of people is competent to rule over another, it also has to invite the attention of the Nagaland Federal Government to certain historical processes that had taken place to give birth to the Union of India and to the emergence of the great concepts and ideals underlying the Union Constitution.

The British had conquered... various parts of the Indian subcontinent, comprising different ethnic groups, political systems and religious beliefs. However, under the aegis of the Indian National Congress and since 1920, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, these various different people, representing diverse against foreign colonial rule and developed a consciousness of nationhood. Unfortunately, this common struggle against foreign imperialism that had welded these diverse people

in India subcontinent into one nation did not somehow have an appreciable impact on Nagas. This was no doubt, due to the policy of isolation and exclusion so deftly practiced by British rulers, who believed in creating pockets contrary to each other and hoping to rule in perpetuity by dividing the people. In any case, this great national movement of unification which freed India including Nagaland from the yoke of foreign rule did not bring within its embracing sweep the Naga population to the same extent as it did the diverse people of India who had been brought under British rule, voluntarily agreed to form the Union of India and to share in the common endeavour to ensure that in this great Union the ideals of Fraternity, Liberty, Justice and Equality, as enshrined in the Constitution are fully achieved for the common benefit of all, the same response and sense of participation was not noticeable in the Naga areas.

The Peace Mission, in the circumstances appreciates and understands the desire of the Nagas for self-determination and their urge to preserve their integrity. The Peace Mission also appreciates the courage and tenacity, displayed by the Naga people in their endeavour to achieve this goal... It is however, to be noted that this declaration, in itself, does not resolve the political issues. Therefore, some appropriate meeting point has to be found, where the aims and ideals of the NFG can be achieved at the same time, making it possible for the Government of India to accept those within the framework of the political settlement to be mutually agreed upon.

The Peace Mission in the pursuit of settlement through peaceful means...would like both the Government of India and NFG to consider seriously whether such a meeting point could be reached. On the one hand, the NFG could on their own volition, decide to be participant in the Union of India, and mutually settle the terms and conditions for that purpose. On the other hand, the Government of India could consider to what extent the pattern and structure of the relationship the Nagaland and the Government of India should be adapted and recast, so as to satisfy the political aspirations of all sections of Naga opinion and to make it possible for the ideals of peace as expressed in the Naga Peace Declaration to be substantially realized...

With that object in view, the Peace Mission offered certain suggestions, whereupon both the parties had unequivocally affirmed and declared that they would renounce war and violence as a means for political settlement. This declaration of renunciation of war and use of armed force, it is earnestly emphasized, must not be deviated from by any means. This Peace Mission proposal, following this bilateral declaration of renunciation of war, to deposit all underground arms in safe custody and to withdraw all Indian Security Forces from law and order duties could not unfortunately be implemented.⁸

How did it happen and why did the Mission fail? According to L. Kaiso, Secretary, Naga National Council, the third Nagaland Baptist Convention at Wokha in late January-early February 1964 was well attended by representatives from different Associations of Nagaland. The Convention had unanimously passed a resolution to set up a Peace Mission with an eye to find out ways and means in order to restore peace and normalcy as well as a peaceful solution of the Indo-Naga conflict. Following this resolution, a Nagaland Peace Mission was set up with the followings as members: Late Jayaprakash Narayan, a Sarvodaya leader, Late Reverend Michael Scott; a British citizen and, Late Bimala Prasad Chaliha, the then Chief Minister of Assam. Concerned church leaders of Nagaland had persuaded the Government of India to relax the Indian Army operation for 8 days in 4 villages. As a result the church leaders along with Rev. Michael Scott walked through jungle paths and rain and reached Zeliangrong Region and met the leaders of the Federal Government of Nagaland. They together discussed ways and means to bring about an Indo-Naga Cease-fire. As a consequence of the initiative negotiations began and Cessation of Hostilities was announced on 6 September 1964. Peace talks commenced on 23 September 1964 first at Chedema village in the Angami Region. However, in the 6th round of Peace Talks in Delhi held in October 1967 the discussion between the Prime Minister of India and the head of the Federal Government of Nagaland (also called the Prime Minister of the Federal Government) reached a deadlock. Following

the deadlock the atmosphere in Naga areas became uneasy. Suspicion between the two sides and between the moderates and the hardliners increased resulting in clashes, deaths, and individual killings. Later the Indian Government unilaterally abrogated the Indo-Naga Cease-fire in August, 1972. Meanwhile Reverend Scott was forced to return to England, and the Peace Mission ended in 1966,⁹ even though dialogues continued thereafter through decades resulting at times in ceasefires. But if ceasefire has actualised, peace has not returned. Conflict remains perennial - in tide and ebb.

These conversations are as instructive as the still continuing Naga peace talks between NSCN (I-M) and the Government of India. We have already referred to the Naga Peace Mission. The ill fated Akbar Hyderi Accord between the Nagas and the then Governor of Assam, Akbar Hyderi (1947) and then the sixteen-point agreement between the Nagas and the Government of India (1960) had preceded the Peace Mission. Clearly these dialogues had set up a model of agreement, which later peace dialogues found difficult to escape. Characteristic of such dialogues are the inevitable legal shackles on discussion between the two adversaries in the name of obligations to the Constitution, top level presence of government leaders and officials giving an appearance of state recognition of the adversary, prolonging ceasefire without conceding anything substantive from the government side, grant of limited autonomy, and introducing various interim arrangements that take a life of their own and continue without ever giving over to a resolution of the question.¹⁰

One of the recent instances of the mixed character of such peace dialogues is the series of conversations taking place in 2005-07 between the Government of India and the People's Consultative Group (PCG) composed of Assamese intellectuals, civil liberty defenders, and lawyers. The PCG was formed by the ULFA to facilitate direct talks between it and the Government. Even this limited mandate proved difficult to execute. As Arup Borbora, one of the key PCG members later recollected, prisoners were not released; security operations continued, delaying and diversionary discussions were initiated by security and government officials during the talks. The Prime Minister though present initially withdrew from contributing to the substantive points of discussions leaving these to be decided by high intelligence and home officials. Even the Home Minister followed suit. Within four rounds of talks spanning over two years it was clear to PCG that there would be no substantive outcome. Meanwhile patience of the rebels broke down and they committed violent acts. Innocent lives were lost. Also various sections of society wondered aloud about the purpose of these talks, which gradually lost their legitimacy. The euphoria and expectations at the ground level petered out. With cynicism returning, the PCG was disbanded.¹¹

These structural features of post-colonial government of peace show why maintaining middle space and engineering ways of continuing dialogues on justice are the two most challenging tasks of peace building, because the fate of these determines the shape of the peace to come. They are challenging because while these tasks represent the subaltern desire for peace with justice, they confront at the same time formidable obstructions in the form of governmental techniques of negotiations that combine threats, coercion, inordinate delay, and persuasion. Governmental techniques of peace building are based on the idea of a war-peace continuum. Therefore the logic of the continuum prevents most of the time any definitive turn towards peace through acknowledging the incipient demands for justice that had given rise to conflict in the first place. Dialogues emerge as significant moments in this continuum. These dialogues in fact result in certain features of the governance structures – such as the appearance of the government in power in the state as a “caretaker” one till the “genuinely representative” government comes to power and takes over, the existence of a sort of dual power, and policies to incorporate the elites of several sections of society in the governance structures (with instruments such as gender budgeting).

In *Fearless Speech* Michel Foucault speaks of the rules of dialogue as the basis of the hermeneutics of the subject¹² – in this case the subject who politically engages, or engages in politics. Who can speak fearlessly? What are the conditions under which the speaker is tempted to speak unafraid – unafraid of consequences, because either s/he knows that it does not matter if his/her head is cut off as a consequence of fearless speech, or s/he has been assured that the head will remain? What is the degree to which the speaker will venture in speaking the truth? How can the degree be determined? Is it determined beforehand so that the speaker knows of the limit that cannot be transgressed and therefore s/he respects the degree, or is it decided in the course of the exchange of words, *in situ*, so that the speaker has to take the risk – the risk of truth, and the speaker has to accept the truth of the risk? Or, has there to be a prologue before fearless speech can begin, like extracting assurance from the powerful on whose face the unpalatable truth will be spoken to the effect that no harm will be done to the truth teller, or a prologue that establishes the mutuality of interests in the dialogue and hence the conversation can continue? In all these considerations two processes are in operation: a process of power that involves contests over positions, wealth, control, possessions, social situations, protocols, and rules; second, a process of subject-formation on the basis of the politics of the dialogue.

The lessons of the peace talks also pose the question: Does the adversary of the state in engaging in a particular dialogue take a maximal position or a minimal one? (Any number of instances can come up to our minds – Kashmir dialogues, and pacts including the Tashkent and Shimla Pacts, the Indo-Naga Accords, Indo-Mizo Accord, etc.) We have no way of knowing the answer till history tells us the outcome of that specific battle of war and words. There is no certain answer here – all we can say is that politics is being created here, and dialogue is the site on which the war-peace continuum or if one likes the interregnum is being played out. The dialogues in a civil war are not only addressed to the dialogists, that is the parties engaged in war, they are addressed to an unseen interlocutor as well, the absent partner in this conversation – the nation, the society, which is listening to each word, each gesture from behind the curtain – as if to prepare for the next round of the battle of words. Recognition of truth thus means recognition also of the fact that truth is produced through a contentious process, that the dialogic process is conflictive. This is how in the colonial era the Indian nation listened to the Gandhi-Irwin dialogues, the Gandhi-Jinnah dialogues (including the Lucknow Pact of 1916), Chittaranjan Das-Fazlul Haq (that resulted in Bengal Pact of 1924) or the Gandhi-Ambedkar discussions (Poona Pact of 1932), or the Cabinet Mission confabulations. We must remember that all those events of dialogues addressed the truths of the nation, such as community, religion, caste, civil liberty, freedom of speech, security, territory, etc.

These talks are, in brief, instances of the dual nature of the dialogic act: first, dialogic act as part of conflict and war that is to say its role as a symbol of civility in a war; and second, its contingent nature.¹³ We have seen how in the long and tortuous history of Indo-Naga relations war and peace have co-existed. From the Hyderi agreement to Shillong Accord, war and peace talks continued. Shillong Accord brought only temporary peace. War resumed in less than a decade. And now ceasefire has held for fifteen years though peace in the sense of return of politics has not been concluded. Talks have gone on. Muivah as the head of the Naga rebels has pleaded for sharing of sovereignty and a federalised vision of existence, while he has also demanded the unification of all Naga areas – a demand that has sparked off new conflicts in areas where Nagas have to co-live with others, as in Manipur. We have no way of knowing if Muivah's vision will become a reality. We also cannot predict the axis of compromise. Yet it is clear that these dialogues have had a specific character, and the vision of the rebels has contributed to the dialogue. Politics in this case

continuously mutated between the war form and the dialogic form and the idea of sovereignty exhibited manifold significance in this process of mutation.¹⁴

In its usual juridical form sovereignty appears as indivisible; therefore logically it cannot allow dialogue. Yet dialogues take place between state and its adversaries, who also often raise the standard of sovereignty. This is what the ULFA participants in the peace talks with the Indian government did. The talks took place. What can be the reason? There are several possible answers. Here is one: If we move aside the juridical idea of sovereignty and look at its formation historically, only one period characterised by the growth of centralised state, tended to conform to the juridical idea. Otherwise, sovereignty became possible, let us say in imperial form, precisely because the emperor accepted the possibility of vassals, kings, principedoms, tribute giving units retaining nominal independence, etc. That is how the Rajput princes retained political power under Mughal rule. In other words, sovereignty in actual political history has had a federal component, a structure that allowed sharing of power (though unequally). The form of the nation-state complicates the issue; political federalism complicates it even more. And if the dialogue in question contests the basic structure of distribution of power, then the issue of shared sovereignty becomes complex to a greater extent – in fact to an extent where vested interests in the old structure oppose dialogue tooth and nail. Dialogues thus have a tendency to federalise sovereignty.

Dialogues and wars in the Northeast with alternating regularity demonstrate in this way the governmental logic of treating war and peace as a continuum. We may say that North East is the laboratory where counter-insurgency or pacification measures built on this logic are conceived, tested, and shaped first. One can get a sense see of this by having an overview of the series of governing measures – territorial reorganisation, peace accords, limited autonomy to assertive groups, protracted ceasefire negotiations, regrouping of villages, extensive privatisation, money laundering and other deliberate measures to encourage corruption, elections at gunpoint, accompanied with expansion of rational modes of governance meaning mainly expansion of banking, enlargement of government offices (with nothing to govern), recruitment in army and paramilitary services, ethnic management, anti-migrant measures, border policing of the most virulent type, allowing loot of natural resources such as timber, etc. These measures were not put in place in one day. They have developed over the years.

Of these measures two have been of special importance: territorial reorganisation and introduction of limited autonomy in the states of the Northeast. The autonomous arrangements have reorganised the states internally while the North East Reorganisation Act externally reorganised the states. Possibly of greater importance has been the introduction of autonomy as a result of the peace accords. These autonomous arrangements have been part of the governance structure in the Northeast in states such as Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, and Meghalaya. They influence the pattern of conflicts; they give an idea of the governmental resources to be available for cornering and sharing, the size of the territory to control, and the volume of population to govern. They enable the elites of different ethnic groups to influence politics in a specific way. They are a major dimension of the governance of peace building. In Tripura they proved most successful, while in Assam they reoriented conflict in a fundamental way.¹⁵

It will take a separate book to recount these in details. But at least we can notice here their significance in terms of the sociology of governance and peace building. These autonomous arrangements, and in general the peace accords as an instrument of rule have been able to shift the terrain of contest: from sovereignty to the task of governance, thereby preparing the ground for the introduction of social governance. They have also ironically accomplished one more thing – except in the minds of certain visionaries and rebellion leaders and forces, they have put an end to any dream

of making the Northeast a single theatre of rebellion. Autonomy along ethnic lines have vivisected the people; and as territory has been put to repeated reorganisation, the idea of a Northeast as a theatre of coordinated battles by subjugated peoples of the region has receded notwithstanding mutual help by rebel movements at times. Sovereignty is no more the key word in this new order of battle, in which people still join and still clamour for justice, but whose tempo is modulated by the emerging local elites. The word now denotes other terrains of battle yet to be formally acknowledged. And what does the new “sociological government” want to do in relation to the society, which now becomes the object of its intervention? It achieves precisely what sovereignty wanted but met with ferocious resistance and could not accomplish, namely makes these societies regulated by a network of (apparently competing) authorities introducing the market as the regulator of life.

The next section will explain the change alluded to here.

Two Phases of Insurgency and Pacification and the Expansion of Government

With the set of transformations I am indicating one can say that Northeast has seen already two phases of insurgency and their “resolution”. The first phase started in 1947 and ended, let us say, in 1975 with the Shillong Accord. The second phase started roughly in 1979-80 (ULFA was born in 1979 and NSCN in 1980¹⁶) whence the insurgency began spreading to many places and has now ended or at least drastically declined. The point to investigate will be: what were the governing measures that tackled these two phases of insurgency? And what comes after?

Once we examine these measures and the assumptions beneath them, the research agenda becomes clear. The research has to be then into the processes and structures of governance – *the science of governing conflicts*. In the development of this science there is a mix of global trends and local particularities. For instance, the policies of development aimed towards curbing social unrest are built around global models. Similarly restoration of the government machinery has also a global model, though a huge failure globally. The discourse of anti-terrorism again is a global discourse. Even thirty years ago, governments used to acknowledge poverty, inequality, and injustice as causes of conflicts. Now all insurgents are terrorists, all agitators are enemies of development, and all dissenters are enemies of national integration. Visits of counter-insurgent experts are regular features. In this sense governance policies today carry the mark of globalisation of politics. Yet it is also true that many of the peace building measures are half concessions to local demands for democracy and for an end to authoritarian governance. It is also true that the civil societies in the conflict areas network; they too learn from each other; rebellions too learn, and alternative policies of friendship too are a mark of time. We have in the sub-continent the case of Pakistan-India Peoples’ Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD).¹⁷ But the fact is that the divide between the world of dialogues and that of rule is too much. Governments rarely learn from dissents in the sense of broadening democracy.

Let us continue taking note of the governmental measures with regard to peace building in the Northeast. As indicated in the preceding section, in the first phase of the conflict, territorial reorganisation, grant of statehood, and introducing the model of peace accord resulting in grant of autonomy were the main features – with the military operations of course continuing all along. Yet more important was the way in each major military operation was followed by major administrative measures of territorial reorganisation (creation of Nagaland as a separate state in December 1963 – the sixteenth state of India and the Northeast Reorganisation Act of 1971¹⁸) and regrouping of villages.¹⁹ In second phase, there was a deliberate policy to introduce panchayati raj,²⁰ and more importantly, territorial autonomies along ethnic lines were created throughout the last two decades within the states of the region.²¹ Likewise new forms of local volunteer groups and vigilante armies

were raised (principally in Assam²² and Tripura). Policies to encourage and ensure surrender of the armed cadres of the underground became crucial in this stage of peace making. Surrender schemes were devised in Assam in 1992 and strengthened in 1998. To give some instances, benefits up to Rs. 200,000 per surrendered individual were introduced, of which Rs. 100,000 came as a bank loan. In case of partnerships, the ceiling was increased up to Rs. 1,000,000 of which 250,000 constituted margin money and the balance was a bank loan. For cooperative societies formed by “misguided youths”, the scale of benefits was further enhanced to Rs. 2,000,000 with margin money up to Rs. 500,000, and the rest as a bank loan. The State government stood as guarantor against the bank loans. After an initial three-year moratorium, the loan repayment was to start in the fourth year, and was to be completed within eight years, including the three-year moratorium period. The schemes identified rehabilitation including the setting up of industrial, transport, agricultural, veterinary and fishery units, and other business undertakings. One correspondent commented that the enormity of this purchase had to be understood against the backdrop of some of Assam’s economic and quality of life indicators. The annual per capita income stood at a mere Rs. 4,281 in 1990-91. Even in 1993-94, 40.9 per cent of the population was below the poverty line. Per capita bank deposits are the lowest in the country, at Rs. 2,715. In other words, in a region where poverty and unemployment were rampant, and resource constraints acute, the government was simply handing out over 90 times and more of the then State annual per capita income to anyone who was a surrendered militant or expressed willingness to surrender.²³

Also as mentioned, in this period regrouping of villages continued in different forms. Like in Mizoram during the earlier phase of insurgency, in Tripura the formal justification was economic.²⁴ It was held that for the improvement of the condition of the indigenous population cluster villages were being formed. Security, pacification, and commercialisation of forestry went hand in hand. They had the same goal: weaning away indigenous peasantry from the path of insurgency by extending the architecture of security at the macro level and by making the indigenous peasant a rational economic actor. Commercialisation of forestry thus commenced in right earnest. Today a new class of dealers, contractors, lease holders, etc. has developed in the entire Northeast with a different kind of stake in the existing social order. In this period there has been greater coordination of governance in different states of the Northeast, in as much as there is greater coordination of military measures. All these have resulted in time in stronger civilian administration, which will not resolve conflicts by addressing issues of justice, but will have stake in continuing low-key unrest that will bring in money for it, while the insurgent *underground* (we are speaking of a phenomenon only and not any particular movement) has to co-live with civilian life and governance thus developing multiple ties with official politics. In this transformed condition, the duality and co-existence of the over-ground and underground is one of the major features of the second stage.²⁵ There is a separate Northeast window in almost every Ministry in Delhi, and above all is the Ministry of Development of Northeast Region (DONER) to coordinate various welfare schemes, developmental programmes, and all other governmental policies²⁶ and to guide the decisions of the Northeast Regional Council.

In both the phases, however, impunity of government officials and the counter-insurgency forces have remained the main guarantee of the success of counter-insurgency. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) became the main form of impunity enjoyed by the government and the security forces.²⁷ One may thus see that, social governance came to the Northeast on the basis of a success of a three-pronged strategy: (a) raising surrendered militants groups as armed units of counter-insurgency operations, (b) conferring in general impunity on counter-insurgency forces, and (c) encouraging what can be called at best “marketisation of economic relations”, and at worst, “crony capitalism” in the region.

There are three more developments adding to the economic thrust: first, the strategy of opening up the Northeast to the greater commercial interests that connect India to the Southeast of Asia, a strategy known as the “Look East” policy²⁸; second, the opening up of villages and far flung areas through new institutions (schools, colleges, banks, offices, communication networks); and third, the policy of encouraging homelands resulting in communal strife, anti-migrant measures, and ethnic policing. If the first phase of insurgency was thus controlled and pacified through direct coercive methods, the second phase has been controlled by ripping the region from within. Difference is now the organising norm of the political form in the region. With the insularity of the Northeast gone, we shall probably wait for the next phase of unrest to begin, because while peace has returned, governance has failed to ensure justice. Yet, if it is true that what we face here is a situation of aporia that is to say, a cycle of production of nativity–linkages–marketisation–immigration–nationalism–ethnicity–violence–law–linkages–marketisation–immigration–nativity–nationalism... it is also true that it is contention that prises open the situation again and again. Precisely the collective politics that in its moment of frenzy makes immigration the most contentious issue in the life of a nation, also exhibits factors or aspects that make the dialogic quest for justice to continue.

To make sense of the current situation, we have to just consider two sets of contemporary developments – one dealing with the political economy of resources and the other reflecting a security-oriented thinking - and how these sets of developments interrelate. Let us see very briefly what these are.

As we all know, the issue of resources began with colonial trade of tea and timber. Besides the British owned tea estates, gradually other estates came to be owned by various Indian groups and the Assamese groups – in the previous decade about 150 tea estates were owned by about 130 Assamese companies in the Assam valley with the largest tea company having an annual turnover of about Rs. 50 crores. Rest of the Assamese bourgeoisie today consists of contractors, transporters, traders, and people engaged in hotel industry and real estate business, besides engaging in LPG distribution or timber trade. An unofficial estimate puts the number of small tea growers in Assam as 500 of whom 80 per cent are Assamese. In Meghalaya the daily transaction of timber sale outside the state is nearly of the amount of Rs. 20 lakhs. The share of central grant-in-aid to total revenue receipts in Meghalaya in 1990-95 has ranged between 55 and 60 per cent. In Arunachal Pradesh it has been between 64-70 per cent and in Nagaland as high as 87 per cent. Thus while the revenue generating capacity of states in the northeast has been extremely weak, with the entire region lagging behind the rest of the country in industrial growth, power supply, fertiliser consumption, credit flow, communication facilities, and transport network, the political class survives with central aid with which it makes its nation. Besides public rent seeking activities, private rent seeking continues unabated – be it in tea industry, or in local petty trade, or in a barber’s shop, in some cases the percentage of the earning given out as rent payment to private parties being as high as 25 per cent.²⁹ We have thus an absolutely combustible combination: renter state, a parasite political class, massive mass discontent, weak or nil growth, and the absence of any appropriate policy of local development and resource generation and utilisation – with the immigrants being seen as the cause of all miseries of life.

The region has a population of about 40 million, with 90 per cent of population living in rural areas, agriculture being the primary occupation of 78 per cent of population, of whom 60 per cent are cultivators, 10 per cent agricultural labourers, and 8 per cent engaging in allied farm sector. Shifting cultivation has 2.7 million hectares under it. Irrigated area as proportion of total cropped area ranges between 11 and 25 per cent as against the national average of 35 per cent. About 25 per cent of the total consumed food grain in this region is imported from outside. Agro-sector reform is

almost absent; while some of the big public sector enterprises marked as promising global players such as the Indian Oil Corporation, Oil India Limited, and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation operate in this region. Yet, notwithstanding the presence of some of the richest public sector companies in this region, the region's incapacity to generate revenue is stark – for instance although Assam produces commodities such as tea, plywood, crude oil, and jute, it gets only 5 per cent of Rs. 700 crores worth of plywood per year, and 2 per cent of tea sold through the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre. Even for the basics for flood control, the state has to depend on the centre, while the borrowing capacity of the state decreases day by day. Out of the total cess of Rs. 30,000 crores collected from the oil sector between 1984-91 Rs. 26,000 crores were deposited to the Consolidated Fund of India. Thus, despite a satisfactory credit-deposit ratio (of commercial banks) in states like Tripura (61 per cent), Manipur (71 per cent), and Assam (49 per cent), the credit disbursed can be hardly properly utilised in this context. The indicators relating to small-scale industrial units and manufacturing units present an equally dismal picture.³⁰ The level of urbanisation in the region is quite low – only 14 per cent of the population of the region lives in towns, while density of population has increased from 57 per square kilometre in 1961 to 123 in 1991. The pressure on land has grown, and the decadal population growth rate in all the states of the region has been higher than the national average, which is 23.50 (1991 census), while non-agricultural productive activity has almost remained at the same level. At the same time, the mode of shifting agriculture has faced crisis. Shifting agriculture was for a typical subsistence economy, and though this did not preclude trading of other products, it meant collective management of forest-land including allotment of the portion for each family, maintenance of village commons, and no accumulation of surplus for “expanded reproduction”. While shifting agriculture has declined, or made impossible in a market set up, settled cultivation too has not improved. Large numbers of communities have practised settled cultivation over the ages in hill areas too, for instance Monpas of Tawang in Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh, Khamptis of Lohit district, and Apa Tanis in Subansiri district. The Angamis and Chakesangs of Kohima district practise wet rice cultivation in form of terrace farming. In short, the principal issue of sustainability of resource use is now in question in the entire region – from the plains of Assam to the hills of Mizoram, whereas except in Arunachal Pradesh in all states of the northeast the literacy level is higher than the national average (39.42), infant mortality rate is lower than the national average (80), and except in Tripura and marginally Assam, the female participation in the workforce rate is higher than the national average (22.25), and except in Arunachal Pradesh the percentage of women in the organised sector is higher than the national average (14.1). Clearly the issue of sustainability of resources, contrary to the popular notion of depending on controlling immigration is wider and more complicated.³¹ It presents a blocked scenario, which is marked by very little formal trade and economic linkages in the east (Burma), south (the Bay), west (Bangladesh), and north (Bhutan and Tibet). Developed basically in recent history as what can be called an economy of “a market along the foothills”, which bears the characteristics of an extraction economy around coal and limestone, and a plantation economy around tea and timber, the entire scenario represents today what Dietmar Rothermund had termed long back “an enclave economy”.

In the construction of the Umiam hydroelectric project a large number of Khasis was displaced without any chance of resettlement. Later on similar projects caused massive displacements in Chandrapur, Namrup, and Bongaigaon in Assam. The Dumbur project displaced 5845 families (an estimated number of 40,000 people) in Tripura. Before that the Kaptai dam construction on the river Karnaphuli in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh had displaced Chakmas and Hajongs and forced them to move to India – and many of them decades later still lead a life of a “stateless community”.³² Similarly the oil industry did not benefit the ousted population in Duliajan, Noonmati,

Bongaigaon, Digboi, and Nazira. Paper mills came up in late seventies of the last century in Nowgaon and Cachar, land pressure increased, and the battle over resource like land became ferocious leading at times to bloodbath as in Nellie (1983). Karbi indigenous people were similarly affected. And the construction of an IIT campus in North Guwahati caused the displacement of 35,000 people. The media (*Amar Asom*, 2 September 2001) reported that out of the central grant of 10.3 crores of rupees to the state government to pay compensation, only 4.3 crores of rupees reached people. If the Tipaimukhi multi-purpose project comes up in Manipur with an estimated cost of Rs. 2899 crores (1995 price level), it will submerge fully 16 villages and partly 51 villages affecting 15,000 people. The entire Tipaimukhi development plan presents in a congealed form the conflicts between the hill and the valley, state administration and the indigenous communities, and the ideology of development and the requirement of survival.³³ Similar development awaits Arunachal Pradesh with the two proposals of Siang dam and the Subansiri hydel project. Similarly in North Bengal, contemporary observers have noted, how dispossession of resources and displacement have played crucial role in the making of a political community and the movement for its claims.³⁴ The battle of resources has pitted communities against the State, the army against the people, one community against another, and in general has reconstructed relations.

The scramble for resources has led to a revision of government's strategy of peace building that was earlier conceived only in terms of conventional pacification measures. Projects and funds have become the key words in the game. Government is happy that between 1998 and 2006, out of total 767 projects sanctioned, 375 projects could be completed, as a result of "improved monitoring and concerted efforts". There was a significant increase in the allocation and expenditure of various Central Ministries and Departments for the North East Region during these two years. The allocation during 2006-07 was Rs.12,621 crores, an increase of about 86 per cent over Rs. 6,787 crores allocated during 2004-05.³⁵ Projects linked with natural resources such as water have become significant as well as controversial. At the behest of the World Bank a detailed discussion on how to utilise water, other natural resources, and the environment was held in Guwahati on 10-11 November 2005. Its report is significant. It said,

The overall objective of this joint M/DoNER-World Bank Study is to develop a vision for the development and management of water and related natural resource / environmental issues in the Northeast for sustainable and equitable growth.

After initial discussions at New Delhi, experts were mobilized by the World Bank for preparation of sector specific Papers. After the draft Papers were in place, a Regional Consultation Workshop was organized jointly by the Ministry of DoNER and the World Bank at Guwahati from 10-11 November 2005. Besides representatives from all the 8 North Eastern State Governments, representatives from the Planning Commission, CWC, Brahmaputra Board, NEC, IWAI, NERIWALM etc. and other stakeholders participated. The Experts presented the Papers. Detailed deliberations were held and inputs received taken note of.

Based on the Expert Papers and the inputs received during the Guwahati Workshop, a draft Strategy Report was prepared and circulated amongst all the 8 North Eastern State Governments, the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Water Resources etc. for their comments. The draft Strategy Report was also hosted on M/DoNER's website. M/DoNER requested the State Governments. to hold one-day Workshops for wider State level consultations. The State level consultations were held during April – June, 2006. M/DoNER funded the State level consultations. Appropriate amendments were made in the draft Report based on inputs received from the State Governments.

The revised draft Strategy Report was discussed further at a National Consultation Workshop at New Delhi from 26 – 27 June 2006. The Workshop was inaugurated by Shri P.R. Kyndiah, Hon'ble Minister, DoNER and attended among others by Shri Saiffudin Soz, Union Minister for Water

Resources, Shri Gegong Apang, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh and Shri Bharat Chandra Narah, Minister of Water Resources, Govt. of Assam. Representatives from the Planning Commission, Central Ministries and other stakeholders also participated. The draft Strategy Report aroused considerable interest.

International Experts from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), USA, the US Corps of Engineers, BC Hydro, Canada, Columbia Basin Trust, Canada and National Water Agency of Brazil made presentations on successful river basin management in their respective countries. The innovative peoples' participatory approach followed by the Columbia Basin Trust was of considerable interest to the participants. The benefit sharing between the US and Canada under the Columbia River Treaty, 1961 was of special significance to the management of river basins in North East India.

Based on the inputs received during the Workshop, the Strategy Report was finalized and is hosted on this website. After consultations with the Ministry of Water Resources and Planning Commission, the World Bank has been requested to make certain changes in the report. They have also been requested to think of some of the recommendations in the framework of projects. The revised Draft Strategy Report has been received from World Bank. Comments of the Water Resources have been requested and awaited.³⁶

Water has become the single most lucrative resource in the desperate governmental thinking on how get out of the enclave called the Northeast. Policy thinking has now concentrated on utilising water in a cooperative framework, developing the knowledge base of the water resources of the region, gaining a geomorphology perspective of the river Brahmaputra, the issue of "living intelligently with floods", inland water transport development in the Northeast, institutional framework of river basin management in the North East, river basin organization for River Brahmaputra-Barak basin, and finally management structures to lead the Brahmaputra river basin into the twenty first century.³⁷ The idea of enclave has also led to an unusual amount of policy deliberations on transport, linkages, and communication. We have already spoken of the Look East plan, which includes the project of the Asian Highway. Here is one relevant report,

Newly-appointed Union DONER minister Paban Singh Ghatowar on Tuesday said his department would expedite all development projects in the northeastern region with full cooperation from the state governments. "To execute the projects, the mandate is to properly coordinate with the other Central ministries," he told a news conference at the North Eastern Council (NEC) headquarters here on Monday. "Our top priority will be to improve the connectivity in the region. Next comes the agriculture and horticulture sector. Tourism has also to be looked after to generate faster employment growth. Besides, we have to encourage entrepreneurship for which proper infrastructure has to be built by developing tourist circuits in all the NE states," said Ghatowar, who's also the NEC chairman.

"There is always scope for more improvement in developing the region through proper implementation of the schemes," he added. The ministry is also supposed to explore other schemes to develop the human resource potential of the region, promote cultural heritage of different ethnic groups and tap the huge power potential, especially hydro-power to meet the shortfall in power generation.

NEC secretary U K Sangma said regarding selection of projects, it is for the state governments to prioritize the development schemes for allocation of funds. "Currently, the biggest project being undertaken in the NE is in the area of transportation," he said.

Asked about the projects that are being taken up specifically in Meghalaya, Sangma said road projects, such as the Mairang-Guwahati Airport Road, Jaintia Hills-North Cachar Road, Phulbari-Tura Road in Garo Hills and conversion of timber roads to pucca roads in rural areas, were in the pipeline. "Improvement of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium at Polo Grounds in Shillong is also on the government's agenda, while civil hospitals in various districts will be upgraded," he added.³⁸

Enclave economy coupled with local power in an autonomous area has also produced a distinct politics of security, a game that makes the immigrants quickly the symbol of insecurity.

Therefore it should not astonish us that a discourse of security co-habits today with a discourse of retarded development, economy, and internal colonialism. Indeed, political economy (that is the political discourse of economy or politics of economy) and politics of security have always gone hand in hand. This situation produces cynicism,³⁹ and a strange combination of what we can call the co-existence of an evolving architecture of macro-security with molecular insecurity or micro-insecurity continuously hovering below this so-called structure of macro-security. On this, the conflict in Bodoland in Assam is instructive. The autonomous arrangement in Bodoland was created through several accords to ensure the autonomy of the Bodo-speaking population. However it did not lessen the conflict there. The arrangement only increased the conflict in Bodoland between the Bodos and the non-Bodos, the latest instance being the massive violence in July-August 2012 between the Bodos and the Muslims there. A recent Press Trust of India (PTI) report illustrates the micro-insecurity in a conflict zone with these figures: 1.87,052 people are still in 206 relief camps there. The inmates include 168,875 Muslims in 174 camps, 17,344 Bodos in 29 camps, and 833 belonging to other communities in three camps. Dhubri has the highest number of 101,373 inmates in 129 camps followed by Kokrajhar with 55,760 inmates in 43 camps, Chirag with 23,609 inmates, Bongaigaon with 5554 inmates in nine camps and 756 people in three camps in Barpeta. The process of rehabilitation of the affected people continues with the verification of land documents and 5706 people have left the relief camps during the last 24 hours. There were altogether 485,321 inmates in 540 relief camps during the height of the violence which began on 19 July claiming 96 lives.⁴⁰

Tripura is however a unique story in this perspective. It is the smallest state in the Northeast, and possibly that is the reason why it has proved to be the most successful laboratory for introducing new pacification measures. In some sense, the success of counter-insurgency there is unique as more than anywhere else the government in Tripura could combine policies of social governance, which began in parts earlier, with direct police-military methods of pacification. In the early eighties of the last century, there was a transition, as one anthropologist has called, “from jhuming to tapping”, that is from shifting cultivation to rubber plantation activities. According to the same anthropologist, “tapping is a promising alternative to jhuming”.⁴¹ This was written when the Tripura government dreamt in a big way of inducting rubber cultivation techniques from Kerala, and saw in this an opportunity to move the indigenous population of the state from shifting agriculture. Around that time, out of 104,362 households fifty per cent practised shifting cultivation, partially or fully.⁴² Government promoted “three dimensional forestry” (sericulture, horticulture, and animal husbandry). Nearly 5000 acres of government forest land were given over to the promotion of rubber cultivation. This was combined with resettlement plans for indigenous shifting cultivators. Bank loans facilitated by NABARD (National bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) covered the gestation period of 7 years. Policies were framed to attend to various aspects of the plantation, namely, rubber seedling nursery, poly-bag rubber nursery, tapping of rubber trees, the raising of budwood mother plants, and maintenance of older rubber plantations. By late eighties 7 lakh person days were being created per year through plantation activities.⁴³ As years passed and the scope of shifting cultivation declined with mounting population pressure on land, and more and more private property in land emerging, the talk of “economic settlement” of indigenous people became frequent among government circles and advisers. Specialists were brought in developing subsidiary occupations in the villages and small towns. Animal husbandry, commercial forestry, fruit cultivation, etc. were encouraged while government concentrated on exterminating what it termed as the “activities of evil force in tribal areas”.⁴⁴ Rubber cultivation was encouraged and flourished.⁴⁵ It was also in this period that Tripura saw an expansion of banking as elsewhere. Demand deposit accounts increased more than threefold and credit accounts twofold between 1981 and 2005. Per capita deposit increased

from Rs. 208 to Rs. 8200 and per capita credit from Rs. 79 to Rs. 2240 in this period. Figures relating to the entire Northeast increased along the same line.⁴⁶

In all these there was a sense of social mission in the governmental attitude in Tripura. The government was and is still backed by a parliamentary Left party. It decidedly wanted to make Tripura modern, developed, characterised by social welfare and protection, and inter-community peace.

This is also the sense that one gets from Tripura's erstwhile Director General of Police B.L. Vohra's enormously self-condescending account of the suppression of insurgency in Tripura during his leadership of counter-insurgency operations there.⁴⁷ His main argument is that political administration is determined and honest, and backs the counter-insurgency operations properly, insurgency can be tackled and there will be a chance to solve root problems. He draws attention to "connected" problems of electoral politics related to tribal council, increasing land alienation, police lethargy, outdated weaponry, lack of strategy, etc. In this sense this is just like any other book by retired counter-insurgency leading officer say from Vietnam or Iraq. But what is interesting is that throughout the book Vohra keeps on mentioning small things such as the Chief Minister's vision, full support from him to Vohra's plan of reorganisation of police forces, measures like hot pursuit and raids across the borders, rubber cultivation, creation of jobs for indigenous youth through the expansion of agro-forestry, gradual resettlement of villages around big police posts of a special state armed force, which he had raised to tackle the insurgency, plans for better land use pattern and employment generation, better surrender policy, better rehabilitation package, etc. Again, these are routine measures and routine stories coming from theatres of counter-insurgency operations. But as has been pointed out, the mix in the police officer's account is significant. Even in the glory-filled moments of braggadocio economic issues appear. The reappearance of economy also occasions the appearance of governance as a critical element in the success story of pacification. Thus Manik Sarkar (Tripura's Chief Minister) knows the significance of governance. He and his mentor and predecessor Nripen Chakrabarty (one of the illustrious communist leaders of an earlier generation) both knew the society well. Both tried to spread education. Roads expanded under their administrations. Both were and are symbols of political stability and a relatively corruption free rule. Nripen Chakrabarty introduced rubber cultivation, Manik Sarkar has spread it. Both were responsible for bringing to the fore the issue of justice for the tribal population. Therefore broad social legitimacy was on government's side. On the other hand, abductions, ransom killings, and raids on innocent people's houses – these were the methods of the rebels. Therefore the rebels quickly lost popular support. That is how the battle for peace was won. As wise administrators would say, *Not guns, Idiot, governance is the key!*

After all, as Vohra repeats following Subir Bhaumik's analysis, young insurgents took to guns only to be counted in society and politics. They rebelled, they were then approached for peace; they were also assured benefit packages; they agreed to talk and entered into peace accords; and they then converted to being participants in parliamentary democratic politics. With this, the problem of insurgency was over. Social governance won the day. Democracy should now resume with some specific measures: addressing issues of land, decommissioning the Dumbur hydel-power project and restoring land to the tribal population as part of government's land policy for the indigenous people, strengthening the arrangements for autonomy, inducting more officers from indigenous population groups in the higher echelons of government, strengthening local police, enhancing education⁴⁸ in the state through indigenous people's language in the state, construction of roads in the interior, and social governance measures like providing jobs under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).⁴⁹

Subir Bhaumik however does not put forward the narrative in this simplistic way. In Bhaumik's account, lack of democracy is not the root of conflict, but democracy itself – the way it appears, its mode of operation and function, and its strange claim to being representative of the wishes of the people while cancelling other possible modes of representation, and other associated maladies of democracy that appear on the *periphery*. Democratic deficit is the question of periphery, of the institution of border, of the margin. Hence Bhaumik's book on the crisis of India's Northeast is actually an account of *Troubled Periphery*.⁵⁰ Yet Bhaumik in his analysis is also pursuing another line of thinking on governmentality, namely, that if the peculiar nature of democracy creates the troubled periphery, then the society on the periphery also knows the rules of the game and are therefore able to turn this game to advantage by making guns a part of democratic politics. Take gun and get acknowledged as a legitimate democratic actor. Then one can make money, be an MLA or MP, or even a CM!

Partly of course this is also the “durable disorder” thesis made famous by Sanjib Baruah,⁵¹ which says that the conflict should not be seen as simply a product of state intrusion in societies existing hitherto in natural manner insulated by the colonial order, and thus now producing disruptions in the plan to make the societies in the Northeast peaceful and liberal, but that armed movements are but the transmogrified versions of the social collectives of the region. Produced as response to a repressive and interfering political power located thousands of miles away, these movements are not aberrations, but placed in a specific relation with the state, they represent the societies in their asymmetric relation with a centralised state. The insurgency problem is to be seen therefore not as an anathema to governance and political order. Instead the ethnic militias can be seen as part of the evolution of actually existing governance structure of the region.⁵² The disorder is therefore durable, it does not die. It actually symbolises a particular state of balance, which modulates the way societies or Northeast as a whole want or need to be governed. This is a sort of neo-realism that spins the conventional governmental logic on its head, and suggests ways of prising open a supposedly locked situation.

Again in some sense, this is also the point made by Dulali Nag in her interesting analysis of conflict, insurgency, and economy in Manipur. In this analysis focusing on capital, ethnicity, and violence.⁵³ She focuses on border and border trade in Moreh in Manipur, analyses the volume of legal and illegal trade, and argues, perhaps convincingly, that trade and the particular nature of border economy hold the key to peace. They occasion gang warfare, inter-ethnic conflicts, provide sustenance to many social groups, and distorted as it may seem, they also provide a rough blueprint to realise the prospect for plural peace, by which she means, freedom of border trade, plural dialogues, rule of law in terms of guiding and regulating economic relations, etc. In many ways, *Manipur between Justice and Law* builds on the neo-realistic position innovatively. Justice calls for rebellion, resolution calls for a regulatory framework. It is not only Manipur, but as if the entire Northeast is caught between the two. Possibly the way out, as she sees, is a “healthier interaction between Capital and society”.⁵⁴

Subir Bhaumik however while echoing these positions decides to stay on more classical historical ground. He begins his analysis with the impact of territorial reorganisation in the Northeast, suggested originally, though not clearly, by the Simon Commission Report (1930) on the initiative of J.H. Hutton who made representation to the Commission on behalf of the Assam Government. The reorganisation of 1971 finally achieved that aim and in the process separated hills from the valley. Bhaumik traces the Nehruvian path of modernisation inspired by the British anthropologist Verrier Elwin to subsequent eras. All these changed the Northeast from being a “frontier” to a “region”. Troubles started thence.⁵⁵ This is also roughly the argument of Paula Banerjee in *Borders, Regions*,

Existences.⁵⁶ After becoming a region – a border region to be precise – a different economy gradually takes shape, in Bhaumik’s words, “guns, drugs, and contraband”, the essence of “rebel economy.”⁵⁷ Scholars on conflicts in Africa have made similar point in analysing drug and diamond trade there. In this sense social governance comes on the back of a parallel economy. There is the economy produced by the conflict; there is another economy produced by extension of government apparatus; finally there is the economy created by the “new markets” (as in Moreh, the border town in Manipur⁵⁸) and new capital nexus of contractors, bankers, real estate owners, informal credit operators, resource looters, etc, distinct from the old markets in traditional economy which were only one part of social life and not the all enveloping type of today. A combination of these three economies bring curtains down for the old form of conflicts, which I tried to indicate by naming the earlier period (1947-2005) as the two phases of conflict, and strengthens the “democratic system”. In this transformed scenario Bhaumik wryly says, “Notwithstanding a feeling of helplessness to change the system that is often corrupt, the ethnicities of the Northeast have taken to elections with greater enthusiasm than to India’s other passion – cricket”.⁵⁹

In this complex scenario, where the Indian story moves away to a direction different from the one said to be taken by several African countries, the critical factor has been the expansion of government in the last two decades, thereby marking again a different story of globalisation and neo-liberalism in India. While part of this expansion is due to inevitable political reasons, such as expansion of the electoral system, setting up of institutions, increase of bureaucracy, etc., the instrument of budget too has played a big role. Thus, gross transfers from the Centre to the Northeast states have counted for roughly 60 (Assam) to 85 per cent (Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) of aggregate disbursements there. Central assistance has covered fiscal deficits in a region where state revenue has not even 10 per cent of the net state domestic product.⁶⁰ Through central assistance, construction of roads, airports, power projects, etc. money has been pumped in. The idea of development has taken the place of insurgency, though this development will create and is already creating the ground for the next round of conflicts. A new rent economy and new extraction model will pacify some, enrich some, corrupt some, and dispossess some. In such circumstances, we may await the third phase of conflict, while the new style of governance may credit itself for having solved the insurgency question in the once frontier lands.

Those who study the Indian Northeast will notice that as examples of evolving governmentality the three recent writings I have mentioned (Baruah, Bhaumik and Nag) are not the classic commentaries on the insurgencies and economy there. Yet they offer insights on the situation we need to understand today. The reason is that they reflect on policies and possibilities of governance; and the interesting point here is that the governmental thinking of an age always reflects, at least partly, the critical edges of the neo-realist thinking of the time.⁶¹ This is the case here too. These analyses however while reflecting the metamorphosis of the conflict, the end of one phase, the beginning of another, with its decline too, do not directly address the question of the mutation of forms. Yet, form remains the all important question in a study like this. Otherwise we shall think that conflict is eternal and immutable, so are the subject positions in conflict. Nothing could be more fallacious than such an idea.

The arrival of social governance indicates such mutation both in the form of governmentality and resistance. Social governance arrives not only on the basis of the market-money-finance network, but also by promoting what is termed as “participatory governance”. Thus in the Northeast we can see proliferation of the non-governmental organisations, media, and various watch bodies, besides the conventional arrangements of participation in governance through the panchayati system and autonomous arrangements discussed in this article. The Ministry of Development of

Northeastern Region (DONER) speaks of a citizen's charter (2011-12), which is in its words a "client's charter". It speaks of the need for the clients to timely submit proposal in required format and with proper documents; likewise timely and proper utilization of funds received from the Ministry; due diligence in formulation, implementation, execution and reporting, timely submission of proposal for revision in case of change in scope, proper monitoring and evaluation of the projects implemented with Ministry's support and keeping Ministry informed of the same; timely submission of utilization and progress reports to the Ministry, and finally extending support to the Ministry to meet its objectives and realize the vision. The citizen in this vision is truly a client. The client is also one of the stakeholders in the development of the Northeast, others being the Northeast State Governments, Central Ministries/Organizations and their enterprises, the North Eastern Council, the civil Society in the Region, and finally not to be left out people of the NE Region. The Charter declares its aims as: to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the region so that it may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country; formulating policies for the rapid development of the region; intensive interventions with other Central Ministries/Departments to spend 10 per cent of their Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) for the development of the region; to develop infrastructure connectivity in a manner so as to mitigate the constraints towards the economic development of the region, and to strengthen institutions and augment capacity with a view to encourage flow of private investment to increase employment opportunities.⁶²

In many ways DONER has become the key body in the expansion of government in the Northeast. In its words, it acts as the central pool of resources for developmental governance in the Northeast. Since the North East has essentially depended on central funding for development works, and all the States in the NER are special category states whose development plans are centrally financed on the basis of 90 per cent Grant and 10 per cent Loan, with these special category states being allowed to use up to 20 per cent of the central assistance for non-plan expenditure, DONER assumes the role of the guardian of development in this region. Projects of economic infrastructure are given priority; in the "social sector" (words used by DONER), priority is accorded to drinking water supply and other health and sanitation projects; likewise projects in Autonomous District Council (Sixth Schedule of the Constitution) is given priority; and as incentive to the governments of the states in the region past performance of a state in implementing projects in the particular sectors to which the projects belong is considered; and the overall utilization and absorption of funds by a particular state in the past years guide the overall quantum of projects to be undertaken for that state in a year. It also coordinates World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD) financed projects in the region.⁶³ The Northeast Council has become the crucial instrument for the implementation of DONER's programmes and projects. As part of social governance an important step is the Rural Livelihood Project, whose draft final report came out in May 2011 in form of an environmental assessment of the project.⁶⁴ The report covers issues like use of hydro-power, horticulture, rural infrastructure development, handlooms and handicrafts, village tourism, fishery, improved land management practices, livestock rearing, and sericulture. Predictably the report speaks highly of the need for the self-help groups (SHGs) to organize, and in that context speaks of the need to take note of the scale of the activity, relevant details from a natural resource assessment of village, mitigation measures the SHG members are interested in adopting, need for any training and technical assistance, and legal and regulatory requirement, if any. The report speaks of the need for constant monitoring and evaluation. It also suggests that since there are many relevant government departments promoting better environmental practices and supporting these practices by providing technical/financial inputs, the prepared

Environmental Guidelines (EGs) will provide guidance for the convergence of these schemes with the ongoing government schemes in the respective States.

In all these, of special significance is the way in which women have become objects of participatory governance at a time when women's activism in entire Northeast is becoming pronounced. Two perceptive authors have recently written in a collaborative study -

The women for their part through their lived experiences of conflict started working for peace. In their activism for peace they acquired a legitimacy to enter the space for political decision making that was denied to them. In their commitment for peace they motivated their society to observe a ceasefire. The state found in them an unusual ally and could see their far-reaching influence in society. When the state decided to move away from their mode of conflict with the Naga people it reinvented its indispensability by championing the cause of women. It was around the same time that women's activism was going through a generational change. Younger women leaders decided to innovate with new agenda for women and brought in the question of women's rights. In this they found much of the traditional leadership allied against them. They found the state keen to ally with their cause in its role as an arbiter. This mutual coming together of Naga women and the government of Nagaland is reflected in the activism for a Women's Reservation Bill. The women used all government institutions to further the cause for peace, justice and equity. This coming together was timely although the alliance is bound to be fragile. Both the sides are giving lip service to this alliance to further their own interest. However, for now this alliance has proved transformative for gender roles in society, helping the cause of peace, stability and justice. It remains to be seen whether this alliance can in any way be liberating for Naga society as a whole otherwise it will soon become redundant.⁶⁵

A study of the governmental moves to expand the participatory base of the rule will lead us to the significant question of the subject positions under social governance, which is at the heart of the government of peace.

The Post-Conflict Subject of Economy and Governance

What can we learn from this discussion about the post-colonial phenomenon of the government of peace? At least the following observations can be made.

The colonial foundations of governance structures for peace building are still intact, though these foundations have been reinforced and reshaped by the post-colonial experiences of democracy. Conflicts and insurgencies do not continue in the same way over time; the study of the phases is important. The mutation of the form of conflict depends on governmental measures and the responses to these measures. The mutation also depends on the condition of the middle spaces in conflict. The governmental logic of peace building at times bears the imprint of the popular demands for peace and justice, also the imprint of collective violence. The discourse of security can be seen as the link between the two types of ideas of peace: one emanating from the architecture of macro-security and other embedded in the phenomena of micro-insecurity. For this reason the governmental logic of peace building often runs counter to the ideas and practices of plural dialogues. Therefore the question: If overall security reinforces "molecular insecurity", how to build a model of "molecular security"? At this point liberal way to peace can think of only one solution, namely increasing marketisation of relations so that the unruly subject can become the rational actor of choices and engage in meaningful rational activity helped and guided by a set of rules and laws.

Subjects are unruly, because they are not sufficiently globalized. They are products of a phenomenon called enclave. If they are to be made modern rational subjects, then they have to be pulled by their bootstraps to the level of the global. Market becomes the key to such exercise. But this course becomes a contradictory exercise, because if the post-conflict subject is to be rational, and

for that only market based norms can exist be allowed to exist, then all other norms have to be destroyed. This also implies rational decision (at all levels) to deploy violence to establish control. How can the government in that case do away with the original violence and become legitimate as a government of peace? And what will be its stand on the tussle existing in the post-conflict scenario between a push towards sharing of sovereignty and the immense desire of the dominant powers to retain it in old form of indivisibility?

We are thus posing a particular way of posing the question of the “subject” – the subject of conflict. Conflict becomes in the eyes of the state a matter of deciding the ratio, and the government of peace becomes a government of constant ratio determination in order to control the conduct of subject population, and reorienting the conduct through the apparatus of policies, economy, and peace. This apparatus, though appearing new in many ways, repeats in a fundamental sense the old combination of the military and the civil. Social governance is the name of this apparatus – in part old, in part new.

We are thus suggesting through this analysis that “conflict” can be analysed as a historically singular mode of experience, whereby the “objects” of conflict governance are transformed into “subjects” through certain specific procedures, such as the procedure of establishing peace, or the attempts at peace at micro-levels, and through the contradictory process of securitisation. We are posing here the issue of a certain kind of public ethics of self-government growing out of the dynamics of subject-formation through conflict governance. Yet we must not forget that this subject formation is not a one sided process. For instance, the first phase of conflict ended with reproducing another phase to succeed it, precisely because the governmental policies of suppression not only produced fear, revulsion, and anger, but a revised subjectivity that took into account the strengths and weaknesses of the adversary. We can also note the recent peasant mobilisations in Assam by Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (led by Akhil Gogoi and others) or the environmental movements in the entire region. These new movements allow us a faint and an admittedly weak picture of that new kind of subjectivity.⁶⁶ Therefore, the process of producing new governing techniques is not one of producing the de-politicised subject, the “mechanical reproduction of art” that Walter Benjamin spoke of, though to be sure social governance aims to produce subjects that will only repeat themselves in their conduct. The subject of conflict in that sense is irreducible, non-transferable. It can be only partially made the economic subject, and we must remember that the economic subject and the subject of right have different relationships with political power. Their autonomies are of different kinds, at times incompatible. The problem of government of peace, like any other form of good governance, is that it will have to deal with different subjects. This is a situation whose principle is that of heterogeneity. The question for government of peace will be: How can it turn the unruly different subjects with immediate memories of insubordination, dissent, and revolt, into the economic actor of a particular, homogenous, type? What is this society that will now sought to be the subject of governance? If social governance means governance of society as distinct from government of men (and women that is individuals), then the problem is: What are the specific conditions in which society in order to continue will find the government necessary? Under what conditions then will the mutually constitutive relation between society and the government become a settled fact? We can describe that condition in one word, *peace*.

Yet, since it is through conflict that the subject has been constituted – the subject, who faced repression and death, and now faces the vagaries and turmoil of an alien economic life, the origin question never dies down. Conflict symbolizing the quest for justice continues even after the government of peace has lodged itself in as the latest form of power to govern society. From another

point, we may say that the subject of exception (with the Northeast being for Indian democracy a state of exception) is not destined to remain the subject outside the time...

Notes

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace – A Philosophical Essay* (1795), trans. and ed. M. Campbell Smith (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1917)

² Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice – Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 213

³ R. Samaddar, “Terror, Law, and the Colonial State”, in R. Samaddar, *The Materiality of Politics*, Volume 1 (London: Anthem Publishers, 2007), Chapter 2; also, Samaddar, “Crimes, Passion, and Detachment – Colonial Foundations of Rule of Law” in Kalpana Kannabiran and Ranbir Singh (eds.), *Challenging the Rule(s) of Law – Colonialism, Criminology and Human Rights in India* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2008)

⁴ Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime” in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State back in* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 169-187

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176

⁶ T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: University Press, 1950)

⁷ In Kashmir we can recall in this context the deaths of the erstwhile Mirwaiz Maulavi Farooq and a prominent pro-independence leader Abdul Ghani Lone (figures seen in their time as voices of justice and moderation). These are events too well known to be recounted here. On 21 May 2002 Lone was assassinated when paying respect to the memory of the late Mirwaiz killed on the street of Srinagar twelve years ago.

⁸ All citations are from Peace Mission statement –

http://www.npmhr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62:17-point-agreement-the-peace-missions-proposals&catid=26:naga-peace-process&Itemid=91 (accessed on 15 September 2011)

⁹ On the second phase of Naga peace process, see R. Samaddar, *The Politics of Dialogue – Geopolitical Histories of War and Peace in South Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), chapter 6, “Governing through Peace Accords”

¹⁰ The Beg-Parthasarathy agreement on autonomy in Jammu and Kashmir took place in 1975; and the crowning success of this strategy came through the Mizo accord in 1986.

¹¹ Arup Borbora, *All About PCG and Talks* (Guwahati: Aank-Baak, 2010)

¹² Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2001); Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982), ed. Frederic Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003)

¹³ On the indeterminate nature of peace accords, Samir Kumar Das, “Nobody’s Communiqué – Ethnic Accords in Northeastern India” in R. Samaddar and H. Reifeld, *Peace as Process – Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), pp. 231-252

¹⁴ I have discussed this in details in my “Sovereignty and the Dialogic Subject” in Anjan Ghosh, Tapati Guha-Thakurta, and Janaki Nair (eds.), *Theorising the Present – Essays for Partha Chatterjee* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), Chapter 5

¹⁵ On the double nature of autonomy in India, see R. Samaddar, *The Politics of Autonomy – Indian Experiences* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005)

¹⁶ ULFA or the *United Liberation Front of Asom* seeks to establish a sovereign Assam. The Government of India banned the organization in 1990 classifying it as a terrorist group. It was founded at the site of Rang Ghar on 7 April 1979, a historic structure from the old Ahom kingdom. It established relation with the NSCN in 1983 and with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Burma in 1987. It initiated major violent activities in 1990. Military operations against it by the Indian Army began in 1990. In the past two decades an estimated 20,000 people died in the clashes between the rebels and the Indian State. There were massive civilian casualty un army operations. In January 2010, ULFA with most of its leaders in jail or dead softened its stand and dropped the demand for independence as a condition for talks with the Government of India. The Agreement Signed for Suspension of Operations against ULFA was signed on 3 September 2011. ULFA had earlier agreed to abjure

violence and find a solution to the problems as perceived by them through peaceful negotiations with the Government of India and Government of Assam.

NSCN or the *National Socialist Council of Nagaland* was formed on January 31, 1980 by Isak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S.S. Khaplang opposing the 'Shillong Accord' signed by the then NNC (Naga National Council) with the Indian government. Later, differences surfaced within the outfit over the issue of commencing a dialogue process with the Indian Government and on April 30, 1988, the NSCN split into two factions, namely the NSCN (K) led by S S Khaplang and the NSCN (IM) led by Isak Chisi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah. The aim of the organization was to establish a '(Nagalim' or the People's Republic of Nagaland based on the principle of Socialism for economic development and a spiritual outlook, 'Nagaland for Christ'. The NSCN (IM) is the stronger and the better known organization today. It represents also the Nagas in the hills of Manipur in the four districts of Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel and Tamenglong. It is also strong in Wokha, Phek, Zunebphoto, Kohima, Mokokchung and Tuensang districts of Nagaland. It has also been able to extend its influence to the Naga-inhabited areas of North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam and some parts of Arunachal Pradesh. Thuingaleng Muivah is the General Secretary and Isak Chisi Swu is the Chairman. The organization has a military wing, the Naga Army and several 'town commands' and specialised mobile groups. It has also established a government-in-exile called the Government of the People's Republic of Nagaland (GPRN) which interacts with formal and non-formal world bodies and media. The GPRN sends emissaries to various places to garner support and raise funds for the Naga cause. Currently there is a ceasefire agreement between the NSCN (IM) and the Indian State, and political negotiations are going on for the last fifteen years with no resolution in sight.

¹⁷ For information on PIPFPD –

http://pipfpd.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1 (accessed on 6 September 2012); also R. Samaddar, "Plural Dialogues" in R. Samaddar (ed.), *Space, Territory, and the State – New Readings in International Politics* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2002), pp. 151-165

¹⁸ On this B. Datta Ray and S.P. Agarwal, *Reorganisation of Northeast India since 1947* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1996)

¹⁹ On regrouping of villages in Mizoram, see, Sajal Nag, "A Gigantic Panopticon: Counter-Insurgency and Modes of Disciplining Northeast India", CRG paper series, *Policies and Practices*, 46, Kolkata, 2012

²⁰ On introduction of rural decentralization in the form of *panchayati raj*, see Sujata Dutta Hazarika, "Conflict and Development: Implications for Democracy and Governance" in R. Samaddar and S. Sen (eds.), *New Subjects and New Governance in India* (New Delhi and Milton Park: Routledge, 2012)211-244; also Dutta Hazarika, "Examining Autonomy – The 73rd Constitutional Amendment in Assam", CRG paper series, *Policies and Practices*, 8, Kolkata, 2005

²¹ Sanjay Barbora, "Autonomy in the Northeast: The Frontiers of Centralized Politics" and Subir Bhaumik and Jayanta Bhattacharya, "Autonomy in the Northeast: The Hills of Tripura and Mizoram" in R. Samaddar, *The Politics of Autonomy – Indian Experiences*, pp. 196-241

²² In Assam as a main counter-insurgency force vigilante groups were raised from the surrendered cadres of ULFA. They were known by the name SULFA (surrendered cadres of the United Liberation Front of Assam). The step became extremely controversial in view of the brutalities by the surrendered militants on the family members of the ULFA cadre. There were numerous reports of rape, murder, and loot of property. It was alleged that the captures ULFA cadre were given two choices by the administration and security forces – either join them to hunt down their erstwhile colleagues or be killed. As a consequence in some cases SULFA members and their family members were also killed in reprisal. A contemporary chronicle had this to report on a major incident of such clash that took place on 21 June 2001, and 14 surrendered militants were killed A report by Nitin Gokhale, Outlook:

In a major fratricidal attack, militants of the banned United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) killed 14 of their former comrades known collectively as SULFA (for surrendered ULFA) in upper Assam's Dibrugarh district on Thursday morning. Ten other SULFA members were injured in the attack, described as daring and skillful by security agencies.

According to Assam's minister of state for Home Pradyut Bordoloi, some 50 SULFA members had assembled at the Moran Club this morning to discuss formation of an NGO when two car-loads of ULFA militants armed with hand grenades and automatic weapons Ak-47 rifles descended on the meeting venue, surrounded the former militants and fired indiscriminately killing 12 of them on the spot, while 2 others died on the way to Assam Medical College. The assailants, who had come in two vehicles, fled immediately after the attack.

“The SULFA members had not informed the authorities about the meeting or sought security”, he said.

This is the biggest killing of SULFA members by the militants ever since the first batch of surrenders took place in Assam in March 1992. In the past decade, several surrendered militants have been killed by the militants but most of the attacks were on individuals.

The killings are likely to renew the fratricidal war between the two groups that had dominated Assam's security scenario in the late 1990s. In fact, during the previous Asom Gana Parishad regime, many SULFA members were used by the police and the army to sniff out the militants and kill them.

Bordoloi said the security of many vulnerable surrendered militants has been tightened and a joint operation launched by the army and the police to nab the killers who had come an ambassador and a Maruti Zen car dressed in military fatigues.

Meanwhile Sunil Nath, the former publicity chief of the ULFA, who was among the top militants who surrendered in 1992 and now runs a business has called the attack by the ULFA “foolish.”

“Whatever little sympathy the militants had would be lost now,” he said, adding, “This would also resume the fratricidal clashes,” as a warning. (<http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?212205> - accessed on 7 September 2012)

²³ From a report by Ajay Sahni and Bibhu Prasad Routray, “SULFA – Terror by Another Name” – (<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume9/Article1.htm> - accessed on 7 September 2012)

²⁴ In Tripura this has been known as “cluster villages”. On the destitute condition of these cluster villages, planned by the Tripura police chief B.L. Vohra, see a report, “Tripura Tribal Rehab Plan Goes Awry”, by a special correspondent, *The Telegraph*, 1 October 2005

(http://www.telegraphindia.com/1051001/asp/northeast/story_5304499.asp - accessed on 7 September 2012); see another report by Archana Prasad, “Forestry and Tribal Development – A Background Note for Tripura State Human Development Report”

(<http://planningtripura.nic.in/THDR/backgroundreport/Forestry%20&%20Tribal%20Development.pdf> – Accessed on 7 September 2012)

²⁵ On the “underground” as a form of claim making in and entering democratic politics, Subir Bhaumik has explained in details in his *Troubled Periphery: The Crisis of India's North East* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009)

²⁶ To get an idea of the money and projects involved, one can access - <http://mdoner.gov.in/> - the official site of DONER.

²⁷ On the AFSPA, there are several writings. From a legal angle and the associated judgments, see P. Banerjee, “Communities, Gender, and the Border: A Legal Narrative on India's Northeast” in Kalpana Kannabiran and Ranbir Singh (eds.), *Challenging the Rules of Law – Colonialism, Criminology, and Human Rights in India* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2008), pp. 257-280; for over all information, see the report of the National Campaign Committee against Militarization and Repeal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, *Where Peacekeepers have Declared War – Report on Violations of Democratic Rights by Security Forces and the Impact of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act ... Life in the Seven States of the North east* (New Delhi, 1997)

²⁸ On this see, Sanjib Baruah, “Between South and Southeast Asia: Northeast India and the Look East Policy”, CENISEAS Paper 4, Guwahati Centre for Northeast India, South and Southeast Asia Studies, 2004; Samir Kr. Das, “India's Look East Policy - Imagining a New Geography of India's Northeast”, *India Quarterly*, 66 (4), December 2010, pp. 343-358

²⁹ These figures are from the various reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) with respect to these states, reproduced in Gurudas Das' “Liberalisation and Internal Periphery – Understanding the

Implications for India's Northeast" in Gurudas Das and R.K. Purkayastha, *Liberalisation and India's North East* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1998), pp. 146-49.

³⁰ Sujit Sikdar and Devadas Bhorali, "Resource Mobilisation, Distribution Effect and Economic Development of the Northeastern Region" in *Liberalisation and India's North East*, pp. 167-72

³¹ All figures relating to human development taken from J.B. Ganguly, *Sustainable Human Development in the North-Eastern Region of India* (New Delhi: Regency Publications, 1996), pp. 29-53; it is noteworthy, Ganguly does not cite immigration as obstructing factor in achieving the goal of sustainable human development in the region.

³² On this see, Sabyasachi Basu ray Chaudhury, "Uprooted Twice – Refugees in the Chittagong Hill Tracts" in Ranabir Samaddar, *Refugees and the State – Practices of Asylum and care in India, 1947-2000* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), pp. 249-280.

³³ For details on displacement due to development activities, Monirul Hussain, "State Development and Population Displacement in Northeast India" in C.J. Thomas (ed.), *Dimensions of Displaced People in Northeast India* (New Delhi: Regency Publications, 2002), hereafter *DDP*, pp. 282-298; Monirul Hussain, "State, Identity Movements and Internal Displacement in Northeast India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35 (51), 2000; Hiram A. Ruiz, *Northeast India's Hidden Displacement*, report of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, Washington D.C., 2000.

³⁴ Sujata D. Hazarika, "Dispossession and Displacement – The Genesis of a People's Movement in North Bengal", *DDP*, pp. 299-31

³⁵ "DONER Reviews Northeast Projects and Funds", Shillong, 28 June 2006 –

<http://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20060628/376527.html> (accessed on 16 September 2012)

³⁶ See <http://mdoner.gov.in/writereaddata/sublink3images/9.pdf> (accessed on 13 August 2012)

³⁷ <http://mdoner.gov.in/index4.asp?ssid=52> (accessed on 13 August 2012); the study papers are available in mimeo form. Readers can access one study paper by B.G. Verghese, "Water Resources in the Northeast – Development Options in a Cooperative Framework", Background Paper 1, August 2006 – <http://mdoner.gov.in/writereaddata/sublink3images/Cooperation8437515003.pdf> (accessed on 1 August 2012)

³⁸ "NE connectivity tops DONER agenda" – *Times of India, Guwahati*, 27 July 2011; see also –

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-07-27/guwahati/29820513_1_road-projects-union-doner-ne-states (accessed on 1 August 2012)

³⁹ The reports of hard boiled journalists who may be often cynics, register the cynicism all around. Such cynicism becomes the ground on which neo-realism originates. See for example, the report on the life and times around a highway in the Northeast, Sudeep Chakravarti, *Highway 39 – Journeys through a Fractured Land* (New Delhi: Fourth Estate, 2012)

⁴⁰ *The Statesman*, 17 September, p. 4, PTI story

⁴¹ Suchintya Bhattacharya, *From Jhuming to Tapping* (Agartala: Directorate of Research, Department of Welfare for Scheduled Tribes, Government of Tripura, 1982), p. 70

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 66

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-84; this book must be a later edition, for we have here the figures of the late eighties, while only the year of first publication (1981) is given

⁴⁴ Bibhuti Bhusan Sarkar, *Economic Settlement of Tribal Youth in Tripura* (Agartala: Tribal Research Institute, Government of Tripura, 2007), p. 45

⁴⁵ With help from the Central Rubber Board, called the Rubber Board India and a part of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Government of India, Tripura has now a Rubber Board Regional Office and a Rubber Mission. Rubber plantation has spread massively to forest areas and the plantation labour is formed mostly by indigenous population. In some cases owners also belong to indigenous background, in some cases owners are Bengali, while cooperative and government plantations also exist. In order to popularize rubber cultivation, subsidies have been provided from the Rubber Board Indi to sustain labour for five-six years – the gestation time for rubber production. Sri Durga Utpadak Samabay Samiti at Bhumihin Colony, Paschim

Noagaon, West Tripura, can be held as a typical cooperative. The annual production there in 2010-11, the total cost of production there was Rs. 1,01,46,836, and profit recorded was of the amount of Rs. 1,98,383 – after paying interest on the loan advanced by the Rubber Board and other agencies, including bank. There was a dramatic increase in the volume of business from 2009-2010, when the total cost of production was Rs. 23,69,949, and the profit was Rs. 21,011. (Annual reports collected from the cooperative office).

⁴⁶ Cited from the Reserve Bank data compiled by Swapanendu Sen, “Banking Institutions” (pp. 220-221) in Indraneel Bhowmik and Debajit Chakraborti (eds.), *Resources and Economy of Tripura* (Guwahati: EBH Publishers, 2011), pp. 206-235

⁴⁷ B.L. Vohra, *Tripura’s Bravehearts: A Police Success Story of Counterinsurgency* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 2011)

⁴⁸ Governmental emphasis on setting up institutions of higher education in the Northeast is significant. There are according to one UGC (University Grants Commission) report, there are 10 central universities, 4 state universities, 17 private universities, 1 deemed to be university, 1 Indian Institute of Technology, and 8 national Institutes of Technology. In 2009-10 the total enrolment of students in universities and colleges was 4,71,492 and the percentage of girl students was 44. The number of accredited colleges was 253. See K.P. Singh and Shakeel Ahmad, “Taking Stock of Higher Education in the North-East”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVII (38), 22 September 2012, pp. 24-26

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 206-226; Vohra repeats Bhaumik’s argument for decommissioning the dam on pp. 210-212

⁵⁰ Subir Bhaumik, *Troubled Periphery: The Crisis of India’s North East* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2009)

⁵¹ Sanjib Baruah, *Durable Disorder – Understanding the Politics of Northeast India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005)

⁵² Ibid, p. 14

⁵³ Dulali Nag, *Manipur between Justice and Law – Capital, Ethnicity, and Violence* (New Delhi: Akansha Publishing, 2011)

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 173

⁵⁵ *Troubled Periphery*, pp. 9-14

⁵⁶ Paula Banerjee, *Borders, Histories, Existences: Gender and Beyond* (New Delhi: Sage, 2010), ch. 1

⁵⁷ *Troubled Periphery*, pp. 182-203

⁵⁸ Besides Dulali Nag’s study, see also Chitra Ahanthem, “Voices of Women in a Border Town called Moreh” in Paula Banerjee and Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Women in Indian Borderlands* (New Delhi: Sage, 2011), pp. 203-217

⁵⁹ *Troubled Periphery*, p. 223

⁶⁰ For details, see Gulshan Sachdeva, *Economy of the Northeast – Policy, Present Conditions, and Future Possibilities* (New Delhi: Konark, 2000)

⁶¹ In some sense Paul Collier’s famous article, “Rebellion as Quasi-Criminal Activity” [*The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 44 (6), pp. 839-53] heralds such a position.

⁶² On these and other aspects of the Charter of 2011-12, see –

<http://mdoner.gov.in/writereaddata/linkimages/dneruse593747497.pdf> (accessed on 19 September 2012)

⁶³ <http://mdoner.gov.in/writereaddata/linkimages/dneruse593747497.pdf> (accessed on 19 September 2012)

⁶⁴ <http://necouncil.nic.in/writereaddata/mainlinkfile/nerlp2.pdf> (accessed on 20 September 2012)

⁶⁵ Paula Banerjee and Ishita Dey, “Women, Conflict, and Governance in Nagaland”, CRG Research Paper series, *Policies and Practices*, 51, July 2012; pp. 26-27; also - <http://mcrp.ac.in/PP51.pdf> (accessed on 17 September 2012)

⁶⁶ Sanjay Barbora, “Assam’s New Voice of Dissent”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVI (28), 9 July, 2011, pp. 19-22; also in the same issue, Udayon Misra, “A New Edge to People’s Protests in Assam”, pp. 16-18

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