Chapter - 8

(Conclusions and Suggestions)
Myanmar's geostrategic positioning and availability of natural resources makes it a very important country, especially for India and China. It is a known fact that whosoever gains control of Myanmar will be able to dominate the Bay of Bengal and China by far is trying its level best to do so. It had invested billions of dollars into developing the infrastructure according to its needs. It had even started making ports and Myanmar was strategically important for China with respect to its strings of pearls project, which was basically an attempt to build a strategic pivot to gain dominance in the Indian subcontinent.¹

The arguments pointed out that it was China's growing presence in Myanmar that mainly alerted India and left it nervous. This gave birth to India's 'Look East' Policy in the 1990's.² China had always looked at Myanmar through strategic lens, while India's Myanmar policy prior to the 'Look East' shift focused mainly on issues of democracy and human rights, which led to a long decade of frosty relations.³

Geo-strategically, Myanmar sits on the top of the Malacca Straits and at the confluence of the Indian and Pacific oceans. As everyone knows, the stability of the Malacca Straits remained a key concern for the economies of the Asia-Pacific region, including India and Myanmar. China remained worried about the US naval presence in the region.⁴

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³ Ibid; p. 63.
For nearly a decade, India's naval ships had frequently called at Myanmar's ports, while they were on the way to the East. In early 2012, Myanmar was part of a fourteen nation joint naval exercise with India in the Bay of Bengal, which was basically aimed at combating piracy and terrorism. For the first time in decades, two Myanmar naval vessels - a frigate and a corvette arrived at an Indian port of Visakhapatnam in March 2013. These ships were to participate in a joint patrolling exercise in the southern Bay of Bengal.5

India - Myanmar bilateral relations seemed to be at a crossroad. The political changes in Myanmar coupled with an apparent desire to diversify its foreign might open up new opportunities for New Delhi to pursue its interests and avoid the risks and pitfalls that had plagued its policy towards Myanmar for many years. The pragmatic and undogmatic foreign policy doctrine of India's new prime minister, Narendra Modi was based on an "enlightened national interest" and placed its focus squarely on India's immediate neighbourhood, including Myanmar. According to some analysts, India should encourage Myanmar to apply once again for membership and support such a bid even more emphatically, just as it had successfully done, when Afghanistan became a full SAARC member in 2007.6

India - Myanmar engagement had undergone fundamental changes in the last two decades, highlighting a shift from state driven, security -

centric, insurgency-focused and narrowly defined relations to market and integration driven, development-centric, resource-based comprehensive engagement. The role of the market and citizens had been gradually growing as the two economics are developing mutuality of relationships facilitated by the opening up of Myanmar and greater politico-economic reforms in the country and the development pressure emanating from India's Northeast.⁷

Sustained growth drives emanating from both the sides including the state and market forces along with the combined economic dynamism developing in Myanmar's neighbourhood, had given a new fillip to India-Myanmar engagement. Market forces along with the combined economic dynamism developing in Myanmar's neighbourhood had also given a new fillip to India-Myanmar engagement.

Moreover, the evolving dynamic of power politics in the Indo-Pacific world and the emergence of Myanmar as a critical and independent player due to the opening up of Myanmar, had added new justifications to the growth of India-Myanmar relations.⁸

India's soft power capital of being a democratic society with distinctive Asian values had great relevance to Myanmar's endeavours at building an egalitarian, progressive and prosperous society. It should be fully leveraged to further a mutually beneficial long term relationship with Myanmar. The imperative for India was to make the most of an extra-

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⁸ Ibid, p. 119.
ordinary window of opportunity, to further its national interests by enabling a long term stable, neutral and flourishing Myanmar which would automatically secure Indian interests.

In recent times, Indian policy makers had begun to position Myanmar prominently in the look east policy framework. The Indian Prime Minister had unequivocally stated that Myanmar held a significant place both in India's Look East Policy and in its collaboration with Asian countries under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). Besides, Myanmar was an important partner of India in the BIMSTEC and an important member in the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) initiatives. Myanmar's geographic location served as a land bridge for India to engage with mainland Southeast Asia. It could facilitate and foster economic growth of India's North East region that had remained underdeveloped due to limited connectivity and absence of investments and industrial growth. It was generally agreed that the root cause of the insurgency in India's Northeast had been the poor state of socio-economic development in the region, which resulted in a sense of alienation among the people who had taken to insurgency.  

At the strategic level, the tone and tenor of articulations by the Indian strategic community had moved away from labelling Myanmar as a 'Satellite of China" and the fears of the Chinese operated electronic surveillance system in Myanmar appeared to have reduced significantly.  

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10 Sengupta, Vivek., Strategic Importance of Kolkata in Kunming Initiative, South Asia Monitor, New Delhi, March 14, 2012.
Apparently, Myanmar had offered to India an access to the often cited surveillance facility at the Coco islands.\(^{11}\) However, there were concerns that China's military assistance to Myanmar was continuing. It is true that China could offer better military aid package compared to India and therefore, it was fair to argue that India need not appease the ruling government with military sops; instead India could explore the possibility of engaging Myanmar in the maritime domain and develop a robust agenda including capacity building to address non-traditional security threats and challenges in the Bay of Bengal.

The opening up of Myanmar was one of the most dramatic and unexpected events in modern Asian history. Its political transition affords India an important and unique opportunity to deepen its relations with its eastern neighbour. Myanmar's geographical position makes it the economic gateway to ASEAN for India. Politically, by inching its way into democracy, Myanmar left behind North Korea and China as the only remaining autocracies in Asia. For India, Myanmar was more than just an economic opportunity and geostrategic buffer - it had also a chance to set right the neglect of our own northeast by linking it infrastructurally, commercially and spiritually with Myanmar, to revive our eastern ports and commercial activity in the Bay of Bengal and to reignite our Buddhist heritage.\(^{12}\) It had also a chance for India's developmental and democratic model to find resonance and replication.

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\(^{11}\) Myanmar Names Naval Chief as New Vice President, Associated Press, Naypyidaw, August 15, 2012.

India must continue with its present policy of providing facilities for training of Myanmar officers and men on various military courses in India. It must continue to provide for capacity building of the Myanmar Army by sale of military hardware, as per offers already made. It must continue with the conduct of joint army and naval exercise on a regular basis. India must cooperate with Myanmar in resolving issues of concern to each other in the field of counter insurgency across the land borders.

This research was undertaken to find an answer to the question as to whether with the onset of democracy in Myanmar India would be able to outpace the Chinese foot print in Myanmar. During the course of the research it had emerged clearly that the China - Myanmar relations were on a distinct downturn, whereas, India - Myanmar relations are on a distinct upturn. China's engagement of Myanmar was both economic and strategic, that is, to develop its landlocked south-western province of Yunnan and Sichuan, acquire maximum resource from Myanmar to sustain its rapid economic growth and to gain access to the Indian Ocean through Myanmar, in order to decrease its dependence on the Straits of Malacca, for transit of both its imports, as well as experts. Until the 1990's, India's engagement of Myanmar as a strategically important neighbour, had lacked the required degree of pragmatism with which she should had actually approached the Indo-Myanmar relationship. However, pragmatism seemed to have prevailed over the past two decades in strategic engagement of Myanmar.

It was important for India that the eastern part of the Indian Ocean be free of conflicts and rivalries and the increasing presence of the Chinese economic influence along with the outreach of the Chinese Navy in the
Bay of Bengal be kept to a minimum. For that, among the South East Asian nations, Myanmar was one of the most important countries due to the fact that it was strategically located between these two great nations, India and China. Myanmar could be the bridge between China and India in promoting trade between the land locked regions namely the North East regions of India and the Yunnan and Zhigaung provinces of China.

Throughout history, naval power had played an important part in ensuring military dominance of region with the aim to have control on the trade and economies of that region. As such, the Indian Ocean was regarded as one of the most strategic and important area in relation to the world's economy and security, as it was through this region that most of the world's fuel supply was produced and transshipped and also where the fastest growing economics were located.

It was also clear that whoever controls the Indian Ocean will have a tremendous influence on the countries in Asia, Middle East and East Africa. India had declared that the ocean must be a peaceful ocean, that was free from the influence and presence of rivalries between different nations, especially in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean which was limited, though China's naval presence in this part of the world was expected to increase, as China wished to ensure safety of its trade and fuel supplies through the Straits of Malacca.

India's strategic aim to prevent penetration of China's navy in the Indian Ocean would most probably depend on neutralising the influence of China upon Myanmar, both economically and militarily. Compared to other SEA countries, Myanmar due to its geopolitical situation played a
key role in making sure that the rivalries in the Indian Ocean was kept to a
minimum.

It was in the interest of both Myanmar and India that these two
countries increased their collaboration for mutual benefit, rather than
embarking on a policy of confrontation. This would further strengthen
India's influence in Indian Ocean both in terms of militarily, as well as
economically. Through such collaboration, Myanmar's natural resources
could be further developed, which would in return support the economic
growth of these two countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Looking at the India - Myanmar relations in the bygone years and in
the contemporary period and viewing them from the Indian point of view,
especially in the light of a unipolar world, the Government of India must
take certain steps and measures to improve and to enhance its relations
with Myanmar. As a prominent Indian academician, Ms Sonu Trivedi has
opined that there were three critical, but important gaps present in bilateral
relations that needed to be bridged through immediate intervention. These
were - security and stability at the borders, connectivity with the Northeast
region of India and border - trade, as this would go a long way in
strengthening partnership and boosting of ties between the two countries.

Besides this, there were still various areas and aspects, where
improvement can be made to enhance and cement ties with our neighbours
like - terrorism, gun running, cross border terrorism, security of island
states, insurgency activity, drug smuggling; ethnic issues, illegal trade,
diasporic, conflict resolution; economic and business ties, cross - culture assimilation; banking and finance sector, power sector, trade and surface transport, flights, shipping; cooperation between academic institutions, opening of professional and technical institutions, early warning systems, health facilities, etc.

The North - East region of India should be developed at par with other parts of the country to enable its people to take advantage of the changing international scenario characterised by increasingly free of trade restrictions. Execution of various development projects should be properly synchronized, well - coordinated and in a time bound manner. The perception regarding the North - East, as being an isolated and difficult area with little prospect for self- sustaining growth must go. The mindsets of both people at the policy making level in Delhi, as well as of those in this region must change to make this region a vibrant, dynamic and prosperous one.\textsuperscript{13}

As discussed earlier, there were many bottlenecks for both countries to achieve their goals, nevertheless, if both the governments imbibe inclusive participation to win the trust and self - confidence of their minorities, it could certainly facilitate them to efficiently and effectively execute the planned projects of cooperation, which would benefit not only the two countries, but the whole regions of South and Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Das, Gurudas Singh., Bijoy, N., Thomas, C.J., Indo - Myanmar Border Trade- Status, Problem and Potentials, Aakansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2015, p. 73.

India must work to reinforce and facilitate Myanmar's desire for return of balance to India - Myanmar - China triangle. An analysis of India's approach to Myanmar states, "India administrations did not seem to have a long term (20 year plus) vision. Everything seemed to stop at the next election."\textsuperscript{15} India must take the long perspective and develop such high stakes in Myanmar polity, economy and society that the cost of disengagement for any future regime in Naypyidaw would be prohibitive and impractical. This could only happen, if India became a serious and credible partner, which thought strategically, invested with certainty and executed with rapidly, without any immediate favoured arrangements.

A long term vision suitable enabled by bipartisan domestic support, which was essential in light of the crucial brief window of opportunity available. Make special efforts to leverage existing good relations and must not lose sight of Tatmadaw in the reforms euphoria. Its pre-eminent position and its primary role in Myanmar polity would continue. A focus on Myanmar Navy to secure own interests in Bay of Bengal was also vital.

Engage diasporic interaction, with emergence of corporate interests,\textsuperscript{16} to achieve critical mass for Indian interests. India should use its diaspora, as effectively as the Chinese do, including the networks built by


Chettiar traders in Southeast Asia and the Meitis in places like Mandalay and also involve local interests to enhance its position.17

The likely future trends in Myanmar, clearly pointed to the large number of areas where India can offer assistance, expertise and uniquely local solutions, more relevant to Myanmar's cultural and social milieu. Irrespective of the success of reforms, India had to press ahead with certain imperatives, while it had the choice to select from a large number of opportunities on the horizon, the strategic space, vis-a-vis, China was unencumbered by the negative constraints of the past and offered areas of cooperation such as, the new democratic system, where the Chinese could not compete. Reinforced by Myanmar's underlying desire for decoupling from the Chinese strangle hold, it provided India on opening to make up the lost ground of the past. Thus, the initial hypothesis that "the rise of democracy in Myanmar will generate opportunities for India, to better secure its eastern frontiers, offset the strategic disadvantage resulting from deep Chinese inroads in Myanmar and in the process further its core national interest of facilitating nationwide development, economic growth, and prosperity of the Indian populace," is amply borne out.

From international outcast to flavour of the moment, it had been a sudden leap for Myanmar. The newly established democratic government combined with a more reconciliation - minded government was moving

towards a unique, Myanmar, style of democracy. The current situation
gave a momentous chance for India to exploit its lead in Myanmar and
remedy the disadvantages of the past.

Devising suitable commercial strategies could also help to build our
development cooperation programmes, for example, our business could
explore possible commercial ventures that could ride on the back of some
of the infrastructure that would be created from the Indian government -
assisting Kaladan project in western Myanmar or the Kalay- Yargyi road
project in the North - West that would enable Moreh on our Manipur
border to be connected to Mandalay and beyond by 2016, as part of the
India - Myanmar - Thailand trilateral highway project. Similarly, our IT
companies could work on commercial spill - overs of benefit, to both
countries from the Myanmar Institute of Information Technology that was
being set up with the Indian government support, as a centre of excellence
in Mandalay. All such commercial proposals would no doubt need host
country's approvals, but if they are were conceived and brought value
addition, they would be welcomed.

On its part, our government tried to also make the cost of doing
business with Myanmar more competitive. Encouraging enhanced direct
air connectivity between our metros and Yangoon was now rendered easier
with a more liberal bilateral air services agreement signed during Prime
Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Myanmar in May 2012. As of now,

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18 Poveter, David Henry., Myanmar's Roadmap Comes Full Circle, 14 September,
2011, from Asia Times, Online website: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast-
Asia/MI14AC 01.html (accessed 31 March 2012).
19 The Hindu, article by Seshadri, V.S., April 20, 2013, New Delhi.
there was only a tri-weekly Air India flight from Kolkata to Yangoon. It was usefully inadequate as compared with airlines from Japan, the Republic of Korea, Qatar and Taiwan which had introduced regular flights to Yangoon in the last six months and airlines from China, Singapore and Thailand were now flying more frequently every day and to more destinations in Myanmar.\textsuperscript{20}

Tourism should be actively promoted to the NER\textsuperscript{21} and to the Buddhist religious circuit.\textsuperscript{22} Indian civil society institutions, trade organisations and think - tanks should be encouraged to invite groups of counterparts (including the 'Sangha') from Myanmar and develop collaborations to remain ahead of other countries now entering Myanmar.

Furthermore, direct shipping service that would enable our goods to reach Myanmar in a matter of a few days, as in fact, they did during the colonial days, than several weeks at present, would surely play a critical role in facilitating greater trade. The Shipping Corporation of India would need to take the initiative here with some initial support from the government to make the service viable.\textsuperscript{23}

Myanmar's science and technology base was shattered and needed rejuvenation. An increased intake of students at engineering, medical and management institutions in India with ample scholarship support could be

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Presently visits between the ethnic communities straddling the borders are permitted upto 15 km. on either side. For tourism, it can be extended to whole of Myanmar.
\textsuperscript{22} Places such as Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, etc, have great significance for population of Myanmar, 85% of whom are Buddhists.
\textsuperscript{23} The Hindu, Seshadri, V.S., April 20, 2013, New Delhi.
made. Myanmar had also shown an interest in launching small satellites\textsuperscript{24} and nuclear reactors for research use.\textsuperscript{25} These could be potential areas for ISRO and BARC to develop long term commercial relations.

Banking and finance were other areas. The United Bank of India made a beginning with the opening of a representative office in Yangon in December 2012. More Indian banks were needed to follow the United Bank of India's move. Making available easy credit finance would also provide a big boost. While the U.S. and EU had taken steps to suspend or waive the economic sanctions imposed by them earlier, these had not altogether translated into allowing U.S. dollar denominated letters of credit to be opened, vis-a-vis, Myanmar. Our banks needed to operationalise these, as soon as it became possible.\textsuperscript{26}

Finally, our business had also to learn how to do business in Myanmar, businesses from countries like China, Thailand, Korea, Japan and Singapore frequent the country. Many of them had established a strong local presence, keeping regular contacts with government ministries in Naypyidaw, the new capital and networking with the local business people in Yangon, Mandalay and other business centres, all of which, form an important part. It is essential that as our political ties and development cooperation efforts gathers momentum, our trade and investment relations


\textsuperscript{26} The Hindu, article by Sheshadri, V.S., April 20, 2013, New Delhi.
should also gain further strength, so that they get to reinforce one another.\(^{27}\)

The following measures are recommended to be undertaken:-

(a) Establish e-governance institution in Myanmar to develop a governance mechanism in taxation, government services and central bank staff-training.
(b) Train regulators for telecom, power, insurance and finance.
(c) Train personnels in the power sectors through Power Grid Corporation and National Thermal Power Corporation.
(d) Start an IIT (Indian Institute of Technology), an IIM (Indian Institute of Management) and an IIIT (Indian Institute of Information Technology) in Myanmar to enable development of high calibre students.
(e) Sign a MOU with the National Skills Development Corporation, both for factory and service jobs.
(f) Private Indian Universities can provide 5,000 students annually to study in Indian Universities, especially in engineering, science and medicine.
(g) Private sector training in skills at private sector institutes in India as part of the companies training process for employees.
(h) Private educational institutions like the NIIT's can provide training in English language and computer skills.

The two countries can urgently begin negotiations and sign an FTA (Free Trade Agreement) to allow an increased flow of goods and services

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
to both markets. The border towns on each side can be upgraded, especially for trade, with low duties for cross-border exchanges of goods. At the moment, the Myanmar border towns are more developed and a robust in formal tax-free trade was being conducted. In addition, the two countries can also sign a multilateral Investment Guarantee Treaty; India can also sign an Investment Protection Agreement with Myanmar.

India should immediately prioritise the easy opening of letters of credit, so that business between the two countries can be facilitated. India should also work to open the third border trade point at Avakhung in Phek district of Nagaland with Pansat/Somra in Myanmar, as already proposed.

Both the government and ethnic armed groups should overcome the differences to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement to move forward. Both countries should agree a clear timeline to embark on political dialogue the sort out their mutual differences. Both parties should implement a nationwide joint ceasefire monitoring as quickly as possible, once the nationwide ceasefire agreement is signed.

Both parties should complete the demarcation of controlled areas clearly, as soon as possible, after the nation-wide ceasefire agreement is signed. Liaison activities should be strengthened with a set of communication procedures that allow liaison and field commanders to communicate effectively. All ethnic armed groups must work together to establish a common ground amongst themselves, which they can bring to the table during future union level peace talks with government officials.
It's their responsibility to ensure preliminary talks leading toward genuine political dialogue in the country.

Apart from the above, a conflict early warning system should be set up to strengthen preventive measures during the peace process.

The International community should also come up with a clear strategy to support strengthening ceasefire implementation and political dialogue, once the parties agree to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement.

Not to encourage insurgency, minor problems in the region should be addressed immediately and transparent news releasing should be carried out. Not to cause division based on policy, an environment of political stability should be built. Not to change economic recession of people into general satisfaction, job opportunities should be created and poverty rate should be gradually eliminated. Ensuring good governance should be established so as not to cause any problems due to the one-sided actions taken by the rulers. Through this ways and through other measures, insurgency could be prevented.

Their education and health needs should also be addressed. Only then, they have a prosperous lives and put their trust in the government and participate in nation building tasks, hand in hand, with the government after abandoning their arms. Through the above - mentioned ways, they could become a strong national force, which would participate in building a prosperous and developed nation flourishing with democracy.
Low capability of Myanmar's private sector in terms of international business practice and standards distracts the investors. There is also a lack of coordination between Myanmar's public and private sectors. Private sector associations are few in numbers and weak in strength.

Political instability and insurgency in some parts of Myanmar (and also in India's Northeast) add to investment risks, lowering the feasibility of cross-border infrastructure development.\(^{28}\)

Connect the capital cities in India and Myanmar with direct air links and extend it to other important cities such as Mandalay and some cities in India's Northeast.

Ports of India and Myanmar should be well connected. The Government of India may plan to call a conference of port authorities and shipping industries of India and Myanmar, which would help understand the local problems, requirements and build business networks.

Intermodal operations connecting port and lands would be required to access inland areas of Southeast and South Asia, and thereby, allowing short sea shipping between the coasts of India and Myanmar.

Set up an SEZ at Sittwe in Myanmar for Indian investors and build highways linking it to major Indian, Bangladesh and Myanmar cities. Ensure economic, social and political stability in Myanmar and India's Northeast.

\(^{28}\) De, Pardir Roy., and Jayanta, Kumar., India-Myanmar Connectivity : Current Status and Future Prospectus, KW Publisher, New Delhi, 2013, pp. 57-58.
Financial market development and market driven currency exchange rate stability are essential. Allow more Indian banks to operate in major Myanmar cities and vice-versa.

Share Indian experiences of economic reforms with Myanmar through effective networking between business delegations and exchange of university facilities and think-tanks. Develop better institutional and business environment to help Indian investors in Myanmar and strengthen chambers of commerce in Myanmar. Low or no tariff on bilateral trade and phase out non-tariff barriers.

Consistent and standardised border crossing formalities and procedures are very important. Upgrade the capacity of land customs stations, particularly of Moreh and Champai with all modern trade infrastructure. Encourage public-private partnership in building and managing cross-border infrastructure.

Training and capacity building in transportation should also be taken up on a priority basis.29

DEFENCE CAPACITY BUILDING:

Defence cooperation between India and Myanmar is also an important facet of bilateral relations. Indian Military chiefs had visited Myanmar in the past and had exchanged views on issues of mutual interest. The Indian Navy appears to have been quite proactive and Indian naval chiefs have visited Myanmar. There have also been regular port calls by Indian naval ships to Myanmar ports. As far as naval hardware was

concerned, in 2006, India announced transfer of two BN-2 'Defender Islander' maritime surveillance aircraft and deck based air - defence guns to the Myanmar Navy. There were plans to help Myanmar establish a naval aviation training centre in Myanmar. It would be pertinent to mention that the decision to supply the aircraft had invited sharp reactions from the UK which was the original supplier of BN-2 'Defender Islander aircraft to India. The UK had warned that it would stop supply of spare parts and maintenance support for them, as it opposed the country's military administration. Further, Myanmar Navy had regularly participated in the Milan meetings held at Port Blair in the Andman & Nicobar Islands in Bay of Bengal. During these events, Myanmar was represented either by a senior naval officer or a naval delegation or on occasions by a naval ship. Military training too had been agenda of bilateral defence cooperation. In 2006, the Indian Army had offered special warfare training for Myanmar soldiers.

**MARITIME SECURITY** - India and Myanmar face a number of maritime security challenges in the Bay of Bengal. These were essentially non - traditional security (NTS) issues and emerge in the form of piracy, terrorism, gun running, drug smuggling, illegal fishing and human smuggling. The Indian Prime Minister also highlighted the issue during his visit to Myanmar in April 2012 and observed that both India and Myanmar needed to "expand our security cooperation that was vital not only to maintain peace along our land borders, but also to protect maritime trade

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which we hope will open up through the sea route between Kolkata and Sittwe. At another level, NTS challenges also included issues relating to climate change and marine environment and the navies/maritime forces had been at the forefront, to respond to climate change related disasters by providing rescue and relief.

In every meeting, the fact that India eagerly requested was to fight the Indian insurgents who intruded Myanmar. The major insurgent groups operating along the frontier were:

(a) PLA, the Peoples Liberation Army.
(b) NSCN (MI) the Naga Insurgent Group.
(c) NSCN(K), the Naga Insurgent Group led by Kaplan.
(d) ULFA, the United Liberation Front of Assam.
(e) NNC, the Naga National Council.

Besides these major groups, MNF, UNLP, NDFB, and PREPKA are smaller ones. These groups were supported by the Islamic Pakistan and Bangladesh. Likewise, the dissident Myanmar groups were ABSDF, NCGUB and Chin group CNA, take refuge in India's North - East region.

To conclude, India cannot compete with China in building roads, power plants and developing infrastructure. India's strengths are her vibrant democracy and entrepreneurial private sector. India must offer what is unique to her that is her democratic values, her freedom of speech, minority rights and independent public institution. If India continues on this path of strategic engagement of Myanmar, India will not only outpace Chinese influence in Myanmar, but will also be able to address its concerns.

\[31\] PM's Address to the Think-Tanks, Intellectuals and Business Community in Yangoon, http://pmindia.nic.in/content-print.php?noted=1180 & node type=2
on northeast insurgency and meet its interests in terms of economic
development of the north east as also towards its energy needs.

Myanmar-India relations were likely to thrive further on their own
steam. But through a conscious and well planned endeavour, they could be
strengthened and deepened in a far more perceptible manner and in a
relatively short period. It is hoped that the two nations, not just their
governments, but their societies too - will make the necessary investment
in this vital relationship. There is no dearth of good ideas. What is needed
is an increased public awareness of the potential of the relationship, the
geopolitical stakes involved and the costs of suboptimal action. A new
fountain of synergy should be created in the future, which would be pulled
by a clear mutuality of interests, common values, shared experiences and a
determined leadership.

To conclude it is clear that Myanmar and India have now reached a
level of relationship which is realistic and pragmatic and keeps the mutual
demands and requirements in mind. The exchanges between the President
of Myanmar and the Prime Minister of India have covered all areas that
would provide the necessary content to the relations where mutual benefit
is a visible plus and enables Myanmar to draw on India's developmental
achievements that fit into Myanmar's socio-economic developments
plans.\textsuperscript{32}