CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION
Lt Gen HRS Kalkat, PVSM, AVSM - GOC-in-C Eastern Command in his foreword note on 'Defenders of the Dawn' dated January 15, 2000 says, "The North-Eastern region is the most enchanting part of our country. Mighty rivers gushing down the snow-clad mountains and verdant valleys meandering gently through the fertile plains make the region uniquely different. The green canopy of virgin forests with rich flora and fauna stretches for hundreds of miles. Indeed, bounteous nature has made North-East a veritable dreamland. A cradle of civilization since ancient times, the region is a confluence of diverse cultures with a rich heritage. The people of the North-East are extremely hospitable and charming and welcome guests with a smile. Hardy and fearless, they are staunch nationalists. Their courage on the battlefield, from the Mahabharata to Saraighat to Kargil, is a standing tribute to their fervent nationalism". The main part of North-East is surrounded by four foreign countries viz. China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Assam controls the eastern end of the neck of the North-East through the Siliguri corridor. Therefore, the loss of Assam would mean loss of entire land mass of the North-East. By virtue of its central position Assam played a pivotal role in the geographical, social, economic and positional development of the region as a whole. It lies between 21° 51' N to 27° 58' latitude and 89° 24' to 97° 26' E longitude. It is bound by Bhutan and Tibet (China) in the north and Bangladesh in the west. All the North-Eastern States are also bordering Assam.

Heartland theory propounded by Sir Halford Mackinder, a prominent British Geographer, former Director of London School of Economics and Political Science, Professor of Geography at the University of London and Vice President of Royal Geographical Society says,

"Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland.
Who rules Heartland commands the World Island.
Who rules the World Island commands the World".
Applying the same to Assam we can say,

"Who rules Assam commands the North-East.
Who rules North-East commands South and South-East Asia.
Who rules South and South-East Asia commands entire Asia".

Assam is of our main life line for move of men and material during any external aggression to the mainland. Since independence this part of the country has faced the 1962 debacle with the Chinese and 1971 war for Liberation of Bangladesh. Insurgency which started with Nagaland in 1958 has now spread up to Assam. In the context of above, as the concluding chapter, this brings out certain workable useful lessons.

This chapter covers the current situation, deductions on the hypotheses, suggestions and recommendations to put an end for the insurgency in Assam which is a vital State of our country. They can be broadly classified under four major heads.

**SOLUTION FOR INSURGENCY**

- POLITICAL
- ECONOMIC
- SECURITY FORCES
- MISCELLANEOUS

**Political**

1. Political Solution.
2. Immigration Problem.
3. Unemployment.
4. Improved Foreign Relations.
5. Formulation of Security Policy.
6. Centre-State Relations.
9. Establish Credibility by Corrupt Free Administration.
10. Drug Control.
11. Role of Women.
15. Stringent Rules on Extortion.

**Economic**

17. Green Revolution.
18. Improvement in Communication System - Development of Rural Areas.
19. Encourage Foreign Investments.
20. Improve Bangladesh Economically.

**Security Forces**

22. Border Fencing and BOPs.
27. Unset Pattern of Ops.
28. Do's and Don'ts.
29. Co-ordination of Int.
30. Handling of ISI threat.
32. Transparency.
33. Increased Defence Budget.
34. Raising a National Counter-Insurgency Force.
35. Views of the Present Chief of the Army Staff.

**Miscellaneous**

36. Wooing the Masses.
37. Matured Handling of Mass Media.
38. Propaganda Secretary.
39. Gainful Utilisation of NGOs.
40. Use of Films.
41. Concerted effort.
42. Accountability of persons.
POLITICAL

1. Political Solution

One young officer had pointed out that nowhere in the world insurgency was settled without the dedicated involvement of the Government. The SFs can only keep the situation under control temporarily. But ultimately the solution has to be political.

There is a lack of political will both at the Centre and the State to end militancy in the North-East and also in Assam which is forming major part of it. In fact, it is jokingly said that some of the politicians do not want militancy to die down in Assam.

The solution to the problem of militancy would involve various aspects like foreign policy, security policy, economic package etc by the Union Government and regional issues like employment, green revolution, rehabilitation of surrendered militants etc by the State Government. Therefore, the final solution has to be political.

2. Immigration Problem

This is a highly controversial issue. The Assam student movement against the foreigners was launched in early 1980's. A lot of literature has been published on this. The repeal of IM (DT) Act remains as 'a bone of contention' between the various political parties. Since it was enacted by the Parliament, its repeal requires the voting of majority in both the houses of Parliament. However, the present Parliamentary arithmetic of the various political parties in both the houses do not permit this. Therefore, this has to be resolved legally. At present the case is with the Supreme Court.
His Excellency Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, the Governor of Assam had submitted a report to The President of India dated 08 Nov 1998 on the subject titled 'Illegal Migration into Assam'. As per this, from 1993 to September 1998 Bangladesh had accepted only 9,253 persons and refused to accept 30,493 who were declared as illegal migrants from Bangladesh by the Indian Government. The acceptance figure in 1993 was 5,799. In 1998 (upto 30th September) the acceptance figure is only 55. The various statistics mentioned in Chapter III of the thesis under the heading 'Illegal Migration' amply reveal that there are a very large number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh who are present in Assam. It appears that all the illegal migrants who are present as of date have to be accepted by the State and Assam has to live with this problem. What is practically workable for the future is to take very stern steps against those who will try to migrate illegally. The field work conducted in the form of conversation with senior Officers of the SFs reveal that only the fear of death on crossing the borders can stop a man from illegal migration and nothing else. This has to be handled ruthlessly. In addition to border fencing, lighting the area, increasing the observation posts, there is a requirement to activate the second line defence.

The hypothesis - 'The change in the demographic pattern and finding an answer to the migration problem will solve the crisis in Assam to a great extent and in turn would help the SFs in maintaining law and order' has been proved to be partially correct.

3. **Unemployment**

This is one of the most important reason for militancy in Assam. The present statistics reveal that about 16 lakhs youths are seeking employment in the State (North-East Times "Poverty Alleviation in Assam-II" - H. N. Das dated 22 February 2000). As a case study, out of the 23 districts of Assam, Nalbari district was chosen. It shows that out of the total population of 10,16,390, the district has 6,79,648 jobless people (Reasons for Insurgency
- Unemployment - Page 135 of the thesis). This is a very large figure for a district. The educated idle youths have opted for undesirable paths, including violence out of sheer frustration. The conversation with the various militants surrendered have also revealed that they joined the various militant outfits since they didn't get suitable employment. In fact, some of them have surrendered with the idea that after their surrender they will get a suitable employment. Lt Gen D B Shekatkar, who was GOC IV Corps had revealed that many youths have joined the militant outfits not because they follow the ideology of the outfits but because of economic factors. By providing employment, they will not be lured away by the insurgent outfits and go in the wrong path.

**Remedial measures** : These are :-

(a) **Self-Employment** : The State Government had started the schemes of generating self-employment avenues. This should be pursued with full vigour.

(b) **Rojgar Yojana** : PM's Rojgar Yojana for creating self-employment should be utilised judiciously.

(c) **Planning Commission** : It had urged the Assamese to grab the opportunity of private investment. They also recommended to have a conducive atmosphere for infra structural development, peace, vocational education, linkage with neighbouring countries etc. The Planning Commission is also trying its best to promote horticulture development programme suitable to the region. It is also trying to improve trade and tourism potential.

*The hypothesis - 'Creating gainful employment would bring a lot of militants to the mainstream' has proved correct.*
4. **Improved Foreign Relations**

The North-East of India is surrounded by four foreign countries i.e. Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Assam has borders with Bhutan and Bangladesh. The boundary of the North-East with the neighbouring countries is 4,688 km. The total boundary of Assam with Bhutan and Bangladesh works out to 507 km. Assam boundary with Bhutan is 245 km and with Bangladesh on the southern sector 130 km and western sector 132 km. The terrain of the neighbouring countries closer to Assam border is ideally suitting for insurgency. In relation to foreign countries the study reveals two connotations. First in relation to the militants and second operations by ISI.

**Militants:** They use the neighbouring countries for purchase of arms, drug trafficking, training, camps and also follow the tactics of operating in India and getting back to the neighbouring country. This was revealed by the field work conducted by the author in the form of questionnaire to the various surrendered militants. The various available literature and the local news papers on the various operations carried out by the SFs support this.

**ISI:** It has been proved beyond doubt that the ISI has been having its own design for operations in the North-East. With the Army back in power in Pakistan, the ISI will continue its operations with more vigour. The personal audience of Lt Gen (Retd) NIS Narhari and His Excellency Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, the Governor of Assam confirm this.

*Therefore, the hypothesis - 'Improved relations with neighbouring countries of India like Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar will help the SFs in fighting insurgency and in turn in maintaining law and order' has proved correct.*
5. **Formulation of Security Policy**

In post-Independence period the political leadership of the country had failed to accord as much attention to formulate defence policy as was given to the foreign policy.

Even leaders of the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru and Krishna Menon could not realise that defence policy is as much important as the foreign policy for the country. As a result a mismatch between the defence policy and foreign policy was created in the very first decade of the post Independence period and the faults are still persisting.

A coherent foreign policy can not be followed without proper backing of military strength. An adequate military might provide manoeuvrability to the foreign policy. During 1962 Chinese aggression the country found to its horror that impregnability of the Himalayas, infallibility of our foreign policy and invincibility of our Army was shattered due to mismatch of our defence and foreign policy.

We have completely neglected the vital strategic aspect to have a surplus military power as an expression of our stability. Sending Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka was a mistake. IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka without sufficient thinking about the requirements of such a large scale military operation outside Indian territory. This was a clear fall out of not having an integrated security policy. During the Kargil conflict for the first time in the history of Independent India, the Ministry of Defence acted in tandem with the Minister of External Affairs. During Kargil conflict the ground was prepared diplomatically for the Generals to strike. The results were there for all to see. In the present century the **country is faced with the challenge** to identify as to where from the threat to the National Security could emerge and formulate an adequate strategy to counter the threat.
Therefore, the need of the hour is that India must formulate a security policy integrating foreign and defence policies for proper management of international relations.

6. **Centre-State Relations**

In India, in the past 50 years since 1947, there had been a sea change in the political front. The monopoly of the Congress Government both in the Centre and the State is no longer existing. Federalism has been followed in our political system. Most of the States have a Government other than the party at the Centre and many regional parties have come to power. This philosophy should be understood by our decision makers.

Control of insurgency has got a larger dimension and wider ramifications. The foreign policy, defence policy and economic policy are linked up in ending militancy in Assam. Therefore, there is a requirement to consider insurgency as a National problem and not as a mere law and order problem of the State. There is a requirement to have a good understanding between the Centre and the State. It should override all other petty issues like Centre and State parties being different. The interest of the State should override all the other obligations.

Therefore, the hypothesis - 'Stable political structure both at the Union and State Governments would bring a lot of militants to the mainstream and in turn the SFs can get back to the original duty of keeping vigil of the borders' has proved correct.
7. **Better Management of Surrendered Militants**

While the State Government is encouraging the surrender of a large number of militants, their subsequent management has always been a sour point. A lot of promises are made by the Government at the time of surrender of the militants. Having faith in the Government, they surrender. After this, they do not want to get back to their hometown since they are either likely to be killed or harassed very badly by their parent militant organization. Therefore, their life becomes very unsafe. Some of them have even gone back and re-joined the same militant outfits. Some militants i.e. especially the SULFAs who have surrendered in 1993-94 still have the weapons with them and they have become more of a nuisance value in the society adhering to extortion, corruption, kidnapping etc. The field work conducted both at Bongaigaon and Guwahati by way of conversation with the militants reveal that quite a few of them have not received the stipend money of Rs 2,000/- per month during their rehabilitation training as promised by the Government. Quite a few of them were disillusioned and did not know as to what they should do. They were also feeling very unsafe to get back to their hometown. The Governor during the personal audience has also given his view on this.

Therefore, the hypothesis - 'Rehabilitation of the surrendered militants will help to end militancy in Assam' has been proved as partially correct. It will be effective provided the assurance given by the Government is executed in the same spirit.

8. **Faster Judiciary Process**

The existing process in resolving cases pertaining to militants is very time consuming and punishments delayed looses its value. A separate judiciary process if need be should be set up for speedy disposal of the cases.
9. **Corrupt Free Administration**

This is in the hands of the politicians, bureaucrats and the people. The North-East in general and Assam in particular has suffered very badly because of this. **An awakening at all levels and concerted effort only can solve this issue.**

10. **Drug Control**

'The Golden Triangle' - key producer of drugs has an area of about 1,50,000 sq miles. It comprises of boundaries - Burma's Chin Hills in the west, China's Yunnan province in the north, Laos and Thailand's north western province in the east and Burma's Kayah State in the south. This area is very closer to Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. The drugs are smuggled through these Indian States to other parts of India. About 110 Metric tonnes of opium is produced in the 'Golden Triangle' area. High grade number 4 Heroin for the American market is produced here. Nearly 30 percent of the Heroin consumed in USA is processed from opium produced in Burma. Assam has become the main transit route for drug traffickers in the North-Eastern region. There are also rivalry amongst certain militant groups in the North-East to have a control over the smuggling of drugs. It is a very good source of income for the militant groups for buying arms and ammunition. This being a social crime it should be controlled and the militant outfits brought to main stream. **Stringent measures on the cases caught should be taken and heavily dealt with.**
11. **Role of Women**

They can play a major role in curbing militancy. They can help to inculcate the old values and could guide the younger generation on the right path. In Bangladesh, about 2 million women have been given membership by the Grameen Bank. This had increased the income of the family, encourages gender justice, promotes women’s education, which acts as a curb on population growth. We should take lessons from Bangladesh. **A similar thing can also be followed here in Assam.**

12. **Better Management of Relief Camps**

The relief camps are in a pitiable condition. It is more of a place which is with full of disease. Since the ration is issued based on the number of heads in a family it has become a child-producing centre. Except 'Lutheran Ford' a foreign assisted NGO, there is hardly any other NGO which is working for the better management of these camps. **The Government should make use of the good offices of the NGOs for the better living condition of the victims who are in relief camps.**

13. **Create Congenial Atmosphere in Handling Militant Groups**

This is a must for a political solution to the vexed militants. Only under a peaceful situation, the Government would be able to think seriously about the political issues. No problem can be solved without a gainful dialogue. Problems can be resolved within the frame work of the constitution. We believe in co-existence, the very spirit of the Indian Parliamentary system. The State requires dynamic administrators to handle this. **High profile IAS & IPS Officers should be posted to Assam.**
14. **Better National Integration**

The effect of this was seen in the recent Kargil crisis. The State had showed all co-operation which is a clear indication that a majority of them want to be part of the mainstream. *Seminars could be organised on this which could motivate the educated younger generation.*

15. **Stringent Rules on Extortion**

This has to be handled with a 'lion heart' and an 'iron hand' especially in relation to SULFAs and ULFAs. Wherever it came to the light that any SFs personnel were involved in extortion it was dealt very severely and nothing less than dismissal from service and rigorous imprisonment (RI) was given.

However, in the case of surrendered militants it is even worse than the unsurrendered ones. Extortion has become as a way of livelihood. They want easy money for luxury. *The law should help in disposing off the cases against the militants at the earliest and also award heavy punishment to those who have been proved guilty. This has to be executed by the Government.*
Assam is the core State of the entire North-East region. Inspite of the balkanisation of the North-East in 1972 the pre-eminence of Assam still remains. More than 50% of the population of the entire North-East still are in Assam. It is rich with natural resources. It has tea industry with a turn over of Rupees 3,000 crores and 50 percent of the on-shore crude oil of the country, including oil shale reserves capable of sustaining crude oil production of 140 million tons annually for 100 years. The annual value of crude oil drawn from oil wells in Assam is about Rupees 2,000 crores. Assam also has large quantities of the other mineral resources like coal, gas, limestone, mica and so on. This region has 40 percent of the water wealth of India.

Inspite of above, the Assamese economy is one of the most backward economy and it is one of the impoverished region of India. On most economic indicators, its performance is less than that of all-India average. This gives rise to apprehension among the local people that they may not get any gainful employment unless the economy exhibits structural change. The per capita of net State domestic product in 1992-93 was Rs 5,056 while the per capita of net National product was Rs 6,234. The per capita income accruing to persons ordinarily resident in the State would be somewhat less than income originating in the State on account of relatively a large income is transferred out of the State. The transport isolation is major constraint for Assam's development.

Despite being potentially one of the richest provinces in the Indian Union, Assam found herself economically backward. The Assamese elite called it "A rich province with the poor people". The Assamese elite felt that their 'legitimate share' is taken by the Centre. They also felt that there is economic exploitation by the outsiders. This was found to be true by the field work conducted by the research scholar. The Union and the State Government are taking steps to over come this problem.
16. **Economic Package**

The new package announced by PM Atal Behari Vajpayee in February 2000 for the North-East is worth Rs 10,271 crores. The salient aspects pertaining to Assam are as under:

(a) It includes development of infrastructure, upgrading the North-East Indira Gandhi Institute of Health and Medical Science, exemption of excise duty to the Numaligarh Refinery, earmarking funds for three major power plants, improvement of facilities for trans-border trade with the neighbouring countries and so on.

(b) Implementing the package is an important factor. Past experience on the subject had been a sour point.

(c) It is the responsibility of the politicians to ensure that the money is released without delay, projects are taken up in time and completed.

(d) Common people have the task of being vigilant and see the money is utilised without any wastage.

(e) PM Vajpayee has already pulled up the States for failing to cut down wasteful expenditure.

**Examples** :- The memorandum submitted by the respective CMs in the conference of CMs and Governors held in Shillong in January 2000 could have been printed in much lower quality paper. One need not go for glossy paper to print memorandums which plead for releasing or granting more funds. This is only a small example.
A few years ago one economist estimated as to how much grain is lost during harvest in the entire country. Only a little care in collecting grains during the harvest can help the country save food grains for at least three months, so had said the economist. Little drops of water, little drops of rain make the mighty ocean.

(f) NGOs, different political parties, as also members of Panchayats and other local bodies should play a vigilant role in ensuring the acceleration of the development process in the backward region.

(h) Media, especially vernacular press in the region should play the role of a watch dog in our society. They should focus more attention on corruption, areas which need to be taken more care of and ensure benefit reaches downtrodden people of the region.

(j) The PM's office is the monitoring agency. Entire population should also play the role of monitoring at the grass-root level.

Therefore the hypothesis - 'Improved economy in the State would bring a lot of militants to the mainstream' will remain true provided the projects as planned are implemented fool proof and the benefits reach the grass root level.

17. **Green Revolution**

The economy of the State of Assam is primarily dependent on agriculture. Assam has a gross cropped area of about 36.94 lakh hectares. The net cropped area is only about 25.45 lakh hectares. And of this, while tea cultivation occupies 2.32 lakh hectares, rice and other crops account for the remaining. The annual food grain output of the State is about 36 lakh tonnes. The requirement is about 44 lakh tonnes excluding the needs of feedstock for the animals.
Production of rice has been always a cause of concern for the State. The deficit of rice has been compounded by the smuggling out of Assam's rice to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan as well as other neighbouring States making the situation more difficult. The State has evolved in its current Ninth plan a strategy to overcome this problem.

**Samvidha Krishak Yojana (SKY) Scheme** : It was started by the Government. The scheme is to provide altogether one lakh shallow tube wells (STW) in 18 districts of the State. In first phase 30,000 have been installed in November 1999. The second phase of balance 70,000 has commenced from March 2000. The agriculture department has set up 30,000 wells all over Assam within a period of just 45 days. Compared to this only 62,000 wells were installed in the State in the fifty years since India attained Independence.

**View of Eminent Economist Dr Jayanta Madhab** : He considers that this silent revolution in the agriculture sector as the beginning of a biggest economic revolution in Assam. In a seminar held in Guwahati, he said that with agricultural production going up rapidly, there will now be a demand for agro-based industries. Once the demand is generated, a second batch of educated youths will be attracted towards this sector. This will further generate employment for yet another several thousand youths, at the same time improving the economic health of the State in particular and the North Eastern region in general.

Vegetables have become more easily available and also become cheaper. The supply to urban centres like Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Jorhat has increased manifold. The scheme is funded by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) under its Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) with a view to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production by the end of the current Ninth plan.
"On the development front, we have had a great success story with our one lakh Shallow Tube Well Scheme. This has led to Assam having two crops a year. For the first time in 50 years, Assam is today no longer a deficit State in food. We held a seminar on Green Revolution in Assam in July this year, attended by the Finance Minister and the world famous Agricultural Scientist, Dr. Swaminathan, the father of Green Revolution in India. Dr. Swaminathan stated that he had not come across another instance anywhere in which such rapid progress had been made towards ushering Green Revolution as in Assam".

The local dailies and the personal audience of His Excellency Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, the Governor of Assam confirm most of the above points.

Therefore, the implementation of the green revolution supplements the hypothesis - 'Improved economy, creating gainful employment in the State would bring a lot of militants to the mainstream'.

18. **Improvement in Communication & Rural Areas**

The mode of communication in Assam is railways, roadways, water transport and airways. Assam has got 2,466.83 km of railways out of which 951.41 km is broad gauge and 1515.42 km is metre gauge. In the roadways it has black topped or gravelled road of 5,534 km, kacha road 29,595 km making it a total of 35,129 km. The road length per 100 km² is 44.79. Though this is a satisfactory figure within the North-Eastern States, on the overall it is inadequate.
Improvement in communication in relation to Assam has two connotations. These are:

(a) For movement of troops during external threat from foreign countries.

(b) For movement of stores and other day to day requirement of the people.

Generally the communication in the State is poor. Brahmaputra flowing 720 km long in Assam can be crossed only in three places. In Upper Assam, the crossing is still by ferry. In relation to Assam, Guwahati forms the gateway to the North-East. The road and rail communication for the entire North-Eastern States radiate from here. Any hampering of communication during external threat is going to delay the movement of both men and material required for the operations. We had seen this problem during the Kargil crisis when the troops had to be moved from this Sector to Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, the rural areas which forms almost 80% is poorly developed both for communication and basic amenities. The newsman who went on an extensive tour of Chungajan, Madhabpur, Nababashiti, Hezari, Santipur, Padum plikhuri, Mikir Basti confirm that during the last 40 years no Government schemes were introduced for betterment of society. They had also brought out in their study that the communication is very poor. The existing communication damaged by militants has not been repaired. There is an urgent requirement to improve these. There is also a requirement to develop lateral communication.

Improvement in communication is a key result area of the present Chairman of NEC who also happens to be the Governor of Assam. Schemes have been planned for the same. This was confirmed during the personal audience of the Governor of Assam.

Therefore, the development of communication will improve the economy. This indirectly supports the hypothesis - 'Improved economy would bring a lot of militants to the mainstream'.
19. **Encourage Foreign Investments**

Assam is basically an inward looking society. But, it has a lot of natural resources and also the place has a great potential for economic growth. Any foreigner will be prepared to invest provided he gets the safety, security and all assistance for earning the money he had invested. There are restrictions in some of the North-Eastern States for an outsider even to buy a piece of land.

The State Government should take earnest steps to encourage foreign investments. This will also help a lot of local population in getting employment.

20. **Improve Bangladesh Economically**

As per the minutes of a Civil Military Conference at Calcutta addressed by Lt Gen Jameel Mahmood on 12 February 1993, he stated that Bangladesh "continues to be plagued with galloping population, economic poverty and natural calamities resulting into abnormal growth of population in the North-East, particularly in Assam which needs to be checked". On 09 March 1993, Lt Gen Jameel Mahmood reported to Army Headquarters that the estimate of illegal migrants in Assam at that time was 30 lakhs. Over the last seven years this number should have increased considerably.

If a Bangladesh citizen gets better living conditions in his own country then he will stop coming to India. Therefore, India must help in its own way the improvement of Bangladesh on economic aspects to avoid illegal migration. The Governor also supports this view.
21. **New Strategic Doctrine for CI Ops**

With the Army back in power in Pakistan, it is futile to expect scaling down of terrorist activity in India which is taking a heavy toll of human lives and economic resources. Judging from Gen Parvez Musharraf's utterances, he has put New Delhi on notice that Gen Zia-ul-Haq's destabilisation plan will be pursued with greater vigour by the military regime of Pakistan to bleed India.

**Clausewitzian Concept** : Pakistan Army seems possessed by the Clausewitzian concept of war as a continuation of politics. It has set before itself certain strategic goals :-

(a) Insurgency in J & K and North-East.

(b) Revival of terrorism in Punjab and other parts of India.

(c) Keeping the Line of Control in force with escalated shelling and larger infiltration.

With the Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's declaration of 'Zero Tolerance Policy' towards terrorism, the Indian SFs should loose no time in putting together a strategy to combat Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism.

**New Doctrine** : In consultation with the States, the Centre should evolve a doctrine to combat insurgency and externally sponsored terrorism on a long term basis, ensuring perfect co-ordination among the SFs, intelligence agencies and civil administration.
New Structure: The Indian security structure needs to be revamped to meet the new situation and challenge. Now that the country has to live with foreign inspired and supported insurgency for a long time, a co-ordinated National strategy needs to be evolved to deal with the menace. Tackling insurgency should not be left to the meagre resources of the affected States, which do not even have adequate and sufficiently motivated Police Forces in place.

The SFs have by now acquired sufficient experience in CI Ops and a situation should not arise in future when they are caught. Internal conflict management has become important and involves co-ordinated thinking and action by the Ministry of Defence and Home Affairs, the Prime Minister’s Office and Chief Ministers. The subject should also engage the attention of the National Security Council which should help in evolving a doctrine to deal with the continuing threat to India’s security and territorial integrity. It is suggested that the new arrangement should provide for co-ordinated planning, decision making, directions, controls, intelligence sharing and joint control rooms. The PM’s National Security Adviser should oversee the functioning of the co-ordinated counter-insurgency. When the Army/SFs is called in, its tasks should be clearly defined and it should be given a free hand in tracking down terrorists, aborting their entry and destroying their bases in Assam and the other States of the North-East.

Side by side with intensified security measures, ways should be found for amicable settlement of contentious issues through dialogue. Excessive reliance on the State Government should be avoided. The foreign trained and armed terrorists must be ruthlessly eliminated, efforts should be made to address the genuine grievances of the people. The Centre’s primary duty is to restore peace. The doctrine should be formulated which would include the participation of the Government, Military Commanders, National Security Council, think tanks and academicians. The long-term solution for terminating insurgency is adoption of a strategic doctrine of this nature.
22. **Border Fencing and BOPs**

Assam has 262 km border with Bangladesh out of which 92 km is riverine. It has 245 km border with Bhutan. The border roads for 77.5 km and fencing along Bangladesh border for 71.5 km has been planned at an expenditure of Rs. 164 crores. To be effective and ensure that the illegal migrants are stopped, vigorous patrolling and other measures are required. This should be on same lines as it had been done in Punjab. The distance between BOPs should be reduced. One BSF battalion should be given a frontage of only 30 km. Observation towers and lighting should be provided on the same scale as in Punjab. Diversion of BSF bns from the border in Assam for other tasks must be avoided. The country boats plying in the river near the border should be registered. The floating BOPs should be given medium craft boats with adequate speed. These factors had been recommended by His Excellency Lt Gen (Retd) S K Sinha, PVSM, the Governor of Assam in the appendix of his report submitted to the President of India on 08 November 1998. The above aspects were also confirmed during the personal audience of the Governor.

Therefore, these aspects if executed will support the hypothesis - 'The change in the demographic pattern and finding an answer to the migration problem will solve the crisis in Assam to a great extent and in turn would help the SFs in maintaining law and order'.

23. **Second Line of Defence**

This started from January 2000. This involves manning of certain locations on own side of the territory just a km from the International border behind the BSF. It comprises personnel of the border wing of the State Police Force. On the 262 km long international border with Bangladesh the second line of defence there is a requirement of setting up of watch posts at an interval of ten km, thereby needing altogether **28 such watch posts - 14 in the Dhubri Sector and 14 in the Karimganj Sector**. Each post will be manned by 20
personnel. There was a tripartite talk among the Centre, the State Government and the All Assam Students' Union (AASU). The demand for second line of defence was raised by AASU with a view to check infiltration from Bangladesh.

The Centre has not given any additional funds for this. This is to be managed from State resources. The fund-starved State Government started the second line of defence with the existing Police Force and equipment without spending the required amount for the purpose. This should be planned in a gradual manner as per available funds. This would marginally reduce the illegal migration and also act as a deterrent against the operations of the ISI.

24. **Better Management of Home-Guards, TA & Ex-servicemen**

Manpower management is an "**acid test**" and **a great challenge** in CI Ops. SFs are given a large area of responsibility. The ratio of the troops operating to the area and population is very less. Therefore, sparing of troops pose **a great challenge**. In addition, active Units are deficient of 10 to 20 percent manpower of their authorised strength.

Therefore, the Government should gainfully siphon uniformed citizens like Home-Guards, Territorial Army and Ex-servicemen for utilisation of convoy duties, other static duties like guarding of vulnerable areas, vulnerable points, traffic control, manning second line of defence etc. **This will relieve the regular forces for better management and active operations in a CI grid.**
25  **Unified Command Structure (UCS)**

This has proved successful in the case of Assam. The other North-Eastern States are not following this. Manipur had declined to follow this. UCS gives a better sharing of intelligence which is the basic requirement for successful operations in a CI grid.

The SFs Commanders at various level are in agreement that the unified command structure should continue. The Governor is also of the same view. **Therefore, this should be continued as it is existing now.**

26.  **Change in Organization and Equipment**

The field work conducted with the SFs in Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Guwahati reveal that there are no platoons in CI Ops. It is only action group under a JCO consisting of 12 to 13 persons. Therefore, there is a basic requirement of change in the organization. The relevant points pertaining to equipment are as under :-

(a)  There is a need for more walkie talkies for better communication, light equipment, light civil vehicles, tracker dogs and a Nursing Assistant at a Company level.

(b)  Two casper vehicles per battalion which is used for protection against small arms and explosive attacks should be authorised.

(c)  Certain stores like bicycles and maintenance money for the same to be authorised.
(d) Search lights, hand metal detectors, rear inspection mirrors should be issued to Units.

Immediate action on the above would enhance the operational efficiency of the Units.

There is also a thinking on the enhancement of the capability and potential of the Rashtriya Rifles by restructuring and reorganising it to give it a greater punch in counter-insurgency operations. It is also felt that there is a need to integrate these force into the regular Army.

27. **Unset Pattern of Ops**

The SFs should not follow a set pattern of Ops like following a standard timing for laying ambush, patrolling, road opening parties, move of convoys etc. They should also change the pattern of uniform frequently because the militants also use them. Similarly the vehicles especially the civil vehicles being used in CI Ops should be changed at frequent intervals to avoid marked identity. While travelling in train, the same type of bogie earmarked for SFs like being second from engine, third from rear-set pattern should be avoided. It is seen from the past experience that the militants target this and blow them up which causes very heavy casualties of SFs. **Avoiding set pattern will save casualties.**

28. **Dos and Don’ts**

These are brought out in Chapter VI - Counter Insurgency (Page Nos 269 & 270) of the thesis. This should be given out to the SFs operating in CI Ops as a ready reference. It should be constantly updated. Commanders at all levels should devote time to educate the troops on this.
29. **Co-ordination of Intelligence**

This is a must for counter-insurgency. Intelligence must be shared in time without any hesitation. It involves co-ordination amongst the SFs operating in that area and co-ordination between SFs and the civil administration. This is being followed but still there is a lot of scope for improvement.

30. **Handling of ISI Threat**

Pakistan has a grandeur design of their own for the North-East. The policy of Pakistan is to support cross border terrorism. India has to face this. In Guwahati city there had been many instances where the ISI agents have been caught carrying explosives, gelatin sticks and detonators. In addition to SFs being active on this issue, all the citizens should be educated through mass media to be aware and cautious about the ISI acts. This would help in reducing the ISI threat.

31. **Human Rights**

This is gaining a big momentum with the people. The type of behaviour and attitude expected from a soldier in a CI Ops environment is totally different from fighting on the line of control. Sometimes, even small excess committed by SFs are blown out of proportion and this in turn tarnishes the image of SFs. Therefore, there is a necessity for the following:-

(a) To educate the SFs on human rights issue. It is better to have a Dos and Don’ts at Unit level in relation to Human Rights.

(b) To make every citizen aware on the constraints of SFs in carrying out CI Ops like checking, establishing mobile check posts etc.
Management of mass media in handling issues pertaining to human rights.

However, the general feeling of the public is that excesses are being created by SFs in CI Ops. **Remedial measures like enhanced education of troops will help to build the image of the SFs.**

32. **Transparency**

There is an urgent need to revamp the intelligence collection, collation, analysis, synthesis and dissemination structure at the National level to make it more responsive to the requirements of prevailing strategic uncertainties and the emerging external and internal threats. Transparency in matters of National Security is a force multiplier as it enhances the public's awareness of major concerns and helps to build a National consensus.

33. **Increased Defence Budget**

The next important step the government must take is to raise the defence budget from the present abysmally low level of 2.3 percent of the GDP to 3.0 percent initially and 3.5 percent over a period of 10 to 15 years to enable the Armed Forces to replace their obsolescent equipment and modernize to meet emerging threats. Defence expenditure of 3.5 percent of the GDP has been found by various think tanks to be sustainable for the Indian economy as well as the minimum necessary to enhance defence preparedness to acceptable levels. Some hard decisions need to be taken by the Government quickly, regarding weapons acquisition with large financial outlays. **A major share of the defence budget should be allotted for the equipment required for CI Ops.**
34. **National Level Counter-Insurgency Force**

The management of internal security is another aspect that has suffered for want of due attention. It is well recognised that the Army's prolonged involvement in counter-insurgency operations detracts from its ability to train and prepare for its primary role. This catch-22 situation can be overcome by raising a National level counter-insurgency force with the Army's ethos, methods of training and initially, the Army's leadership. The present system of committing almost all types of Central Forces like the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police has not produced results commensurate with force levels employed as counter-insurgency operations require high levels of specialisation and higher level coordination. Dealing with the various insurgencies threatening India's security requires a holistic inter-ministerial and inter-departmental approach. Above all, it requires political courage and vision to evolve and implement a comprehensive National policy.

35. **Views of the Present Army Chief**

The new Army Chief Gen S Padmanabhan, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC has revealed the following :-

(a) The Army over the past decade had been heavily committed to CI Ops duty, which was its secondary role.

(b) Prolonged exposure to CI Ops duty will eventually affect the operational efficiency of the Army. The Army has made its points to the task force set up by the Government to study this aspect and till that is done the Army would continue to deal with insurgency.
(c) In its anti-insurgency drive the Army was operating in a "transparent manner" under the ever watchful eyes of the National Human Rights Commission and media.

(d) He came out in support of the Unified Command structure to say that the system ensured synergization, expedited decision making and achieved greater cohesion among different forces engaged in internal security.

(e) Regarding the concept of integrated intelligence agencies, the Government had already constituted a task force to have a de novo look at the intelligence apparatus. The views have been given to the task force and it is expected that they will take positive steps to bring about improvement in the functioning of intelligence agencies.
MISCELLANEOUS

36. **Wooing the Masses**

Though this is the task of the civil administration, SFs have also taken up these tasks as good Samaritans. Some of the things being done are:

- (a) Construction of school buildings and certain approach roads.
- (b) Weaving centres.
- (c) Computer, type writing centres.
- (d) Organising seminars on insurgency to include impact on women and children.
- (e) Improving tourist spots like Kaziranga park.
- (f) Vocational training to surrendered militants in various districts of the State.
- (g) As part of green revolution, motivating the youths to concentrate on agriculture and allied sectors.
- (h) Providing ready made market by buying all vegetables required for SFs from locally produced fields.
- (i) Providing special recruitment rallies.
The personal audience of the Governor of Assam revealed that insurgency thrives in those places where there is a lack of economic development and there is a necessity of carrying out people friendly operations by the SFs though he was in agreement that it is essentially the job of the State administrative machinery. Therefore, it is recommended that the SFs should continue to carry out the people friendly operations as it is being done now.

37. **Matured Handling of Mass Media**

The press has to be handled with care. Any difference of opinion between the press and the SFs should be addressed in the correct perspective. Hiding of any relevant information in the name of excessive secrecy should be avoided. The field work conducted in the form of attending a seminar at North Eastern Hill University, Shillong and conversation with a war correspondent of 30 years of experience reveal that in the past two years there had been a drastic improvement by the SFs by following an "open door" policy. This has to be pursued with greater vigour which would build up on the image of the SFs.

38. **Propaganda Secretary**

There is a necessity to make the public know about the ill effects of insurgency and also there is a necessity to bring the militants to the mainstream. The various projects of the Government, civic action programmes conducted in the form of people friendly operations by the SFs should be known to the common man. The Public Relation Officer who is the spokesman of the SFs should have more interaction with the Government. Having a Propaganda Secretary at the district level by the State Government will go a long way in building the image of the Government and the SFs.
39. **Gainful Utilisation of NGOs**

There are any number of NGOs operating in the North-East. They are not gainfully employed as it should be. They could be utilised for civic action in villages, rehabilitation camps, refugee camps, organising seminars to motivate the youths etc. This would go a long way in handling the present situation, educating the younger generation for future and ending militancy in Assam. **The Government should voluntarily give all possible help to the NGOs.**

40. **Use of Films**

In certain Southern States like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh the films played a major role in State politics. The matinee idols like famous M. G. Ramachandran (MGR) and N. T. Rama Rao (NTR) became Chief Ministers and remained in power as 'uncrowned monarchs'. Their basic ideology was propagated to the people through the film screen. On the similar lines **the artists of the film world in Assam should propagate the ideology of the Government and SFs for ending militancy in Assam.** This would have a lot of effect on the younger generation and rural population.

41. **Concerted Effort**

An awareness is required from all angles to end insurgency. The response should be from the militants, Government, SFs and the People. No outsider will come and resolve the problem. As the saying goes, "The best place to find a helping hand is always at the end of your own arm". This philosophy is very much true for resolving the insurgency issue. Therefore, **there should be a will and concerted effort to end militancy.**
42. **Accountability**

In a CI Ops situation there is a tendency to palm off the responsibility to others. This is more so in the case of local people who happen to be in the State administrative machinery. They also have the fear of the militants. It also gives an impression that the local Officials give a sort of coveted support to the militants. This tendency should be out rightly curbed. Everyone should act as a custodian and responsible Law-Keeper of the State. **Politicians, Government officials, SFs - everyone should be made accountable for each and every action.** This will improve the overall situation.
CONCLUSION

The Government, undoubtedly, has numerous pressing domestic and international issues to deal with. However, it is in the realm of National Security that the Government needs to move with courage, sagacity and speed to take some major decisions to undo decades of stagnation and neglect in relation to insurgency.

India for long has been internationally perceived as a 'soft State'. Otherwise, Pakistan's 'proxy war' would not have gone unchallenged. Also, the ISI would not have been allowed to spread its tentacles to forge its links with militant organizations in India's North-Eastern States and engineer bomb blasts and other acts of terrorism all over the country. The defeat of Pakistan in Kargil has further fuelled feelings of revenge in its military establishment which is the ruling regime at present. Osamabin Laden, a terrorist mastermind which has the support of Pakistan has threatened a 'jehad' on India. The internal security situation is also far from encouraging, with religious extremism once again rearing its ugly head and fissiparous tendencies in desperate ethnic groups coming to the fore.

The first and foremost requirement for better management of key National Security concerns is to integrate the three services headquarters with the Ministry of Defence without any further delay. This long-pending reform in the country's decision-making and policy implementation structure will lead to an exponential improvement in the management of National Security. The Union Government has already started thinking on these lines.

A comprehensive defence review is still to be conducted. This must be done post haste. The dangers posed by emerging threats to National Security like information warfare, the threat to India's integrity from the scourge of terrorism and the linked proliferation of small arms, threats from the weapons of mass destruction, the imperatives food, energy and water security and the hazards of mass migrations from across India's borders need to be
evaluated and suitable policy options drawn up. An all encompassing National Security strategy should then be formulated to deal with the threats on long-term and short-term basis so that the responsibilities of the Armed Forces and Government departments concerned are clearly enunciated.

Based on the security objectives and the responsibilities assigned, the SFs can review their organizational structures and make recommendations to the Government to institute the changes necessary for all the challenges in the 21st century.

"Insurgency is three dimensional; Government, People and SFs. It shall therefore be looked at through wide angled lens. Any attempt to compartmentalise militancy will be self defeating".

- Fidel Castro

Above all, to end insurgency all our actions must match the words. Therefore all should put in concerted effort to end militancy in Assam and it should emerge as one of the most peaceful States in our country.

JAI AI ASOM

JAI HIND.
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH HIS EXCELLENCY
LT GEN (RETD) S K SINHA, PVSM
THE GOVERNOR OF ASSAM

Dates: 17 December 2000, 08 February 2001
and 14 February 2001

His Excellency
Lt Gen (Retd) SK Sinha, PVSM
The Governor of Assam