


[HOME](#) [ABOUT US](#) [AREAS OF STUDY](#) [EVENTS](#) [PUBLICATIONS](#) [TEAM](#) [MEDIA](#) [CAREER](#) [CONTACT US](#)
Language 

## Kachin-Myanmar Conflict: Implications for India

18 Feb, 2011   [Jaideep Saikia \(Senior Fellow, VIF\)](#)   [View953](#)   [Comments 0](#)

The virtual end of the 17 year old ceasefire between Kachin and Myanmar will turn out to be a dilemma for India, particularly in New Delhi's quest to control North East. The normalising of ties between India and Myanmar in recent times would, in all probability, require that New Delhi supports the junta's action or oppose it. In fact, certain observers have opined that the events that have unfolded in Bhamo and thereabouts could be a result of Indian pressure on Nay Pyi Taw. The military wing of Kachin Independent Organisation (KIO), Kachin Independent Army (KIA). The KIA is reportedly aiding various Indian Insurgent Groups. Recent reports have indicated that new camps belonging to both ULFA and PLA have come up in the area. Indeed, an Indian hand in the Kachin-Myanmar conflict is part of a larger Indian strategy to neutralise at least the resurgent anti-talk ULFA billeted in area controlled by the Kachins, even as New Delhi held its first ULFA leaders on 10-11 February 2011. However, the matter is in the realm of speculation at this juncture, and the reason that has been provided for the ceasefire, which KIO had signed with the Tatmadaw in 1994, is a result of the junta threatening to use force if KIO does not comply with Naypyidaw's plans to reorganise Myanmar's army controlled Border Guards unit.

Indeed, the dilemma that India would be faced with is because the present situation poses both a danger and an opportunity. The danger stems from the fact that to be supporting punitive action against the Kachins, it would offend the ethnic group (which is estranged in any event), leading them to become even more hostile to India. The Indian Insurgent Groups, which would then—as they have in the past—support them against the Myanmar army. The North East insurgency would continue to have one last island left, and an active conduit to China, which as recent reports suggest have already begun to support groups such as ULFA and

Also, the ongoing conflict may upset China which does not want conflict in northern Myanmar where more than two million mainland Chinese have settled, and to China as a result of the conflict. China perceives the Chinese settlements in the area as their outposts in Myanmar and would not countenance a situation where these having to be abandoned. Indeed, in 2009 when the Myanmar army attacked the Kokangs, resulting in a deluge of refugees to Yunnan, China finally restored peace. The course of action that China might take could be the same as it took during the Kokang crisis. But, it may also lead it to intervene militarily in a way—were the junta to continue to act against the ethnic militias. Indeed, during the Kokang crisis there was considerable public opinion inside China to re-evaluate foreign policy and act more forcefully, even it meant, as one group asserted that "Chinese compatriots should take up arms against Myanmar and join the Alliance." If such an incident were to come to pass, the consequence would be dire for India as the Indian Insurgent Groups, as aforesaid, may actually get a firmer control over the area would become stronger. A response of the sort that is being analysed stems from two primary factors. First, Beijing feels that Naypyidaw is closer to forces inimical to China like the United States and India, and may not be amenable to its dictates as in the past. Secondly, there are reports that the junta has promised help to the Kachins by way of considerable amount of money that is to be routed through the Kachin Baptist Church. The Kachins can then utilise this weaponry from the Wa run black market and take on the Myanmar army with greater strength. The American objective is quite simple. They want a Christian US satellite post strategically wedged between Myanmar and China, which would be tantamount to considerable forward engineering for the United States. The situation about the development and would do anything to prevent the Americans from getting a foothold in the area. At any rate, as far as India is concerned the situation between the Kachins and Naypyidaw is not clear. Kachins may continue to wield considerable influence in the area, leading to a status quo of so the problem of North East insurgency is concerned.

The opportunity that presents itself to Indian interest is to restore the 1990 relationship it had with the Kachins. India can provide tacit support to the Kachins to help them to fight the Myanmar army. In return, New Delhi must seek a firm commitment that the Kachins will not allow any anti India activity in their refuge like Bhutan and Bangladesh having been lost, this would destroy the last effective trans-border base of the Indian Insurgent Groups. The defusing of this is important, because as aforesaid, ULFA and PLA would use it to take cadres to China for training and weapons. Indeed, Indian agencies had with considerable success cultivated the Kachins during 1990s: there is no reason why it cannot do so now. Besides, the Myanmar army has done nothing until now to aid India or the Indian Insurgent Groups. Therefore, even if India continues to maintain cordial relations with the Tatmadaw, it may find it in the interest of its security to support the American game in Kachin. It would be in Indian interest to construct an anti-China base in the area that abuts the People's Republic so closely. The other reason would have quietly built up a solid ally in the Kachins, whose alliance would ascertain that the North East insurgent groups are denied their last regrouping zone.

Published Date : 17 February, 2011

### Post new comment

Your name: \*

E-mail: \*

The content of this field is kept private and will not be shown publicly.

Comment: \*

Input format

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Save

Preview

## Related Articles



China bounces back in Myanmar as West retreats



Myanmar's Armed Forces  
(Tatmadaw)

**Historical Perspective**  
Myanmar historically h



India-Myanmar  
Parliamentary F  
**Introduction**  
occupies a cen



म्यांमार शांति प्रक्र  
ट्वेंटी फर्स्ट सेंचुरी



Myanmar Peace Process: A  
Bridge Too Far!

The second session of the  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Panglong confer



Developments in  
A week-lo  
exploratory tr  
was a rewardi



म्यांमार में सत्ता प  
म्यांमार में नेशनल लीग



Power Transition in Myanmar  
and Indo-Myanmar Relations

The new government in  
Myanmar headed by President  
Htin Kyaw of Na



Myanmar: Post I  
Scenario and Ta  
San Su  
Even though  
Suu Kyi led f  
for Democrac

### About Us

The Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) is a New Delhi-based think tank set up with the collaborative efforts of India's leading security experts, diplomats, industrialists and philanthropists under the aegis of the Vivekananda Kendra. The VIF's objective is to become a centre of excellence to kick start innovative ideas and thoughts that can lead ...

[Read More](#)

### Contact Us

Name\*

Email Id\*

Phone Number\*

Message\*

I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Submit

### Tweet With Us



**VIF India**  
@vifindia

Merchandise exports from India  
303.3 billion, registering a growth  
2017-18 (P) vis-a-vis 2016-17.



