

Forces Of Instability At Work In North-East

CALCUTTA:

MR P. K. THUNGON of Arunachal Pradesh, the Chief Minister of the outgoing Government, has gone on record saying that agents of some foreign powers are trying to create conditions of instability and disorder in Arunachal and in the entire North-Eastern region. Independent observers of the scene have also been apprehensive for some time about the activities of such forces and their agents in the area.

In today's conditions, political instability seems to have become a reality all across the north-eastern region.

In Meghalaya, a general climate of tribal exclusiveness has been created thanks mainly to the All-Parties Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) — which is now being supported by the Janata Party, though not openly. The APHLC has been instrumental in inciting trouble between the tribal and non-tribal people of Meghalaya.

It has also been charged with inspiring students from Arunachal to go to Shillong for their studies—during which time, it is said, they are given the grounding necessary to spread disaffection in their home areas when they get back.

US CONNECTION

The People's Party of Arunachal (PPA), whose activities seem to help the forces of destabilization, is said to be financed by the APHLC. It is common knowledge that the APHLC is largely influenced by the Americans. (APHLC leader Stanley Nichols Roy, born of an American mother, is married to an American).

According to Arunachal Pradesh reports, the PPA has established liaison with both the American Baptist Mission Church

on the one hand and the Chinese beyond the border, on the other. These reports also speak of frequent Chinese infiltration — but of course such reports are strongly denied by official spokesmen. It has not been denied, however, that three or four Chinese infiltrators were arrested in Arunachal territory some time back.

SEPARATISTS

In Assam, the biggest State in the region, the Janata Party has allied itself with the separatist party, the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA). The PTCA, which demands a state under the name of "Udayachal," has won as many as four seats in the recent election.

The Janata Party has also come to an understanding with another separatist party, the Ujani Assam Rajya Parishad (UARP), which also demands a state separate from Assam. Observers expect that in the coming days, the campaign of both the PTCA and the UARP will gain further strength.

During the election campaign in Assam, an unfortunate kind of Assamese chauvinism was sought to be strengthened by certain quarters. The CP-M played into their hands by bringing into Assam a large number of volunteers from West Bengal and Tripura.

In Mizoram, it has not been possible to hold elections till now. There are continuing reports of trouble in several areas, and the Government has thought it prudent to postpone the election for the time being.

Newspaper reports show that following the demonetization of thousand-rupee and higher notes, unusually large amounts of

Our Special Correspondent

money in these notes were deposited in the banks of Manipur and Nagaland. One conclusion is that in these two areas, smuggling has been quite extensive.

The main border town between Manipur and Burma has earned notoriety as a smuggling centre. Recent reports suggest that it has also become a centre of other more serious and dangerous activities.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCO) — a known American based outfit operating in this part of the world — has opened a new centre in Manipur.

In Nagaland, peace and normality are as tenuous as ever. But the peculiar political morality encouraged by the Janata Party has not inhibited it from conferring recognition on the UDF in Nagaland.

The leadership of the Janata Government at the Centre should know that Chinese-trained rebel Nagas have already combined with the Burmese Nagas to form a separate Naga State on Burmese territory, not very far from the Indian border.

'EASTERN NATION'

It is also no longer a secret that the Mizo rebels regularly receive help and assistance from the Chittagong hill area in Bangladesh. Tripura has borders both with Mizoram and Bangladesh. According to Tripura Chief Minister Nripen Chakravorty, crimes have been increasing all along the borders of Tripura.

In West Bengal, special and influential lobbies are busy spreading the idea of an "Eastern Nation" comprising of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Bangladesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizo-

ram etc. It is said that such "nation" would be quite real and that "all the countries of the world would have no alternative but to give recognition to this "Eastern Nation."

Mr Thungon's recent statement in Shillong (that foreign agents seem to be active in Arunachal as well as the whole of the northeast region) was perhaps prompted by the activities of the PPA in Arunachal and the activities of the APHLC in Meghalaya. But a close study of what is happening in the entire region suggests sinister doings—inspired by powers inimical to the interests of the country.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Janata Party cannot absolve itself of the responsibility for these developments. The party consciously inspires regionalism and separatism, although Prime Minister Morarji Desai has been denouncing such ideas.

According to Janata Party seniors in Calcutta, Mr Desai is fully aware of the goings on in the northeastern part of the country, including West Bengal. One reason for his stout rejection of a "national debate" on the issue of Centre-State relations is believed to be this awareness.

Congressmen of West Bengal generally agree that the entire northeastern region has "become extremely vulnerable" following the disintegration of the Congress. CPI circles also feel the situation is becoming dangerous. No such awareness, however, seems to influence the other parties.

There is little conscious effort made by the political parties to rouse the people's anger against imperialist conspiracies. The recent election battles have served to further blunt the people's anti-imperialist consciousness.