

# Barack Obama's India Visit - Outsourcing US' Economic Crisis to India

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On the eve of his visit to India, and on the heels of mid-term polls in the US where voters showed their discontent with the Obama government by allowing Republicans to wrest control of the House of Representatives from the Democrats, an op-ed piece by US President Barack Obama appeared in the New York Times. The article, seeking to address concerns about recession and unemployment in the US, indicated clearly that his visit to Asia and India was a quest for jobs in the US, seeking "new customers in new markets for American-made goods." Referring in particular to India, Obama wrote that the trip spelled "billions of dollars in contracts that will support tens of thousands of American jobs," and was intended to "explore ways to reduce barriers to United States exports and increase access to the Indian market."

In his speech to CEOs in Mumbai, too, Obama reiterated that for the US, India represents "an opportunity to sell our exports in one of the fastest growing markets in the world... a jobs strategy." On his first day in India, US companies like Boeing and General Electric sealed deals worth \$10bn, thereby creating tens of thousands of jobs in the United States. A recent report by the CII that describes India as a "Growth Partner in the US Economy" and stresses the role of Indian companies as "partners in the resurgence of the U.S. economy" estimates that Indian purchases of military and nuclear hardware, civilian aircraft and infrastructure equipment alone from the United States can create nearly seven lakh jobs there over the next decade.

From his visit to India, Obama will take back lakhs of jobs for US citizens and an expanded market for US corporations - all this, at the cost of jobs, education, health and self-reliance of India's people. Increased US access to India's markets comes by reducing restrictions to foreign investment in key sectors of India's economy - such as defence, agriculture and insurance. In particular, the business lobby has been pushing India to open up its consumer market to foreign retail chains - and during Obama's visit, the Manmohan Singh government has assured US and Indian CEOs of its "positive mindset" on this question. This move, if it comes to a pass, will lead to the loss of employment and survival for millions of small retailers in India.

The Joint Statement released by India and the US on Obama's visit talks of a partnership in agriculture to achieve an "Evergreen Revolution." US-dictated liberalisation policies in the agriculture sector have already caused hundreds of thousands of farmers' suicides in India - opening up this sector further will spell further devastation for our farmers, and will destroy the self-reliance of Indian farmers and agriculture. Outsourcing cuts have already hit India's IT industry badly. Clearly, US Inc. and its CEO Obama are outsourcing their economic crisis to Indian soil!

As Bhopal reminded us, US corporations also love to outsource pollution and accidents to countries like India, where human life, in their eyes, is cheap. The Bhopal verdict and the Nuke Liability Bill have sent a message to the US corporations that safety regulations are lax in India, and thanks to US political clout, Indian governments will go out of their way to ensure that US corporations are protected from criminal liability and even from having to pay compensation! Obama has visited Mumbai, the site of India's worst terrorist attack - but he has averted his eyes conveniently from Bhopal, the site of India's worst industrial disaster, whose perpetrators have evaded justice with the

patronage and protection of the US and India's own rulers.

Obama's visit has been marked by much rhetoric about partnership against terrorism and justice for the perpetrators of the Mumbai attack. But President Obama did not tell the Indian people why the US failed to share crucial intelligence with India which could have prevented the Mumbai attack. Home Minister P Chidambaram, in a bid to ease any embarrassment for Obama on this question, has sought to play down the issue by saying that the US did not have specific intelligence that Headley was planning an attack on Mumbai. Even if that is true, it does not change the fact that the US, which knew of David Headley's terrorist links prior to the Mumbai attack, did not share this information with India, thus enabling a terrorist mastermind to travel freely in and out of India on a US passport.

In the case of both Bhopal and Mumbai, key perpetrators have been American citizens, and continue to be shielded by US Governments, which have refused to extradite Warren Anderson and which are protecting David Headley from facing justice in Indian courts.

In his address to Indian Parliament, Obama reiterated his justification for US aggression in the Af-Pak region by declaring that 'safe havens for terror' in Afghanistan and Pakistan would not be tolerated, while remaining silent on the killings of innocent civilians in US drone attacks in that region. Obama overtly chose to comment on India's foreign policy vis a vis Iran and Myanmar. While Indian citizens too would demand that their government break its silence on the Myanmar military dictatorship and human rights abuses in that country, it smacks of double standards for a US President (who is yet to acknowledge war crimes and occupation in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan) to do so. India has already buckled under US pressure by voting against Iran twice at the IAEA - and Obama's speech clearly indicates that the US will continue to mould India's foreign policy to suit US interests.

US President Barack Obama's address to Indian Parliament, which served as a prelude to the Parliament's winter session, has been welcomed not only by the ruling Congress but also by the main Opposition the BJP, indicating the unity of the Indian ruling class in its subservience to US imperialism. The Manmohan Singh government betrayed Indian people by failing to confront the US on Bhopal or on David Headley. It has refused to ask the US to break silence on prosecution of those guilty for war crimes in Gaza, Iraq and Afghanistan. It is all too ready to create jobs in the US and expand US corporations' markets by opening up India's economy and sacrificing Indian jobs, Indian farmers' lives, India's agricultural self-reliance and Indians' health and safety. And it is ready and willing to be US' junior partner in its bid for imperialist world hegemony - 'sharing' the US' war-time military burdens and boosting America's military-industrial complex by buying up US military hardware and nuclear reactors.

The countrywide protests that greeted Obama on his India visit are a clear message to the Manmohan Singh Government that Indians reject and resist the Indian ruling classes' bid to make India a junior partner of US imperialism.

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## **Countrywide Protests said "Go Back Obama!"**

US-India 'Partnership' - All Gain for the US, All Pain for India!

New Delhi: As part of the Countrywide protests against Obama's visit, CPI(ML) held a dharna at Parliament Street on 8<sup>th</sup> November with the slogans "US Imperialism Keep off from India, Keep Off from Asia!", "Asia is not for US Meddling and Occupation!" and "Stop Outsourcing War, Terror, and

Economic Crisis!". The protest was organised at the call given by All India Left Co-ordination (AIRC) and was attended by a cross section of people including large number of students, working people as well as people from other walks of life. The dharna was led and addressed by CPI(ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya along with other senior leaders and cadres.

Comrade Dipankar in his speech said that "while the US imperialism has become the greatest threat for the world peace, justice and sovereignty of nations, increased American interest in Asia and India is meant only for outsourcing war, terror and economic crisis. Manmohan Singh's UPA-II Government clamour for India's 'special' relationship with the US and embracing US' strategic alliance is more and more endangering India's economic and security interests....The Indo-US Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture and 'Obama-Singh 21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge Initiative' are all increasing the US stranglehold over India's self-reliance in education and agriculture. The US has called on India to ease restrictions to foreign investment in sectors such as retail, defence, agriculture and insurance."

The sit-in was also addressed by CPI(ML) Central Committee members Prabhat Kumar, Rajendra Pratholi, Delhi State Secretary Sanjay Sharma, State Committee members Santosh Rai, NM Thomas, AISA leader Piyush Raj and many others.

### **Punjab: Massive protest by Left Parties against Obama's visit**

About thirteen hundred activists of Left Parties under the banner of All India Left Coordination (AIRC) staged an impressive convention and demonstration in Jalandhar on 7<sup>th</sup> July against the growing intervention of American Imperialism in the affairs of our country. Coinciding with the anniversary of Great October Revolution in Russia (English Calendar- 7 November) the massive convention was held in the overflowing hall of Desh Bhagat Yadgar. A presidium comprising of Comrade Trilochan Singh Rana, Dr. Satnam Singh Ajnala, Com. Ruldu Singh and Com. Bhagwant Singh Samao conducted the Convention. Various leaders of the organising parties including Com. Mangat Ram Pasla, Secretary CPM Punjab, Com. Dipankar Bhattacharya, General Secretary of CPI (ML) Liberation, Com. Swapan Mukherjee, AICCTU Gen.Sec., Com. Rajvinder Singh Rana, Com. Rattan Singh Randhawa and Com. Harkanwal Singh addressed the convention and strongly criticised the Manmohan Singh govt. as well as state governments for playing to the tunes of imperialist marauders and betraying the cause of working masses of the country, simply to safeguard and promote the interests of a handful of monopoly houses, big business and big landlords of the country.

The Convention called upon the Indian people to remain fully vigilant against the befooling tactics of both Mr. Obama as well his Indian hosts regarding the outcome of this monstrous visit of American head of the state. It also urged upon the people to wage a forceful united Countrywide mass struggle for the abrogation of all the strategic ties with imperialism and to undertake an alternative, pro-people model of development, based on self-reliant economic growth, job oriented Industrialisation, labour intensive production activities and massive expansion of internal market. The Convention warned the govt. that further sell out of the national interests to the imperialist sharks will not be tolerated and will be opposed at all costs: It also called upon the Govt. to withdraw all the draconian measures including the obnoxious 'operation green hunt'.

The Convention congratulated the 17 Organisations of peasants/farmers and agricultural workers of Punjab for their victory in getting restored the subsidy on tube-wells. It also passed a resolution strongly deploring the discrimination shown in this respect with the agricultural labourers and urged the state government to restore the 100 unit cut in electricity subsidy for these poorest section of society and also to fulfil other promises made to them in its election manifesto.

After the convention a well decorated and organised “Obama Go Back” march led by leaders of the All India Left Co-ordination marched through the main areas of the city. Participants, including women, agricultural labourers, students etc. came from all the districts of Punjab.

**West Bengal:** At the call of All India left Coordination (AIRC) anti-imperialist protest campaigns took place on 8<sup>th</sup> November against Barrack Obama’s visit to India. In Kolkata, a well-decorated protest rally started off from College Square for Dharmatala. Later there was a road blockade for 30 minutes and the effigy of Obama and Manmohan Singh were burnt. The rally was led by CPI(ML)’s PBM Com. Kartick Pal. State Committee member Basudev Bose, CCM Com. Kalyan Goswami and State Secretary Com. Partha Ghosh addressed the rally. Comrades from North and South 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly joined the rally in great number. AISA members also participated in the rally.

**Siliguri:** A protest rally started off from Sidhu-Kanhu Sarani, went around Hillcut road to Hasmi Chouke where Obama’s effigy was burned followed by a street corner meeting. The rally was led by CCM Com. Avijit Mazumder.

Krishnanagar, Nadia: Anti-imperialist mass meeting was held. The meeting was led by Com. Biman Biswas.

**Malda:** Anti-imperialist mass meeting took place at six places.

N. Dinajpur: At Kaliagunge, roads were blocked for 30 minutes. Then a mass meeting was held.

Protest campaigns were held in several other parts of **West Bengal** as a part of All India Protest programme against US imperialist policies and their Indian agents.

**Andhra Pradesh:** 200 people marched in Kakinada town, headquarters of East Godavari district. The protesters raised anti-imperialist slogans and burnt American President’s effigy in front of the Collectorate. CPI(ML) State Secretary and Polit Bureau member Comrade N Murthy and All India Agricultural Labourers’ Association’s (AIALA) State Secretary Comrade Bugata Bangaru Rao addressed the demonstrators. Other district leaders Arjuna Rao, Ganesh, Simhachalam, Narasa Raju, AIPWA leader Kakara Ratna Kumari and Nageswara Rao among many others were those present at the protest.

At Vissanapet, HQ of Krishna district, about hundred people blocked the road in Vissanpet Mandal. M Malleswara Rao, Central Committee member (CCM) of CPI(ML), Krishna district secretary B Viplav Kumar, All India Kisan Mahasabha’s (AIKM) State Secretary D Harinath, State Committee member Comrade P Satyanayarana, other district leaders Pulla Rao, Sonti Napeswara Rao, Babu Rao, Satyanarayana Godegu, and AIPWA leaders Himavati and Kavita were among others who were present.

A protest march was held at Visakhapatnam led by District Secretary Comrade Vasudev Rao, AIKM leader Soribabu and AIPWA leader B Vija.

Ananthapur - a protest march was held at Ananthapur district HQ. State Committee member Comrade Siva Reddy and AIPWA leader Comrade Gayatri and other district leaders led the protest march.

**Orissa:** A protest demonstration was held in front of the Orissa State Assembly by CPI(ML)’s Orissa State Committee. 200 comrades marched in a rally from Nagbhushan Bhavan raising slogans of go back Obama, down with US imperialism, down with UPA Govt and Manmohan-Obama policy etc. In the end a public meeting was organised led by Com. Mahendra Parida, AICCTU Secretary. Comrades Yudhistir Mohapatra, Satyabadi Behara-AIALA State President, Murali Behera- State

Committee member, Janaki Rao- Secretary of Basti Basinda Mahasanga and Simdadri Sethi- Secretary Rickshaw Pullers Association addressed the gathering.

Protest rallies were also held in Rayagada, Kendrapara and Bhadrak districts.

Uttar Pradesh: In UP, State-wide demonstrations and marches coupled with effigy burning were held. In Lucknow, the Party members held a demonstration and dharna at the Martyrs' Memorial. The protesters raised slogans warning the US to get out of Iraq and Afghanistan, keep off from India and Asia, and to stop exporting terror, war and economic crisis.

March was held from Varanasi Cantonment Railway Station to Lahuraveer Crossing in Banaras. In Allahabad protesters marched from Party Office in Colonelganj to Chandrashekhar Park. In Ghazipur, the district administration virtually gheraoed the CPI(ML) office at noon to prevent us from taking out anti-Obama march and pressurised the leaders to just handover the memorandum at the SDM office. Only after our sharp protest and unrelenting opposition to this ploy the administration backed off and march was indeed held.

Demonstration were also held in Mirzapur, Sonbhadra, Chandauli, Mau, Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Khiri, Sitapur and Jalaun among several other districts of UP.

**Tamil Nadu:** Protest demonstration was held in Chennai led by CPI(ML) PBM Comrade Kumaraswami. Demonstrations were also held in Pudukottai, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. "Go Back Obama" posters were released and put up all over the State.

**Karnataka:** Mass rally was organised by Koppal District Committee of the CPI(ML) at Gangavathi town and and Obama's effigy was burned. Party Secretary and AIALA's State President Comrade J Bharadwaj led the march.

A demonstration and dharna was held at the taluk office of HD Kote town in Mysore district led by Com. Javaraiah.

**Uttarakhand:** Protest marches, dharnas and meetings were organised by CPI(ML) State Unit and AISA at several places in the State. Dharna and meeting was held at Lalkuan in Nainital district participated by dozens of CPI(ML) members. Meeting was addressed by Comrades Girija Pathak (Party's Nainital incharge), BS Jangi (Dist. Convenor, AIKM) and KK Bora (AICCTU's State Convenor).

A memorandum addressed to the President of India was handed over to Dist. Magistrate of border dist. Pithoragarh. Comrades marched to the Magistrate's office led by Dist. Incharge Com. Govind Kaphalia.

AISA members burned the effigy of US imperialism and organised meetings at Syalde in Almora dist, Rudrapur in Udham Singh Nagar and Srinagar in Pauri Garhwal. These protests were led respectively by Comrades Purushottam Sharma, Bhagwati Sogai (Student Union Secretary of Syalde Degree College), Bhagwati Sharma (SU Vice President of Syalde Degree College), Lalit Matiyani and Mohammadin, CPI(ML) leader Indresh Maikhuri and AISA leader Ashish Kandpal.

**Jharkhand:** Demonstrations protesting American President's visit were held in Ranchi and Bagodar. In Ranchi the Party members took out a demonstration from Party's State Office to Albert Ekka Chowk and held a public meeting. In Bagodar, in Giridih district, Dist. Secretary Com. Manoj Bhakt led a protest of 200 people. Preparations for the Panchayat elections are on in the State.

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