

ML Update, 3-9 July 2007

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We Don't Need US Advice, US Warships or the Anti-Nation N Deal

In yet another audacious expression of the carrot-and-stick approach, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has almost promised that the US-India nuclear deal would be finally concluded by the end of this year — if only India dumps the non-aligned movement (NAM) and toes the US line on the Doha round of trade negotiations. The NAM had “lost its meaning” and India should “move past old ways of thinking and old ways of acting”, she tutored us.

Well, before telling this to others, should not the US do the same itself? Why the hell is it continuing with the bad old practice

of military aggressions? And expanding the NATO even after its supposed *raison d'être* vanished with the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? The answer is obvious: the surviving superpower is desperate to build a unipolar world under its domination even as it is slowly but steadily losing its grip on world affairs. In fact Condoleezza's recent statement at the US-India Business Council reflects just this desperation. What worries Washington is not the NAM of old, but the newly emerging trends of open and not-so-open defiance of American hegemonism. And to add to its worries, the fundamental difference this time around is that whereas the NAM always lacked economic muscle, the current trends are led by rising economic powers like Russia and China.

Thus in early June Vladimir Putin followed up his now famous Munich speech (February 2007) — where he had come out categorically and strongly against US unilateralism and expansionism and in favour of a multipolar world — with a call for sweeping reforms in the “archaic and undemocratic” world economic order. “If 50 years ago, 60 per cent of the world's gross domestic product came from the G7, now 60 per cent is produced outside,” he told the International Economic Forum at St. Petersburg and appealed for establishing a new order keeping with this new reality, complete with several financial centers and several reserve currencies. In the meantime, the Russian President took a range of successful diplomatic initiatives in the Arab world and elsewhere, even as his Chinese counterpart was doing the same in Korea, Africa and other regions.

Three-way relations between Russia, China and India have also been developing steadily since 2005, particularly in the fields of economic and energy cooperation. During the recent G8 summit in Germany, the BICSAM (Brazil, India, China, South Africa and Mexico) countries — specially invited as “outreach partners” or the O-5 — met separately and decided to come closer and work together on a wide range of issues. The five spoke with one voice even as the G8 members failed to unite on vital issues like climate change and arms control. The recent progress, despite American

browbeating, in the long-stalemated talks on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project comes as yet another encouraging development.

As in Eurasia, where Putin has proposed the creation of a regional Eurasian institute on free trade, in Latin America the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) championed by Venezuela and Cuba is steadily gaining ground against the failed US-sponsored Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Prospects of a future multipolar world are thus opening up everywhere. To participate adequately in this historic development, India needs to decisively come out of the shadow of its domineering 'strategic partner'. Don't interfere in our foreign policy fundamentals — it ought to have told the US Secretary of State — and don't try to lure us with the N deal; its non-completion would be good riddance for us. But instead of doing this, the Indian government has chosen to invite the US Nimitz, a huge nuclear powered aircraft carrier, to the Chennai port as part of the defence cooperation with the US. This very fact, confirmed by Defence Minister AK Antony in New Delhi on 25 June, goes to show that the Indian government's statements reiterating commitment to the NAM is a mere eyewash. The threat of nuclear radiation apart, it is indeed a shame that a war machine — which has been a conspicuous part of US gunboat diplomacy across the world (including Iran only recently) as well as actual aggression on Iraq — will be allowed into Indian waters. Left activists are rightly staging demonstrations against this flagrant violation of our sovereign non-aligned status and all self-respecting Indians should join the protest against both American interventionism and the UPA government's policy of licking the boots of Uncle Sam.

Anti-Emergency Day Observed in Jharkhand

CPI(ML) Jharkhand unit commemorated the anti-emergency day, 26 June, as anti-repression day and highlighted the increasing state repression over mass movements, rising corruption as well as government's attempt to decrease the number of tribal seats in the Assembly through the ongoing delimitation exercise in Jharkhand. Various programmes were taken up on the day throughout the state. Hundreds of people held out a dharna at Giridih district headquarters against the imposition of fake cases on party activists and general public who were protesting the administrative protection being given to the black-marketeers in Gandey. Protesters demanded the arrest of black-marketeers and action against the police and administrative officials protecting such elements. Another incident of imposition of fake cases was protested at Birni block of the same district where CPI(ML) State Committee member Mustkim Ansari along with several comrades has been framed under serious criminal charges only to terrorise the innocent masses who stood up against governmental high-handedness, corruption and mafiadom.

A protest march and dharna was also organised in Garhwa and acts of patronising the criminal-feudal elements was strongly condemned, besides the demand of withdrawal of fake criminal charges against party activists. Here another State Committee member Tahir Ansari and many other comrades have been framed under various false cases in Ramuna block. In another incident police conspiratorially propagated CPI(ML)'s name in a murder incident occurred under Dhurki PS area. It is a common practice by police and administration to falsely propagate names of party activists in order to protect the real criminals, or to victimise the protesting people and democratic forces who rise up against the criminal elements. The dharna held at Palamou district headquarter strongly demanded to stop such practices and resolved to oppose every such incident in future. Speakers strongly condemned the incident where Comrade BN Singh was framed under false charges and then convicted when the court accepted the lie of the hired witnesses produced by the police-criminal nexus.

The day was also observed in other districts of the state including Koderma, Deoghar and Dhanbad. In the state capital Ranchi, a protest march was organised. This was led by State Secretary Subhendu Sen. The marchers also protested the arrests of PUCL leaders Dr. Vinayak Sen and Rajendra Sayal in Chhattisgarh. They resolved to intensify the struggle for democracy and to foil the governmental attempts to protect the killers of Comrade Mahendra Singh. Speakers in the march said that the present UPA govt. is only following the policies and orientation of the ousted NDA regime by amending the CNT-SPT Act, abolishing the urban land ceiling, not holding the panchayat elections, decreasing the number of Assembly seats reserved for tribal community and by not considering the proposal for doubling the number of Assembly seats. They called for wider mobilisations and intense struggles against the governments, in the state as well as in the centre. The anti-emergency day was also observed in North Dinajpur of West Bengal where a rally was held in front of the district headquarters and a memorandum of demands was submitted. This was attended by hundreds of people.

Seminar in Bettiah

A seminar was held in Bettiah on 'The legacy of Peasant Rebellion and the struggle of 1857' in the specific context of the peasant struggles fought in the region during and after 1857. The seminar also marked the completion of 100 years of the valiant struggles by the indigo farmers of Champaran region against the British colonialists during 1906-8. The ruler of Bettiah and the King of Nepal hanged more than 3000 indigo farmers during those years. It is a sad fact that Sheikh Gulab and other peasant leaders who led the peasants against the Britishers have been deliberately forgotten by the current rulers although their memories are still afresh in the minds of the local population.

The seminar was addressed by Comrade Dipankar who said that we must not forget the fact that the rulers of today were the accomplices of yesteryears' oppressors and emphasised the need to reestablish people's history and people's heroes through widespread struggles. He called upon to organise various democratic forces on a wider platform to fulfill the aspirations of the masses. A resolution was also passed by the seminar demanding a memorial of Shiekh Gulab and removal of the still existing statues of the Britishers who killed thousands of peasants. The seminar was concluded with the recitation of a poem of Azimullah Khan, a hero of 1857.

Comrade Dipankar also released a booklet sketching the life and struggles of martyred comrade Gambhira Shah, an immensely popular leader of this region during the Naxalbari movement, who was martyred in 1977 in police lock-up when he was caught by the reactionary feudal goons.

Martyr's Statue Unveiled in Champaran

The statue of Comrade Gambhira Shah was unveiled by CPI(ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya on 3 July at Chhoradano block in East Champaran. Thousands of people assembled at the venue of the ceremony. The son and other family members of the martyred comrade were also present.

Mass Convention by AIALA in Singur

The AIALA organised a mass convention in Singur in West Bengal on June 30 to highlight the plight of the agricultural labourers and sharecroppers of Singur who have been left without any means of livelihood after the land acquisition in favour of the Tata's Motor Plant and were left without adequate compensation. The convention was addressed by CPI(ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya [1], CC member Partho Ghosh, Sajal Adhikari, AIALA National Secretary Shrikant Rana, Prabir Haldar and others. Speakers condemned the ruling CPI(M)'s policy of evicting poor peasants and agricultural workers in order to satisfy the vested interests of the big capital in the

name of development. Ironically, the CPI(M) called for a bandh on the same day to oppose the arrest of some of its local leaders in a case of rape and murder of a girl. A CBI inquiry is already going on in this case. In spite of the bandh call, a good number of people came to attend the convention and sent a befitting message to the ruling party's such terror tactics. The convention received an overwhelming response from the toiling masses of Singur and nearby areas.

Panchayat Representatives Meet

A meet of elected panchayat representatives of CPI(ML) in Bihar was organised in Nalanda on June 24 to have an overall assessment of party's intervention on various burning issues at panchayat level. A number of mukhiyas, sarpanches, BDC members and Zilla Panchayat members attended this meet and discussed about various activities going on at the grass-root level. The meet concluded that while some interventions are made effectively with regard to implementation of NREGA and towards establishing the people's control over the panchayats, still lot more is needed to defeat the corrupt practices by the nexus of government officials and their local agents/contractors as nearly 32 percent of the development money is eaten up by them as commissions besides other types of corrupt practices. Job cards were distributed after people's intervention in our areas of work and wages have also been increased due to our interventions, there is need to further develop people's resistance at the village level to counter this nexus. The meet was addressed by AIALA General Secretary Dharendra Jha and others.

Zonal Teachers' Training Camp

A teachers' training camp was held at Uphrainkhal in the hills of Uttarakhand on 1-2 July which was attended by 15 leading comrades from Delhi, MP, Punjab and Uttarakhand. Comrade Ramjatan Sharma, in-charge of Education Deptt., inaugurated the camp. He said that the Party has adopted a regular system of education upto the district level in the Bardhaman convention. This has been done at a time when imperialist onslaughts are on the rise and the people all over the globe are organising themselves against the attacks on their basic rights. The current situation once again has proved that the Marxism is the only ideology capable of not only explaining the exploitative character of the capitalism but also has the potential of defeating the oppressive bourgeoisie. He called upon the delegates to make the task of study of the Marxist fundamentals as well as education of the cadres an inherent part of day-to-day practice. The camp was organised in two sessions. The first session was conducted by Comrade Lal Bahadur Singh where discussions were held on fundamental principles of Marxism. Comrade Ramjatan Sharma conducted discussions on Party programme and the current political situation.

Tributes Paid to Comrade Jita Kaur

CPI(ML)'s Punjab unit organised a memorial meeting for Comrade Jita Kaur on 4 July at Mansa. A large number of party members and supporters besides the representatives of various left and democratic organisations attended the meeting and pledged to complete the unfinished mission of the departed leader.

Party's Central Committee member Prabhat Kumar, AIPWA National President Srilata Swaminathan, Party's Punjab Secretary Rajwinder Singh Rana, Ex-MLA Tarsem Singh Jodha, Punjab Kisan Union leader Ruldu Singh, CPM(Punjab) leader Bhim Singh Alampur, CPI's Ex-MLA Buta Singh, CPI(ML)-ND's Dhan Singh Bhatti, BKU-Ekta General Secretary Satej Singh, Lok Sangharsh Morcha's leader Sohan Singh Sunam, IDP's Darshan Singh, Inquilabi Kendra, Punjab leader Tara Singh Bareta, Punjab State Electricity Board Employees' Federation's Lakhan Singh and Surendra Singh, and the representatives of many other organisations including AIPWA, AISA, Mazdoor Mukti Morcha, etc.

paid tributes to Comrade Jita Kaur. The speakers recalled comrade Jita's contributions in organising the Party and AIPWA in Punjab and other states and pledged to carry forward her unfinished mission.

A condolence meeting was held in Delhi on June 30. The meeting was attended by many left and democratic personalities, representatives of various women's organisations, journalists, intellectuals, human rights and cultural activists. Comrade Jita's family members were also present in the meeting. CPI(ML) General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, Polit Bureau member Swadesh Bhattacharya and Delhi State Secretary Rajendra Pratholi addressed the meeting which was conducted by Party CC member and AIPWA General Secretary Kumudini Pati.

Obituary

Comrade Arvind Kumar

Comrade Arvind Kumar met an untimely death in an accident in Patna when a tree fell over him while he was asleep in PMCH on June 29. He was there for the treatment of her daughter. He was only 50. The news of his death came as a sudden blow for the party ranks in Bihar.

Born in a peasant family in Nalanda district, Comrade Arvind completed his B. Sc. from Barh College. He got the job of a Science teacher and worked for two years on this assignment till his active involvement compelled him to work as a full-time activist in 1982. Actively involved with various party activities he played an important role and led various campaigns in Nalanda district. His family was very much supportive of the Party and this was the reason that the feudal goonda army Lorik Sena killed his younger brother in 1987. Initially he was given the responsibility of organising the peasant front in Nalanda, and later, he was elected to the Party's District Committee in 1987. He always gave primary emphasis on the politics of the basic masses and the Party's propaganda work while implementing various programmes. He played a remarkable role during the consolidation campaign that was launched in 1986.

He was elected Nalanda District Secretary in 1990 and Bihar State Committee member in 1993 when the Fourth State Conference was held in Patna. He was also entrusted with the task of organising and leading the Party in other districts of Bihar. During last one and a half decade he efficiently accomplished various responsibilities and worked as the Secretary of Nawada and Gaya districts, also helped in organising the party in Arwal and Jahanabad. He was again sent to lead the Nalanda District Committee for some time and at the time of his death he was the Kaimur District Secretary.

When the Party became open, he proved himself to be a very good speaker. He was a popular mass leader and when he was fielded for the Assembly elections from Hilsa constituency in 1995, the widespread support received by him dimmed the prospects of the candidates supported by the feudal forces. It was alleged that the election was countermanded by killing an independent candidate only for this reason so that the feudal forces could get some time to reorganise themselves. And this was exactly what happened in the re-elections.

The soft-spoken and hard-working comrade Arvind used to encourage younger comrades to study the Marxist literature. He himself inculcated the good habit of buying the distributing the literature to the needy comrades. He always developed very close relations with the activists and the masses. He had the quality to learn newer aspects of the movement in new situations and used to successfully organise and mobilise masses in different situations.

We have lost a valuable comrade and important leader. The loss is irreparable. Younger comrades

will always benefit from his experiences and achievements.

Comrade Arvind's body was kept at Party's state headquarter in Patna where people paid him tributes. His last journey, started from the Party office on July 1 in an open and decorated van, was attended by hundreds of party activists and supporters. Party leaders including State Secretary Nand Kishore Prasad, KD Yadav, Rameshwar Prasad, Mina Tiwary, Amar, and many others accompanied him. He was cremated in the electric crematorium in Patna.

Party's all district units in Bihar organised memorial meetings and took pledge to carry forward his unfinished task.

Red Salute to Comrade Arvind Kumar!

P.S.

* ML Update, a CPI(ML) Weekly News Magazine, Vol.10 No. 27, 3-9 JULY 2007

Footnotes

[1] **Corrigendum from the next issue of ML Update:** The report on 'Mass convention in Singur' published in the last issue of ML Update (Vol. 10 No. 27, page 2) mistakenly carried the name of Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya though he was not present on the occasion. The error is deeply regretted. — Ed.