



Is the Red Star shadowing the Rising Sun?

3 Dec, 2010 [Jaideep Saikia \(Senior Fellow, VIF\)](#) [View1045](#) [Comments 0](#)

When Manipuri insurgent organisation PLA's commander-in-chief, Manohar Mayum met journalists in Myanmar's Somra Tracts (opposite Ukhrul) and p
alliance with CPI (Maoist) to fight the "common enemy", the speculation that had been doing the rounds about Maoist inroads into the North East became
quite categorical about the alliance. He said (the statement below is a verbatim replication of what the PLA leader said in a video-taped statement, excerpt
possession of the author) "We have been maintaining relations with CPI (Maoist) for some years. But from 2008 this has become stronger and it has be
level. We should unite against a common enemy. This unity should be part of our campaign against our enemy even as we fight for our legitimate cause."

While it is not immediately known as to what the "upgradation to a new level" actually entails, analysis has it that it could involve not only joint traini
facilities of PLA in Kachin and sharing of bases, but joint operations as well. After all, PLA is one group whose principles closely approximate that of the
ultra-left ideology. One anecdotal report has stated that Manipuri people (it is not known from which grouping) have been seen alongside Maoist cadres in
learnt that CPI (Maoist)'s Eastern Regional Bureau has been tasked with the responsibility of engineering association with insurgent groups in the North East
of securing ground in the region. The alliance with the Meitei group, in all probability, was one of the Bureau's successes. The Maoists "Unity Congres
September 2004, "declared" its support to insurgencies by "various nationalities", including those by ULFA, NSCN (both factions) and PLA (Manipur), s
reaffirms its whole-hearted support to all these nationality movements and their right to self-determination, including the right to secession." The Congress
self-determination of all the oppressed nationalities, including their right to secede from the autocratic Indian State." If the report about Manipuris being sig
West Bengal has any truth to it, then the cross-pollination between left-wing-extremist groups in heartland India and insurgent groups in the North East has

It is also learnt that Koteswar Rao @ Kishenji, the military wing chief of CPI (Maoist) has communicated with ULFA chief of staff, Paresh Barua (interesti
himself as Deepak). The PLA communiqué above and reports about increasing contact between North Eastern insurgent groups and the Maoists clearly indic
primary internal security threats is attempting to systematically engage insurgent groups in the region, and gain a foothold in the area. Indeed, Mao
reportedly dates back to at least the days preceding the 2 April 2004 arms haul in Chittagong. Reliable reports have stated that a sizeable portion of the arr
Anthony Shimray of NSCN (IM) have been named by apprehended Bangladeshi arms dealer, Hafizur Rahman as the two primary recipients—was meant for
much is immediately known about the exact sum and substance of the conversation between Baruah and Rao alluded to above, one condition that was rep
Rao to the ULFA chief of staff was that ULFA must stop targeting Hindi-speaking people, which it had been doing with impunity in order to attract New Del
told Baruah that the Hindi-speaking people, mostly from Bihar (and ones that have been systematically targeted by ULFA, NDFB, KLNLF etc), constitu
Maoists, and it would be incorrect to kill people of such hue, who are themselves bearing the brunt of New Delhi's "exploitation".

Interestingly, ULFA has not targeted people from the Hindi-speaking community since the aforesaid communication between Kishenji and Paresh Barua
killings of 24 people in Assam—a majority of whom were Hindi speakers—by NDFB (at least in the opinion of the author) had an ULFA component. Paresh
anti-talk faction of NDFB, has great affinity with the group's leader, Ranjan Daimary, and it is the author's considered opinion that the two groups are c
conducting such operations. But to keep the records straight, incarcerated anti-talk NDFB chairman, Ranjan Daimary—during the course of a televised inter
2010—denied any such links with ULFA. But, he also stated that he has presently no control over his cadres as he is in jail.

But to return to the question of Maoist inroad into the North East, it is the author's analysis that alliances and arms-trading, with attendant aspects like t
conduit to China and even combined operations, is not tantamount to establishing robust ground inside the North East. The primary reason for this is becau
not provide a ready fertile ground for the Maoist to thrive. After all some of the realities that characterise areas like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and thereabo
extremism is flourishing are not evident in even an unrest-ridden milieu like the North East. While rampant corruption and exploitation pervade the enchar
the ire is trained against non-North Easterners, for instance the Marwari community (who control a majority of the resources in the region: on 25 No
belonging to AASU ransacked several shopping complexes run by people belonging to the Marwari community in different parts of Assam) or people from
petty labourers, and who are slowly being replaced by illegal Bangladeshi migrants). Therefore, not only are the conditions—including the fact that pov
exploitation are not as all pervading and ingrained in the North East as it is in areas where Maoism has taken strong roots, but a sense of social justice cor
the region. This is perhaps because of the policy of the British to administer much of the region in partial exclusion (as it saw no profit in occupying the hil
choosing to send punitive expeditionary missions only to control marauding Naga raiders when the latter descended on tea plantations in mainland Assam.
region there is an inner-line permit regime in place and outsiders cannot purchase or own land. This prevents land takeovers, which acts as a protecti
outside control (it is another matter that illegal Bangladeshi migrants are coming in hordes and settling in the region, albeit with patronage from certain quar

Another reason why Maoism will not be able to gain a foothold in the North East is because of Christianity, which is the primary religion among almost
barring the caste Assamese, a few Bodos, certain Bengalis of Assam and Tripura, who are Hindus, and the animistic religious communities of Arunachal Pr
the tribes of central India also have Christianity in their midst, the fact of the matter is that the socio-economic conditions that prevail in the region have l
embrace Maoism, which in the opinion of the author is actually tribal insurgency, a phenomenon that had characterised the area even during the days of th
such as the Santhal uprising. It will also be recollected that the Naga insurgency disassociated themselves from China because they were unwilling to replace
with communism. In a non-industrialised milieu, where religion and social egalitarian standards are important drivers, Maoism would have to bet hard to fir
Eastern sun.

Alongside conditions, space is an important component for Maoism to grow. Every inch of land in the North East already has an indigenous movement with
objectives. An insurgent group such as ULFA—despite hobnobbing with CPI (Maoist) on matters of exigency such as arms-dealing—would not allow the Ma
the state. ULFA despite their avowal to a Marxist-Leninist ideology, have little or no idea of scientific socialism. Celebrated author, Udayon Misra has written

manner in his seminal book "The Periphery Strikes Back: Challenges to the Nation-State in Assam and Nagaland." He writes (and a somewhat extended qu juncture to disabuse ULFA's ideological leanings)

"The AJYCP (Asom Jatiyotabadi Yuva Chattrra Parishad) roots of the ULFA should help one in understanding the latter's emphasis on "scientific socialism" something which has been picked up by social scientists and journalists to give the ULFA a Marxist or Communist veneer, while in reality it is a militaristic ou the ULFA too is said to be attempting a blend of Maoism and Assamese nationalism. For instance, the CPI (ML) leader, Vinod Mishra has said that ULFA's "I has led them to provide a new turn to the erstwhile Assam movement, a left turn indeed, doing away with its anti-communist, anti-left communal bias of parties like the CPI (ML) have tried to project ULFA as a "representative organisation of the Assamese people" which has taken "Mao's ideology as its pri against the all-India supra-national forces...An analysis of the structure and class character of the ULFA does not show it either as a communist or organisation, though it has been quite common for the insurgent groups of the northeastern region of the country to claim left credentials. The colonial th armed struggle to achieve one's ends have quite often been factors which have led sections to the communist left in our country to conclude that such o Maoist-Marxist ideology. Referring to the ULFA's claims to "scientific socialism," ULFA maintains that its aim of liberating Assam and making it independent being implementation of the principles of scientific socialism. The literature that is available from the organisation suggests that it has a fairly simple nc socialism is all about." (Udayon Misra, pp 134-135)

There is an accentuated class distinction among ULFA's rank and file, and praxis does not form a part of its functional apparatus. Indeed, ULFA has assa even the CPI (ML), like Anil Baruah in Dibrugarh during the run-up to the general elections in 1998 in order to halt the march of the reds into Assam. Although Leninist enterprise in the state—of the parliamentary form, particularly in Karbi Anglong—it soon decayed in the face of centrist politics. An organisatio never abdicate space to any other group, leftist or otherwise—its territorial claims are non-negotiable, and furthermore ULFA does not evince itself as a p International even though it projects itself as leftist outfit with socialist standards. At any rate, the present character of ULFA and its chieftain, Paresh Barua a pure warlord who eliminates detractors, governs his organisation by way of whims and fancies and acts financially and politically in the international system Therefore, even if Paresh Baruah is talking to Koteswar Rao, it would be not about sharing space, but about arms-deals, joint training and safe h: circumstances (despite reports that even the ISI has held meetings with the Maoists), ULFA would never countenance truck with the Maoists, especially latter's power in the Indian heartland. In fact it would resist it. The conditions and the space aspect would, therefore, not permit the ingress of Maoism in manner it has spread to other parts of the country. Practical considerations may, however, lead to alignments, but not superimpositions.

Even groups such All Adivasi National Liberation Army (AANLA) (it had sent at least 24 of its cadres to Jharkhand to train alongside the Maoists) that has na India, being from the Santhal stock, and were brought to Assam by the British to work the tea gardens have shown little interest in the "dictatorship of the either in a surrender mode or have been arrested for graduating into contract killing (Nirmal Tirkee, the leader was arrested in Ranchi in the second wee Maoism means little for them in the Assam scenario. Clearly they had gone for training with the Maoists in order to acquire muscle against the Bodos that The hard core Maoists of Dantewada and thereabouts—where the Adivasis trained—did not fathom their real objectives. Indeed, 16 of the trained 24 Adivasi the authorities. Anyone with a sense of communism would know that the modus operandi of the AANLA was not in line with Karl Marx's Communist Mani upon in Hyde Park, London. Adivasi sentiments in Assam are locally placed, and against Bodos, and even a stray incident that resulted in an Adivasi won Guwahati during the Beltola (Guwahati) riots of 2007—has no connection with the commune. Indeed, the unfortunate Adivasi lady who was humiliated w communal Assam United Democratic Front (headed by Badrudin Azmal) in order to contest elections. The Adivasis approached the Maoists only because the affinity—they belonged to the same stock. But once they returned to Assam, they realised that they could not impose the ideological training that they comrades on their community in Assam.

The phenomenon is exactly at par with what became of certain indigenous Assamese Muslims who had gone to POK to train alongside LeT, JeM and gro were guided by the global salafi movement. The Assamese Muslims came back and surrendered to the authorities. On being questioned about the reason, tl gone to train so that they can come back and aid their Muslim brethren in Assam. Instead, their ISI instructors had pressed them to perform acts like assa: political leaders and attain shahadat by indulging in suicide terrorism. Such instructions meant nothing for the indigenous Assamese Muslim and being disen to the mainstream.

The attempts by the Maoists to make inroads into the North East are clear. But, what is not clear is the success of the exercise. Clearly insurgent groups like CPI (Maoist) only for practical consideration, despite the fact that PLA, too (as aforesaid), wears a leftist veneer, albeit not of the rabid Maoist variety, bi locale.

How about the changing course of proletariat politics in the region, especially Assam?

The blazing sun in the horizon that is storm-trooping Assam, the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and its general secretary Akhil Gogoi, whose left doubt, do not have any (despite myriad accusations against them) links with the Maoists. The author has confirmed this with traditional central agenc matters as well, although provincial intelligence might seek to colour the movement, or attempt to draw connections with the Maoists in order to bludgeon th

Mass movements against corruption and mega dams that are currently dominating Assam's firmament in a furious manner have not indicated any truck mass anger against what a section of the Assamese people is incorrect action. This analysis, incidentally, does not subscribe to aspects such as stoppage c being tom-tommed by KMSS: for the simple reason that development has to take precedence over certain exigencies such as internal displacement (with cor necessary the occasional bitter-pill has to be swallowed, which in the North Eastern context translates into internal displacement, earthquakes, and down-str demand of groups should, therefore, not be the stoppage of all mega dams, but demand for the institution of feasibility studies before projects such the Power Project is completed. It is a happy sign that the Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh has engaged people like Akhil Gogoi and assured that he v grievances of the people of Assam to New Delhi. These are positive signs of centrist concerns for the periphery. But, the non-violent manner of protest relating to mega dams or corruption must appeal to the government and press it to undertake remedial measures.

It is evident that the Maoists in heartland India are closely monitoring the situation and one can also be certain that the Maoist leadership have tried to influ undertake measures to provoke the farmer's organisation into resorting to non-traditional methodology. Fortunately it has not succeeded in its endeavour because of these reasons that the state must recognise the fault lines and take a correct course correction action in right earnest. The logic of "winning the a allowed to await a time when dissonance has already graduated into violent movements. This has been the bane of centrist policy for the North East for c results.

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