

Democracy As Reason

It's democracy that the Congress-led united Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government is fighting, not Maoists. The Maoist threat is an excuse. Understanding democracy in the world's biggest showpiece of democracy is in the main aimed at continuing 'controlled democracy' in order to keep control over the perpetually marginalised and subdued who literally enjoy no democratic right to voice their democratic dissent. There is nothing new in the yearly report card of UPA-II regime other than renewed pledge to wipe out 'root and branch' of left-wing extremism and enforce the writ of the state in areas over which they have lost administrative control. What is really at stake is real estate. But they have no control over inflation, rather food inflation. It seems it is not their concern. They are urging the people all the time to accept it as natural as anything else and bear with the painful situation for some more time. What matters in their scheme of things is 'growth' as it sells in international market, albeit the gap between haves and have-nots has so widened in recent months that the 'bold' performance on the economic front as claimed in the UPA-II progress summary, is at worst a caricature of the 'high growth' syndrome.

Strangely enough, they no longer see 'cross-border' terrorism originating from Pakistan as the main threat to security and integrity, though the spill-over effect from Afghan war is going to affect Indian polity in a big way in the coming months. The low-intensity conflict that Kashmir and Northeast have been witnessing for decades is not really on the wane. Maybe, they have decided to live with non-left insurgency permanently, maybe it is a way of life for many who think the best way to solve a crisis is not to solve it. But it is not the case with the naxalites, the contradiction is sharpening with every passing day as the Manmohan Singh government is now seriously considering the option of deploying army to curb naxalism or whatever remains of democratic facade.

Army means full-scale war. Union Defence Minister A K Antony reportedly discussed 'threadbare' the armed forces' response on demands for deploying them in the fight against the naxalites beyond the auxiliary role of providing training to paramilitary and police force. In other words a blueprint for genocide is in place because corporate tycoons need land. At the time of writing the Cabinet Committee on Security failed to arrive at a consensus on the deployment of army and airforce in naxal-affected areas.

Anti-war protest movement invariably invokes a scenario of foreign aggression or invasion. As for anti-naxal war it is not so, it is more like a civil war. But Indian troops behave more like an occupied force wherever they go. They are an occupied force in Kashmir. To the people of north-east they are barbarians. And now central Indian forest region, endowed with enormous mineral wealth, is

going to face the Indian army as the most brutal occupation force. For the Indian left anti-war protest movement is distant memory. Also, there is hardly any tradition of anti-war struggle in this part of the globe. Official communists have a chequered history of supporting British war efforts. India's contribution to anti-fascist struggle against Franco's fascism in the Spanish Civil War was negligible.

Barring a few civil liberties and human rights groups, no outfit, political or quasi-political, is serious about India's ongoing civil war and anti-maoist crusade. The bone of contention is land. In essence it is the peasant question that tries to manifest itself through this civil war. The peasant question in the changed context stands to get redefined but tragically subjective forces are nowhere around. Blaming it on the maoists for all the evils under the sun cannot wash. They are now blaming it on the maoists for the Gnaneswari Express Train mishap on May 28, 2010, in which about 150 civilians died and several injured.

Exfacie it appears to be a re-run of Godhra incident in which mainly saffron karsevaks died but the Bharatiya Janata Party lost no time to cash in on the tragedy. Then the political opponents, including communists, had all along tried to add a conspiratorial angle to the Godhra mayhem. In truth, truth behind 'Godhra' is yet to be revealed in full, notwithstanding so many expert committee reports, including a special report by the Railway Ministry itself.

Who stands to gain maximum political mileage in the 'Gnaneswari' pogrom remains to be unearthed without which it will be simply a blaming game.

Political atmosphere in today's India is getting increasingly supercharged because for too many players too much is at stake. Though India's economy is running out of steam, its military and internal security expenses are increasing, aggravating the crisis. No matter what the UPA-II yearly report card says this regime aspiring to become a great power is condemned to fade. □□□