

**TAGORE'S
ARGENTINIAN
INFATUATION**

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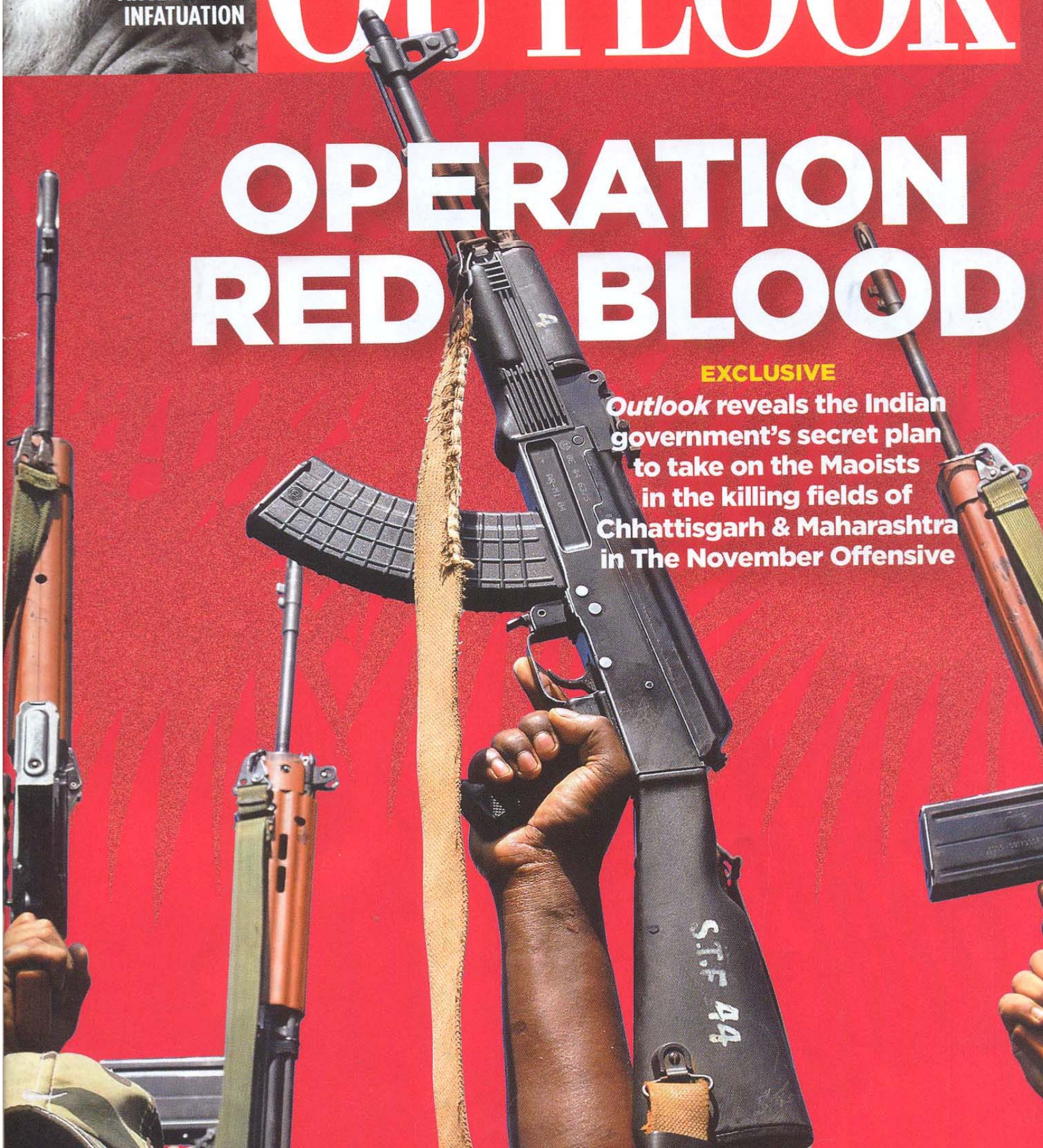
**THE UNTOLD STORY
OF RAM AND SITA**

OUTLOOK

OPERATION RED BLOOD

EXCLUSIVE

Outlook reveals the Indian government's secret plan to take on the Maoists in the killing fields of Chhattisgarh & Maharashtra in The November Offensive



SIF 44

RED CHAPTERS

The Maoists might derail the Centre's hearts-and-minds track

by Smita Gupta

FOR five years, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been describing the Maoists as the single largest threat to India's security. But it's only after P. Chidambaram became the Union home minister that the government got down to dealing with how to restore the writ of the state in that swathe of the country known as the Red Corridor.

Clearly, there are no easy solutions. So even as plans to upgrade the anti-Maoist operations are being formulated, the debate within the government on how much force should be used and by whom (there is the fear of collateral damage and its political consequences) remains unresolved. Top government sources told *Outlook*, for instance, that the home ministry's "maximalist approach" was "beaten down" at the Cabinet Committee on Security meeting on October 8. "It was made clear to the HM," they said, "that his plans were too ambitious and would have to be scaled down. The forces required for the operation he had envisaged are not available, given the competing needs in areas like J&K and the Northeast." The option of using the army is something the government does not want to sound too bullish about. Indeed, on October 12, the PM said in Mumbai that the armed forces would not be used to fight the Maoists.

A senior PMO official explained this calibrated approach: "It will be a long, drawn-out battle, not one time-bound decisive strike, certainly not an Operation Bluestar. The fight will be fronted by the states, with technological support, logistical back-up, intelligence etc coming from the Centre." On the question of using the army, he said, "This is not a war, it's an internal disturbance. These are our people, not terrorists." The government, clearly, is negotiating between two needs: squaring off the necessity of action with the desire to not be seen as initiating a bloody action in a poor region with an unclear overlap between Maoist insurgents and ordinary adivasis.

Of course, there is agreement on both sides of Raisina Hill that there will be "zero tolerance" for violence, and a uniform scepticism about the possibility of talks with Maoists anytime soon. Maoist politburo member Koteshwar Rao's offer of talks provided the government declares a ceasefire and

releases all prisoners is not being considered, at least not now. Neither is the offer by People's Union of Civil Liberties' Jharkhand head Subroto Bhattacharya to mediate being taken seriously. The consensus in government seems to be that while civil rights groups and overground left-wing movements don't resort to violence, they tend to create an ideological climate in which the guerrillas thrive. That said, Bhattacharya points out that in '02 retired IAS officer S.R. Sankaran and the PUCL's K. Kannabiran had mediated between the AP government and the PWG and brought about a successful ceasefire. The PUCL's national council is meeting in Ranchi on October 31 (activists Binayak Sen and Asghar Ali Engineer will attend), to draw up a mediation proposal.

Meanwhile, there is pressure from sections within the government as well as the ruling Congress, including party general secretary Rahul Gandhi, not to forget that this is essentially a battle for minds and hearts, not territory. Indeed, the latter has stressed that Maoist violence was continuing because development was not reaching the people. Of course, there have been efforts to create goodwill. In Jharkhand, now under President's Rule, the government recently dropped over one lakh cases against the tribals. Home ministry sources say the governor informed them that the tribals were being harassed for petty acts like "stealing" of forest fruits, grazing cattle, hunting and entering reserved forests without permission.

But it isn't always easy for the states to focus on people-friendly measures as the Maoists are constantly reworking their strategy. Take Maharashtra, where Maoists sought to disrupt the recent elections in Gadchiroli. Over

the years, the state had simultaneously taken on the Maoists militarily while initiating the Jan Jagaran Abhiyan—which had met with reasonable success. But there's been a recent revival, say intelligence officials, after Maoist groups in neighbouring states regrouped, launching inter-state operations in Gadchiroli. Worse, anticipating the escalation in counter-Maoist operations, they stopped targeting civilians, suspected informers etc and instead started hitting police personnel, including the specially raised elite C-60 force.

But that's the challenge for the state, not to get deviated from the hearts-and-minds track. Congress general secretary and former chief minister of undivided Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh says, "The three reasons why Maoist influence is growing is poor governance, non-implementation of the Tribal Bill

PEOPLE-FRIENDLY MEASURES AREN'T EASY FOR STATES, THE MAOISTS ARE ALL THE TIME REWORKING THEIR STRATEGY.



Shoot first? A Maoist camp in the Nallamala forests in AP

P. ANIL KUMAR

FRINGE IN THE MIDDLE

Nine states, 160 districts affected; average of 60 killings a month now.

The Main Maoists

Communist Party of India (Maoist): Formed in September '04. Muppala Laxman Rao aka Ganapati is general secretary. Active in 12 states including Andhra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra.

The Consolidation: Earlier, three main groups existed: People's Unity, Maoist Communist Centre and People's War. Finally, united as one in '04.

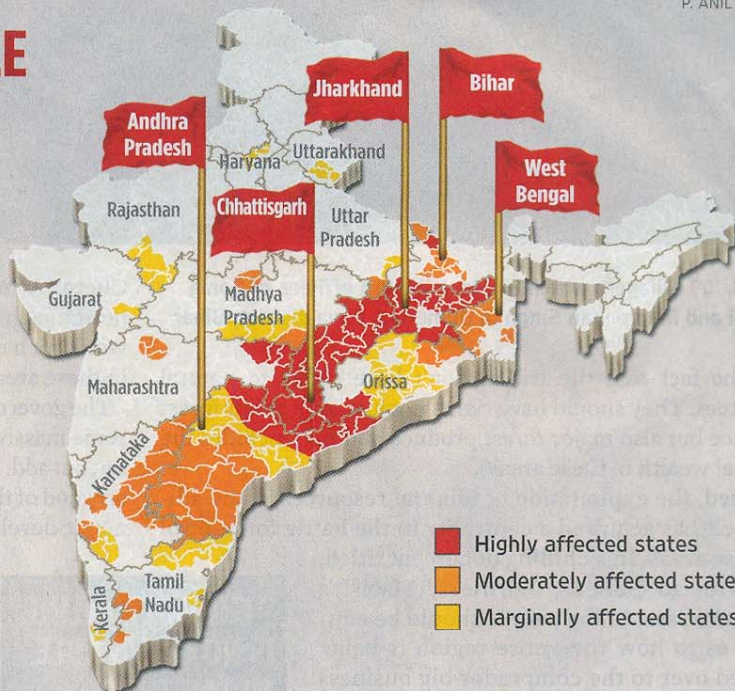
The Other Groups

There are other overground formations active, even participating in elections:

Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist (Kanu Sanyal): Formed in 1969. Kanu Sanyal, who abandoned violent means after Charu Majumdar's death, is general secretary. Active mainly in West Bengal.

Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist (Liberation): Formed in 1974. General secretary is Dipankar Bhattacharya. Active in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, UP.

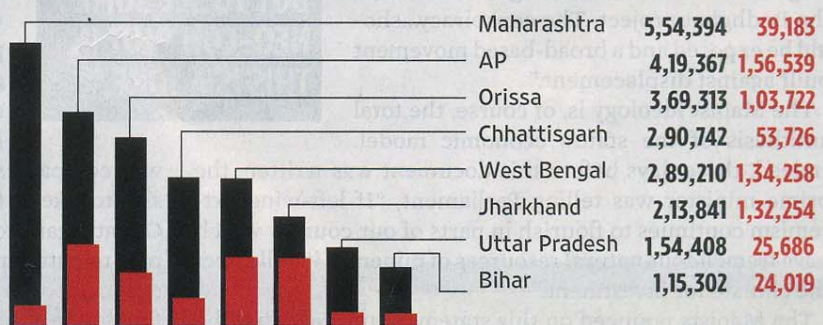
Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist (Janashakti): Formed in 1992 with the merger of seven Communist groups. Contested the '94 Andhra Pradesh assembly polls but switched to violent means later. State secretary is Koora Rajanna. Active mainly in AP.



■ Highly affected states
 ■ Moderately affected states
 ■ Marginally affected states

No Fullstops...

Investments in Naxal-affected districts continue to rise, growth rates match the countrywide trend.



Projected investments in ■ Naxal-affected districts ■ Total state figures
 As on September 2009; Source: ProjectsToday.com

Graphic by TANMOY CHAKRABORTY



PTI

Oct 13, '09 Villagers watch as Maoists burn effigies of Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh in Dumariya, Gaya district, Bihar

and the fact that the tribals don't have rights to natural resources. They should have rights not just over minor forest produce but also major forest produce and that includes the mineral wealth in these areas".

Indeed, the exploitation of mineral resources in the adivasi belt has acquired a centrality in the battle for control of these areas. In a chilling document titled, 'Tasks Ahead' (June 12, '09), the CPI(Maoist)'s politburo says, "...the people should be educated as to how the entire region is being handed over to the comprador big business houses like the Tatas in Lohandiguda, Essar in Dhurli, NMDC's proposed steel plants in Nagarnaar and Dilimili, Raoghat mines and the Bodhghat project. The conspiracy...should be exposed and a broad-based movement built against displacement."

The Maoist ideology is, of course, the total antithesis of the state's economic model. Indeed, three days before this document was written, the prime minister was telling Parliament, "If left-wing extremism continues to flourish in parts of our country which have tremendous natural resources of minerals, it will affect the climate for investment."

The Maoists pounced on this statement to prove that the current upgradation of anti-Maoist operations was to "recapture" these areas for big business. Himanshu Kumar, Vanvasi

Chetna Ashram director, in Dantewada, says, "If there were no mines here, then some violence, or underdevelopment wouldn't have mattered to the government. It wants mining in these areas, that's why the crackdown is being arranged."

The government says this is just Maoist propaganda. "To see some massive neo-con plot in this is laughable," PMO sources say, but add, "Natural resources must be exploited for the greater good of the nation. We can debate different models of economic development, but the bottomline today is that no one's able to tap those resources."

"THE BOTTOMLINE IS NO ONE'S ABLE TO TAP THOSE RESOURCES NOW. BUT TO SEE SOME NEO-CON PLOT IN THIS IS A JOKE."

An analysis of investments in Naxal-affected areas by projectstoday.com for *Outlook* clearly reveals the growing business interests at play. Till September '09, Rs 6,69,388 crore of investment had been pledged in the troubled areas—14 per cent of the total pledged investments in the country. Sure, not all these investments will materialise—some big-ticket plans in minerals, metals, power and oil and gas have been stuck for awhile. But significantly, the growth in big business interests here matches the national average. Which is

why companies operating in these zones welcome the decision to take on the Maoists frontally. A PSU representative in Chhattisgarh told *Outlook*, "The Salwa Judum was an attempt to battle an unlawful movement through an unlawful agency. It was disastrous, it lacked moral authority. Now, finally, the state has realised its own responsibility." ▣

with **Smruti Koppikar** in Mumbai, **Lola Nayar** and **Chandrani Bannerjee** in Delhi and **Debarshi Dasgupta** in Jharkhand

No rest: Naxals
in fatigues



OUTLOOK-MDRA OPINION POLL

49% SAY THE FIGHT AGAINST
MAOISTS WILL NEVER END

Two of every three respondents in Maoist-affected states believe the war against Maoism will eventually be won. But is the battle without end? The uncertainty is reflected in the fact that half our respondents thought so. These are the findings of a poll conducted for *Outlook* by Marketing & Development Research Associates (MDRA) on October 13-14 in Hyderabad, Calcutta, Patna, Raipur, Ranchi. Sample size: 519.

Do you agree with the PM's opinion that Maoism is the 'great internal security threat' facing India?



Do you agree with the home minister's strategy of deploying the Indian army to deal with Maoism?



Should locals be trained to help the State fight Maoists, like the Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh?



In your opinion, are the Maoists justified in picking up civilian targets to make their point to the State?



Is the use of violence by Maoists (killing, beheading, etc) a justifiable tactic?



Should the Indian air force be allowed to fire back at Maoists firing at its aircraft?



Should people in Maoist-affected areas be evacuated before any strike?



Do you think the Indian State will win the war against Maoists?



Yes No Don't Know/Can't say

All figures in percentage

What do you think is the main cause for growth of Maoism?

Lack of development	63
Government policies which help big business	19.5
Exploitation of tribal land by government and big business	6.6
Police atrocities	7.9
None of these	1.2
DK/CS	1.9

How should the govt deal with the Maoist problem?

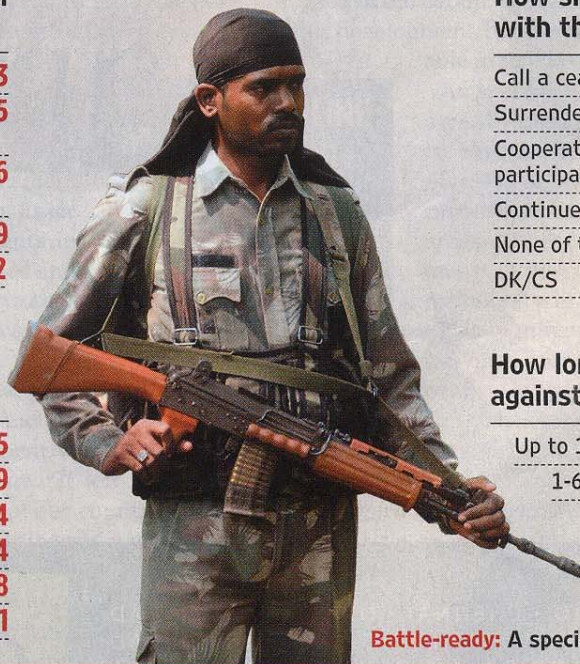
Negotiate with Maoists directly	50.5
Use third-party mediators	8.9
Develop adivasi areas better	26.4
Use police & security forces	11.4
None of these	0.8
DK/CS	2.1

How should the Maoists deal with the government?

Call a ceasefire, hold dialogue	34.3
Surrender and negotiate	28.9
Cooperate with the State & participate in development	31.2
Continue the struggle	3.3
None of these	0.8
DK/CS	1.5

How long will the fight against Maoists go on?

Up to 1 month	1.3
1-6 months	5.6
6 months-1 year	11.8
More than 1 year	32.4
Will never end	48.9



Battle-ready: A special forces trooper