

Statement On Indo-Pakistan War : 1965*

[Issued By E.M.S. Namboodiripad On Behalf of The Central Committee of C.P.I. (M) On November 2, 1965]

The outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war created a situation which was particularly difficult for our Party. We had to lay down our policy at a time when the overwhelming majority of the top and middle leadership of the Party was not available for that collected discussion which is necessary for arriving at correct decisions.

Those of us who remained free, had, therefore, to discharge our tasks under severe handicaps. I myself had, in my capacity as the General Secretary, to make pronouncements on the basis of decisions taken by the Party previously, but without any opportunity to consult my colleagues. The comrades who are running the central organ, *People's Democracy* and the various state organs of the Party have also been doing what they thought was necessary and correct to meet the developing situation.

It was natural, under these circumstances, that there were certain divergencies in approach and emphasis as between the pronouncements made by different individuals and organs of the Party. Conscious as we were of the need to overcome this difficulty as quickly as possible, we arranged for utmost possible exchange of views among the leading comrades of the Party; all methods available under the existing circumstances were utilized to consult the views of as many comrades as possible.

We have now been able to assimilate the various points of view exchanged and, on that basis, to arrive at conclusions which represent the viewpoint of the Party. I am, therefore, issuing this statement, on behalf of the Central Committee of our Party, setting out the conclusions so arrived at.

1. Our Party has repeatedly made it clear that it stands for the defence of national territory when it is under attack. This position

* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, November 7, 1965

was recently restated by Comrade P. Sundarayya in his reply to Central Home Minister Nanda. It is, therefore, obvious that when the Pakistani rulers decided to send infiltrators into Kashmir, our Party should have no hesitation to come out in support of government measures to throw out these infiltrators. This, however, can be successfully done only with the cooperation of the people of Kashmir. The Party would, therefore, warn the government that measures to throw out the infiltrators should not in any way lead to harassment of the state's people.

2. Our Party considers that defence of our territory against Pakistani attack should be combined with serious efforts to settle the Indo-Pakistan problems in general and the Kashmir problem in particular through peaceful means. Any attempt to use Pakistan's sending of infiltrators into Kashmir to extend the conflict, or to try to settle the problem through military means would be harmful to the interests of India as well as Pakistan.

Our Party would in this connection like to draw the attention of the people to the implications of preparing the country for a prolonged war with our neighbours, whether Pakistan or China. The financial burden imposed on the government by the state of cold war (which once broke out into a hot war) with China, even while strained relations were continuing with Pakistan, has been roughly estimated at Rs. 900 crores per year. This is about the same as the actual public sector outlay for the second five-year plan which, at the time of its formulation, was considered by some people as "over-ambitious". (The public sector outlay for the second five-year period was Rs. 4,800 crores; the actual outlay during this period, however, was only Rs. 4,500 crores, or Rs. 900 crores on an average for average for every year of the second five-year plan). It is obvious that this financial burden will grow enormously because of the war with Pakistan. According to one calculation made unofficially, Rs. 500 crores was the additional expenditure incurred during the August-September weeks of war with Pakistan. Even the present state of skirmishes within the framework of a formally-declared cease-fire would itself raise the Rs. 900-crores-per-year military budget several times.

4. The financial burden mentioned above is only part of the story. The economic consequences of the state of war are still more serious, still more lasting. For, not only has money to be raised for military expenditure, but the entire economy of the nation has to be geared to the needs of war. Production, transport and communications and all other spheres of economic activity have to be adjusted to the needs of the huge military machine required to face the well-trained and well-equipped armies of two neighbouring countries along the entire land frontier of India. Considering the fact that war with either China or Pakistan singly, not to speak of a simultaneous war with both, cannot be a "short and swift war", it is obvious that the perspective of planning for peaceful development will have to be replaced by the perspective of planning for war. Indications are available that this will take place. The Prime Minister and the Planning Commission have already been giving what is called a "defence orientation" to the fourth five-year plan. Although a clear picture has not yet emerged, it is obvious that such basic objectives of planning as industrial and agricultural development, improvement in the standards of living of the people, the attainment of a minimum level of income, reduction of social inequalities, etc., will have to give place to the needs of feeding the gigantic military machine which has to be built up.

5. The social consequences which follow from these economic transformations will radically alter the face of Indian society. Shortage of consumption goods, disruption of family life, inadequate facilities for the education and public health of citizens, etc., will raise innumerable problems and lead to acute social conflicts. The people of Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan are already suffering from the direct effects of the war—destruction of their homes, loss of crops and livestock, dislocation of economy, closure of factories, etc.

6. Out of all this would naturally arise that political instability which will put an end to what the leaders of our ruling party claim with pride for India—her parliamentary democracy. Already before the full onset of a militarized economy, we see how the institution of parliamentary democracy is getting emasculated. The notorious Defence of India Rules, whose indiscriminate and partisan use has

become the target of criticism by large numbers of democratic people in our country, is only the beginning. It is bound to develop further into more and more attacks on the institutions of parliamentary democracy if the war continues. The ruling party and the government which had no hesitation to launch an open attack on our Party in the name of the continuing cold war with China, will not hesitate to attack other parties if war with both China and Pakistan continues on a long-term basis. This would ultimately lead to an Indian version of that very anti-democratic rule which has been established in several other countries.

7. Such an extension of the conflict will give an opportunity to the imperialists to carry on their intrigues in India as well as in Pakistan. It is necessary in this connection to recall that it was the British imperialists who created the problem of Kashmir. It was they, together with the United States and other imperialists, that used the United Nations Security Council to keep India and Pakistan quarrelling over the future of Kashmir. The American imperialists carried this policy further by arming Pakistan and drawing her into the net of their SEATO and CENTO military blocs. Having thus armed the Pakistani army, they subsequently used the opportunity of the India-China conflict to dangle before the Indian ruling classes the prospect of military "aid" to India. When Pakistan sent the infiltrators into Kashmir, it was hoping on utilizing India's growing dependence on the imperialists to put pressure on India to get a solution of the Kashmir problem in its favour. Nothing would please the imperialists more than the continued tension and occasional military actions between the two neighbouring countries. On the other hand, nothing would conform more to the interests of the two neighbouring nations than to have the disputes between them peacefully settled.

8. Unfortunately, however, there are powerful groups in the country who, are from seeing and fighting the imperialist game, actually help it. They look upon the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan as a good opportunity, rather than a calamity, for the nation. They raise slogans of "inflicting a total defeat on Pakistan", "fight to the finish", "uncompromising struggle against theocratic state", and so on. These elements have succeeded in creating a war-hysteria among the people.

Leaders of the ruling party are also exploiting this situation in order to divert people's attention from the problems of their livelihood—problems which have been created by the bankrupt policies of the government and accentuated by the bankrupt policies of the government and accentuated by the outbreak of the war.

9. The untenability of the position taken by these elements can be clear from the fact that the government of India itself is committed, both before world public opinion and before the people of Kashmir, to deal with the state of Jammu and Kashmir in a way different from that of other states which acceded to the Indian Union. Although the validity of the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union may stand the test of legality, a part of that state has in fact remained with Pakistan for eighteen years. The cease-fire line which divides this part of Kashmir from the rest of the state was laid down by the United Nations whose observers are looking after its proper observance. Furthermore, the government of India had committed itself to the United Nations to hold a plebiscite when certain preconditions have been fulfilled; it is only because the government of Pakistan did not fulfil those preconditions that the occasion for plebiscite did not arise. Internally, too, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was allowed to have its own Constituent Assembly; special provisions were written into the Indian Constitution safeguarding the rights of the Kashmir people.

10. It is, therefore, totally unrealistic to argue, as the spokesmen of the government of India are doing, that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is in no way different from any other state of India. These arguments run against the reality that, on a number of occasions, talks had been held between India and Pakistan on this problem and even as late as in 1964 the late Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, got the case against Sheikh Abdullah withdrawn even though the charge against him was that he conspired against India. Not only was Abdullah released from jail but was welcomed and treated as the Prime Minister's own guest in Delhi. This, too, after Abdullah had made several public pronouncements that he wanted to have negotiations with the leaders of India as well as of Pakistan in order to settle the future of Kashmir. Having been received in Delhi, he was allowed by Nehru to go to

Pakistan. It was thus clear that the government of India at that time had looked upon the future of Kashmir as a political problem to be settled through consultations among the leaders of India, Pakistan and Kashmir itself.

11. No useful purpose will, therefore, be served by repeating ad nauseam (as the leaders of the ruling party are doing) that there is no Kashmir problem. The fact is that the government of India itself took this problem to the United Nations in 1947. Even today, the Security Council resolution of September 20, 1965, which India has accepted envisages political negotiations after the cease-fire and withdrawals are effected. It is also obvious that the United States is tightening its screw on India by withholding food and economic "aid" precisely in order to force India to go to the negotiating table and "settle" the problem in such a way as to facilitate further imperialist intrigues in the sub-continent. This pressure of the United States is being increasingly felt on the government of India, as can be seen from the pronouncements made by S. K. Patil who was sent to the United States as the Prime Minister's special emissary. It is difficult to believe that the government of India will be able to resist this immense pressure from the United States so long as it continues to pursue policies of reliance on the United States for food as well as economic and military "aid".

12. Taking all these factors into consideration, any reasonable person would come to the conclusion that it will be better and more advantageous to India to come to terms with Pakistan and with the Kashmir people themselves, than to look for assistance from the United States in persuading the Pakistani rulers to accept India's terms. The eighteen year-long experience of the United States' handling of the Indo-Pak and Kashmir questions has proved the utter futility of relying on it either for settling with Pakistan or fighting her. The only result of such dependence on the United States will be the perpetuation of the present state of tension with Pakistan.

13. Our Party, therefore, calls on the people to demand of the government that it should not surrender to this pressure from the imperialists, but should take the path of direct negotiations with Pakistan. It should be remembered that India had concluded a

cease-fire agreement in 1948 under which a part of Kashmir has remained with Pakistan for eighteen years.

14. The Kashmir problem, however, has another aspect, the internal aspect. Even after Pakistan agrees not to interfere in the affairs of Kashmir, the question of relation between that state and the Indian Union will remain. This will have to be solved through consultations between the government of India on the one hand and the ruling and opposition parties within Kashmir on the other. Many of the attributes of the special status given to Kashmir at the time of framing the Indian constitution may have now become outmoded and may therefore require revision. These and other questions can and will have to be dealt with as part of the internal problem of relation between the centre and the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

15. While thus calling for a settlement of the Indo-Pak problem through the method of peaceful negotiations, our Party is aware that the Pakistani rulers are threatening the integrity of that part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir which has been in India's possession for the last eighteen years. This demands of our Party that it helps the government in the defence measures it is taking to resist any Pakistani attack. Our Party, however, cannot agree to any measure which will amount to an attack on territories which have been in Pakistani possession for the last eighteen years.

16. Our Party wants to make it clear also that the methods adopted by the government in mobilising the country for the war are anti-people. The further and still more indiscriminate use of the Defence of India Rules not only against our Party but also other Left parties; the large-scale arrests and detentions of muslims; the manner in which defence committees, homeguards and other organisations are filled with anti-democratic elements; the various forms of pressure put on the common people to make contributions towards the war fund even though the big profiteers and blackmarketeers are allowed to get away with nominal contributions; the efforts made to prevent the common people from raising their voice against increasing cost of living and other problems of their life—all these go to show that the government is defending itself against the people, defending the vested interests, rather than defending the nation. The continued

detention of the leadership of our Party and other forms of attacks on the Party underline this anti-democratic trend. It is obvious that our Party cannot agree to such methods of “organizing national defence”. It will have to fight for the reversal of these policies and for the adoption of democratic methods. We hope that other democratic parties and democratic elements will cooperate with us in fighting for it.

17. The Central Committee in the end appeals to the people to defend their democratic rights, to defeat imperialist machinations, refuse to be swayed by the war hysteria and to work for a peaceful solution of the disputes with not only Pakistan but also with China.