

The battle for Baliapal

More than a hundred thousand farmers are engaged in a life and death struggle against the Government of India in Baliapal, one of the most fertile areas of Bhareshwar district, in Orissa. The Government wants to displace these people from their agricultural land and establish a ballistic missile base, ostensibly to test the missiles that the country is now about to produce, but in effect as a nuclear missile launching base. The exercise has been a part of the decision to build the infrastructure to make India a nuclear military power.

Apart from the farmers, about 30 thousand fishermen will also be affected by the Government's decision, since the area borders on the sea and the fishing villages are dotted all over the coastline.

A number of individuals and organisations have joined the people of this region to provide them with necessary support to fight their battle.

In the forefront, is the Janata Party, and, particularly, its leader, Biju Patnaik. Despite his indifferent health, Biju Patnaik has been engaged in a vigorous campaign in Baliapal, in Orissa and in Delhi to persuade the powers that be to abandon their idea of installing the missile base in Orissa.

The Ganatantrik Adhikar Sangharsha Sanghathan, headed by Gangadhar Panigrahi, is another body that has been involved in mobilising public opinion against this ill conceived killer project.

The concerned section of the scientific community in India has also been opposing the Government's move. There have been suggestions that some of the scientists go to Baliapal and participate in a "sit-in" along with the affected people in the area.

Yet, for all these developments, there has still not been a national debate in the country over the sinister designs of the Government to not only further militarise the country but to take it in the direction of a nuclear military power.

At a time when the whole world is expressing its concern at the consequences of a nuclear accident like the one at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union, and particularly when the Prime Minister of India struts around the world in the company of other heads of government speaking about the need for nuclear disarmament and an end to the nuclear arms race, the Government of India's persistence with the Baliapal missile test range is inexplicable.

Unless it is to be understood as the high point in its known standards of duplicity.

Baliapal is not merely a question of the life of the farmers, the fishermen and other poor who will be displaced and rendered destitute.

It is a moral issue as well as a political issue.

Unless the entire country joins the campaign to prevent India from going militarily nuclear, the future can be, to say the least, very disastrous for the entire country.

the OtherSide carries this exclusive feature on the facts as well as the implications of Baliapal, in the hope that it will help in generating a national debate and arouse the people to act against the nuclearisation of India.

George Fernandes

Baliapal Test Range and India's defence

NILMONY ROUTRAY

The Government of R. Gandhi has been lying to the country about the compulsions to have the National Test Range in the thickly populated Baliapal segment of Baleshwar district in Orissa. No government in the world has been so insensitive to its own people as the Indian government, argues the author.

IN THE MATTER OF ESTABLISHMENT OF A National Test Range for rockets, missiles and other military weapons, we should not presume that India is the only country that is desirous of setting up such a defence establishment. Super powers like USA or USSR and some other countries like Great Britain, China and France have not only established such ranges, but are also far ahead of us. It is imperative for us to learn and for our Prime Minister, Defence Department and the Chief Minister of Orissa to know the ground rules, principles and criteria that guided those countries in the matter of establishing their National Test Ranges for short-range testing as well as very long range testing of missiles and other weapons; and how scrupulously and consciously they have avoided densely populated areas, eliminating uprooting of masses of people and destruction of fertile cultivable lands. On the other hand, they selected sandy deserts, swampy and uninhabitable lands and reclaimed them away from populous areas, while selecting sites for such establishments.

The United States of America has got both short range and very long range centres for testing rockets, missiles and other weapons. In the matter of selection of sites for such centres the Government of USA had taken utmost care not to uproot people and destroy cultivable lands. Their short range testing centre covering a range of 100 miles is called the White Sand Missile Range in the New Mexico State of USA, in the White Sand Desert Valley and within an area of 100 miles by 40 miles. America's very long range rocket and missiles (ICBMs) testing centre is at Cape Kennedy (formerly Cape Canaveral) in the State of Florida on the Atlantic coast. In selecting this site the US Government have exhibited their wisdom in avoiding displacement of their people. This is the largest

missile range and space centre in the world, and in establishing this not a single man was displaced, not a single house was demolished, not a drop of tear was shed and not an acre of arable land was acquired. The total area of Florida State is 58560 square miles and the population of the entire State in the year 1950, when this long range centre was established was only 27,00,000 (27 lacs). Out of the total area of the State, 4,424 square miles are swampy low lands that submerge with the tide and as such quite uninhabitable. This is the area where Cape Canaveral (now Cape Kennedy) is located. The uninhabitable nature of the land and the primitive characteristics of the surroundings can be better appreciated from the following picture given by the assistant editor of the Washington-based *National Geographic* magazine written after a decade of the foundation of this missile and space centre.

Imagine, for a moment, a desolate expanse of sand and snarled brush that juts out into the Atlantic like a bent elbow. Alligators bask in its swamps, snakes infest its undergrowth, birds of many species wing its air lanes and hordes of voracious mosquitoes drone in its thickets. Of human habitation, however, there are but few signs—a venerable light-house and several forlorn old houses. That would be Cape Canaveral a decade ago. Wild life still claims the Cape. Despite Canaveral's metamorphosis, other wildlife remains in residence. Workers often see rabbits and armadillos. Occasionally someone sights a very bobcat. Gulls, vulture, hawks and pelicans still abound.

It has to be admitted that in the matter of knowledge and experience and preparation of defence and in the installation of vital defence institutions at strategic points, Great Britain is superior to us in many respects. Great Britain, however, spread the proof testing operations to different areas. For instance, tanks are tested at Castle Douglas in Scotland, artillery at Helyhead in Wales and

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infantry weapons and ammunitions in England. There are short range weapons proving grounds like our existing proof and establishment organisation at Chandipur in Balasore District. But so far as their long-range rockets and missiles are concerned their testing centre was not in Great Britain but in South Australia in the vicinity of Victoria desert at a place called Woomera Range. This may sound strange and astonishing, yet the British people in their wisdom selected this site obviously to avoid the displacement of English people, demolition of their houses and destruction of their culture and as well as ensuring location of the Range at a place where danger to people is minimum. Such are the feelings of the British people, their armed forces and their Government towards the sufferings of their common man and society.

France is one of the four nuclear powers. It will be beneficial and instructive to study the efforts of the French government in the matter of selection of sites for testing rockets, missiles and other weapons including nuclear weapons. That will give enough idea as to the criteria they fixed and the guidelines they followed in their choice of sites for such purposes. They deliberately selected places far away from human habitation and in uninhabited islands and marshy regions. When Algeria in Africa was in their possession they had their Test Range at Reggane in Sahara, the biggest desert in the World. When Algeria became free and independent, the French government closed down their Test Range in Sahara and went to some islands in their possession in the South Pacific Ocean. Here the French Government established their Test Range in the polynesian group of islands namely Wallis and Futuna at a distance of about 12000 miles from France. Here also after few years they had to face hostile demonstrations from the local inhabitants in the surrounding islands against such tests including surreptitious tests of nuclear weapons. The States in the South Pacific Ocean formed a forum to carry on this agitation and they resolved to make the South Pacific Ocean a nuclear-free zone and urged upon France for cooperation. An embarrassed France ultimately had to move out to French Guiana in South America on the Atlantic coast—a distance of 8000 miles from France and located their Test Range and Space Centre there. In selecting such a place for testing their long range weapons, France has exhibited her great concern for the safety and sufferings of humanity and has equally demonstrated her conscious efforts to avoid uprooting of people and the attendant problems of misery and rehabilitation.

A study of the physical geography and population of French Guiana will confirm the assertions made above. The French Guiana with a coast line of 190 miles has a total area of 35907 sq. miles with a population of only

73022 according to 1982 census, roughly 2 persons per sq. mile. Out of the total area of the country only 5000 sq. miles are habitable and the rest 30,000 sq. miles are marshy low lands and uninhabitable. It is here that the French Government have established its long range missiles test and space centre at a place called Kourou. Incidentally it may be of interest and very relevant to know that the number of people who are sought to be uprooted for the proposed National Test Range at Baliapal are more than the total population of French Guiana.

The USSR is another super power, perhaps at par with USA in the matter of establishing such long range missile and space centre in a very big way. The Russians have located this Centre in Siberia whose area is 53 lac square miles and where hardly one person lives in one square mile. The same considerations and human problems that weighed with USA, Great Britain and France have obviously weighed with the Russians as well.

China is also very much ahead of us in its strategic missile development. It has located its launching range centre in Central China in the mountain belt which is a "confused mass of low hills not suitable for human habitation" and is as vast as 1,25,000 square miles. China is also utilising the vast areas of Gobi desert in Central China for such test purposes. Its location of a launching base in the Tibetan area is well known. There is hardly any population problem in this area.

From the above instances it may be seen that in almost all the countries that have gone in for setting up rocket and missile range testing centres, their governments and defence personnel have deliberately and consciously located their missile range centres in uninhabited swampy lands, sandy deserts and mountain ranges, but our government and our defence advisers in their whims and caprices are insisting on selecting the most densely populated area which is otherwise known as the granary of Orissa. The defence establishment of USA, USSR, France, China and Great Britain could work at their missile range centres in marshy lands, in forests, in mountain ranges and in deserts but our scientists and defence personnel want easygoing areas at immense social cost to our citizens, and thus have rejected places like Andamans, Sundarbans (Sagar Islands) and Dwaraka on Gujarat coast as unsuitable for missile range centre on some plea or other like unhealthy marshy lands, proneness to cyclone and nearness to foreign countries. Dwaraka is rejected for its nearness to Pakistan and Sunderbans is rejected for its marsh. The distance of Dwaraka is about 100 miles from Pakistan and similarly the distance of Baliapal from Bangladesh is also 100 miles. In this atomic age distance has got no meaning at all.

Strategically and otherwise Andaman Islands would be the most suitable place for setting up the proposed missile-range-test-centre in order to strengthen our defences, in that part of our country and for increasing our command over the Indian Ocean. This is a task and responsibility which the Government of India have neglected so far. But most surprisingly our defence advisers have deliberately shut their eyes and rejected this location for its alleged proneness to cyclone. This is a diabolical misstatement trotted out with impunity for the purpose of misleading the prime minister and the government. The truth is that, as borne out by authentic records, Andamans are rarely affected by a cyclone. On the contrary, it gives out accurate information relating to the direction and intensity of cyclones better than from any other point in the bay and provides warning signals to vast amount of shipping in this part of the Indian Ocean through a well equipped meteorological station at Port Blair. Generally the climate of Andamans may be described as normal for tropical islands of similar latitude.

A ridiculous impression is sought to be created by responsible persons in authority in Orissa, that the onslaught of Pakistan cannot be checked unless the National Test Range is located at Baliapal and that India's defence largely depends on such location there. Our defence department by their attitude is also encouraging such absurd propaganda. If there is any truth in this type of assessment, then to ward off the Pakistani thrust it will be most appropriate to locate the Test Range either at Dwaraka on the Gujarat coast or in the Rajasthan Desert.

After all, what is going to be achieved at Baliapal

National Test Range and what are the purposes for which this test range is being set up? In the language of the Defence, it is nothing but a proving ground for military use of arms and ammunitions. Its location has got no strategic significance for the defence of the country. If that would have been so, then the nuclear powers like Great Britain and France would not have established their Test Range or proving ground thousands of miles away from the parent country. It can be located in any sparsely populated area having suitable range site. In accordance with military expert opinion as depicted in Encyclopaedia Britannica "the testing range is a 'Proving Ground', an area set aside and usually specially modified and equipped to 'proof test' military devices and military vehicles. The purpose of such testing is to show up, by excessive or distorted operation, the weaknesses of an item or any of its components; to determine whether the item's operation fits into a standard pattern or to determine the life expectancy of any product. In many instances, items are tested to destruction. In the case of ammunition the test is actually an expenditure on sample quantities from each lot made. In all cases data are collected, evaluated and used in further development or in making engineering or production improvements. Proving grounds for rockets and guided missiles are distinctive primarily because of the much greater ranges involved. They are usually located in sparsely populated areas where missiles may be fired to a distance of 100 miles or more; sometimes they are on coasts so that firing may be out to sea".

Would the governments of India and of Orissa State pause to ponder over the entire problem.

Assault in the name of defence

A report to the nation on the proposed missile base at Baliapal by a Fact-Finding Team formed by the Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan.

A SMALL STRIP OF LAND ON THE EAST coast of India abreast the Bay of Bengal, 400 sq km in area, has suddenly become a matter of great concern and significance for the entire nation. Though the information is not adequate, it is learnt that this area, belonging to the Balasore district of Orissa and consisting of 126 villages—99 villages of Baliapal P.S., 4 villages of Basta P.S., and 23 of Bhograi P.S.—has been earmarked for a ballistic missile base, euphemistically called the National Testing Range.

It is also learnt that the cost of this project will be more than Rs 4,000 crore, excluding the cost of compensation.

The Defence Ministry of India has surveyed all the coastal areas and made a list of possible sites in different states, specifically Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and West Bengal. A Calcutta newspaper reports that the Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal governments did not agree with the location of this project in their states. Since the Orissa government evidently gave its assent to the location, the Defence Ministry has commissioned the state government to evacuate the nearly 400 sq km for the proposed installation. Accordingly, the government of Orissa has already issued notification for the requisitioning of the proposed area.

What is the nature of this so-called National Testing Range? On 31st July 1985, the Chief Minister of Orissa, on his return from New Delhi, spoke to the press at Bhubaneswar airport. He stated that a missile base would be installed at Baliapal from where missiles would be fired that can travel a distance of 1000-5000 km. He was also reported to have said that the missiles would be observed on radar and would be controlled from a ground control station to be built at Niligiri, near Balasore. Though there is apparently no official notification or information from the Defence Ministry, this statement of the Chief Minister cannot be dismissed as sheer bravado. It has certainly created panic among the people of Baliapal. The injury this will inflict to one of the most populous regions of Orissa is incalculable. Rumour and speculation regarding this project has gained a free hand throughout Orissa.

A positive menace

Nor is it a question concerning the people of Baliapal alone. For, pieced together, (a) the Chief Minister's statement describing the type of missile base, (b) the strategic dimension and topography of the area involved, and (c) the budgetary allocation of Rs 4,000 crore, all point to a positive menace to the entire east coast of India. They amount to a goodbye to the notion of keeping the Indian Ocean a war-free zone as well as to the posture of non-alignment of the States India, Pakistan, Burma and beyond.

It is obvious that a missile with a range of 1000-5000 km is no toy firework. Expert opinion is categorical that missiles of the range mentioned by the Chief Minister of Orissa, are in the possession of only the USA, USSR, UK, France and China. None of them is considered non-aligned.

Moreover, ballistic missiles of this range usually carry nuclear warheads. So, if the Chief Minister's remark to the press is to be taken seriously, the Baliapal base may constitute the introduction of sophisticated nuclear weaponry onto India's coast. Our protest against the USA's equipping Pakistan with sophisticated weapons, therefore, becomes once again sheer hypocrisy.

Even as things stand, and as the following table shows, India is already the largest importer of arms among the South Asian nations, notwithstanding our Government's "peace efforts" here and everywhere. During 1980-86 India's dependence on foreign supplies for military hardware has become so extreme that India has purchased items such as the Hermes warship and the Westland helicopter on extremely unfavourable terms. Such indiscriminate acquisitions from merchants of military hardware by India clearly contradict its stated official position as an anti-imperialist and peace-loving nation.

Incidentally, the present location covers both banks of the river Subarnarekha at its confluence with the Bay of Bengal—and this strategic site may allure one of the super-powers to set up a sea-based missile station here. (See table on distribution of ICBMs and SLBMs for each super power.)

Though, only a missile testing centre has initially been announced to allay public opinion, the inevitable next step as part of the arms race is a missile launching centre. This has its attendant—and greatly enhanced—dangers to people in all the surrounding areas.

The people's movement

In the period between the statement of Chief Minister of Orissa on 31st July 1985 and the notification for evacuation published in the press in the first week of February 1986, the natural reaction of the people in Baliapal was one of uncertainty and turmoil. Statements and counter-statements of various political parties, groups, and the Government ensued. Government and opposition have a point in common: viz, that the missile project should be taken up. Their dispute is over its location. The opposition argues that the present location is unacceptable as it will dislocate lakhs of people and destroy a fertile landscape with its self-sufficient economy.

When the notification came, the people of that area refused to accept the notice. They resisted the construction of approach roads and the installation of telephone lines. The movement thus began to take an organised shape. The people's reaction was the innocent one—that of people from a highly prosperous and productive area in an otherwise poverty-stricken Orissa state.

Unlike Pokhran in Rajasthan, which is a semi-desert and was the site of the first nuclear explosion by India, Baliapal is the fertile centre of a densely populated area, with much trade and commerce. Its fertile land produces all sorts of crops in plenty. People here take pride in their land and in what it can produce with their labour. Moreover, the state government's past attitude to rehabilitation of refugees created by projects has consistently been ill-motivated. For example, in a flash-flood of the Subarnarekha in October 1985, the entire village Badakhapur was washed away; its few survivors have not yet been rehabilitated. The miseries and bitterness of the evacuees of the Hirakud and Rengalle dam sites are widely known. Similarly, the government has been extremely callous and incompetent in responding to the problems of the repeatedly famine-stricken Kalahandi district. The people of this district sell their children, leave their hearth and home in search of food and jobs, and starve to death. In such an overall situation in the state, the creation of fresh refugees from one of the most stable,

Major Euro-Strategic Nuclear Weapons (Missiles)

<i>States</i>	<i>Description of Weapons</i>	<i>Year When First Deployed</i>	<i>Maximum Range (km)</i>	<i>Number Deployed in 1979</i>
USSR	SS-4	1959	2,000	390
	SS-5	1961	3,700	80
	SS-12	1969	—800	72
	SS-20	1977	4,000	—120
	SS-N-5	1964	—1,200	18
USA	Pershing IA	1962	—750	108
	Pershing IA	1962	—750	72
	Pershing II	(1983)	—1,600	—
	GLCM	(1983)	2,500	—
UK	Polaris A-3	1967	4,600	54
France	S-2	1971	3,000	—
	K-20	1977	5,000	—

(Source—SIPRI Brochure—1980)

Arms Supplies to Countries in the Indian Sub-Continent

<i>Recipient Countries</i>	<i>Per Cent of Region's Total</i>	<i>Largest Supplier to Each Country</i>
India	52	USSR
Pakistan	28	France
Afghanistan	13	USSR
Bangladesh	3	China
Nepal	0.3	France
Sri Lanka	0.2	France

Suppliers to the Indian Sub-Continent in Order of Importance: 1. USSR, 2. France, 3. UK, 4. China
(Source: SIPRI Brochure-1980)

Current Strategic Nuclear Arsenals of the USA and USSR

<i>States</i>	<i>Per Cent of Total Number of Warheads Carried on Various Delivery Vehicles</i>		<i>Per Cent of Total Megatonnage Carried on Various Delivery Vehicles</i>
USA	ICBMs	21	41
	SLBMs	54	9
	Bombers	25	50
USSR	ICBMs	79	83
	SLBMs	21	17

(Source: SIPRI Brochure—1980)

productive and self-reliant areas of Orissa, is perverse. And it becomes a matter of concern for all patriotic and democratic people in Orissa.

In the circumstances, the Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (G.A.S.S.) Orissa, affiliated to the All-India Federation of Organisations For Democratic Rights (AIFOFR) deemed it its duty to send a team of persons on a fact-finding mission to Baliapal and to submit a report to the nation, highlighting the problem of the democratic rights of the people of Baliapal. The team included a scientist, an economist, a journalist, and writers. Team members Professor G.M. Mahapatra, Manmohan Misra, Prof Jayakrishna Misra, Binod Mohanty, Brajnath Rath, and others visited the area in early March 1986. The terms of reference were: to assess the human problem, to weigh the pros and cons of the proposed defence base (the material losses and argued benefits) and to gauge the psychological problems of the uprooted humanity of that area for generations to come.

A gamble with people's lives

The committee visiting the area found the area had assumed the appearance of a besieged fortress. A sort of people's curfew had been established throughout the 126 villages; there were warning signals about the approach of friends or foes, and a round-the-clock vigil with properly codified signals. In spite of the desperate determination of the people not to allow an inch of their land to be surrendered, however, their own normal activity of life—such as raising of crops, marriages of the young, and other social commitments—have been hampered by the threat of impending evacuation and likely separations.

This Baliapal and its environ is one of the most fertile and productive regions of Orissa:

The total materials loss at a conservative estimate prepared by the Kshepanastra Ghatti Pratirodh Committee would be about Rs 412 crore, exclusive of poultry, domestic animals, and so on, whose number and value are difficult to assess.

The committee found that the proposal for this base is ill-conceived. It is in line with the general policy of expanding security forces in this country. While our Government talks of Panchasheela, non-alignment, and above all peace here and everywhere, it has been expanding its police, paramilitary and military forces. We are already saddled with non-productive services such as state police, home guards, state military police, central reserved police, industrial security force, railway protection force, and above all the all-pervading military with their innumerable wings. The more we recruit to these services, the less we have in productive occupations such as farming and industry. One more policeman or soldier or

defence scientist means one less worker engaged in generating wealth in terms of food, clothing and shelter. While the former consume more than what is available to the average Indian, they also do not contribute to the quantum of national income. That partly explains why, in spite of three decades of 'planning' and 'economic development', we have more below the poverty line than there were at any time in the past. It is universally accepted that levels of living can be raised faster if, among other things, the budgetary resources put to non-developmental uses are drastically cut down. The movement to allocate a lower fraction of GNP to defence is therefore quite strong today in many developed and affluent countries.

Most of the wars fought after 1945 have been in the territories of poor and developing nations. The rich produce arms for the poor to fight and die. Wars since 1945 have not been fought on North American, Australian or European soil; but we have had countless wars—in Korea, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran and many countries on the African and Latin American continents.

Who encourages us to fight border wars and destroy our man-power and wealth? It is the affluent who produce and supply the weapons and military hardware for use ('testing') on the people of the poor nations. If nuclear warheads were used to kill people, that too was on Asian soil. Similarly, who does not know how the US Paton tanks' killing power and general efficacy was employed on this continent? The use of chemical killers in Iran-Iraq war is another instance of how poor people become gun-fodder. So why go in for another 'testing', when the logic is that only we would die, not the makers of the missiles?

Should we not learn anything from the experience regarding U.S. military bases on Philippine soil? To protect American bases, Marcos was allowed to kill innumerable Filipinos. The poor people there have suffered under his despotism for 20 long years. Is it not an insult to an under-developed nation? In the name of greater economic aid, employment and what-have-you, poor nations are pushed into such positions. Filipinos are told that they can not close the bases, there is apprehension about the immediate collapse of the country's economy. Various types of vested interests develop, from which it is extremely difficult to extricate oneself. Orissa is a poor state in a developing nation in Asia. Can we imagine the miseries to be brought upon us later if we succumb now? Investment of Rs 4000 crore at Baliapal has been advertised as a big bait, but who can quantify the sufferings and death of a hundred thousand people in the decades to come.

The committee, therefore, strongly suggests that an in-

Picture of the Inhabitation of the Proposed Missile Base Area:

1. Area affected: 400 sq. km.
2. Number of villages: 126
(Baliapal-99, Bhograi-23, Basta-4)
3. Number of families: 11,950
(as per 1981 Census)
4. Population: 1,05,700
(as per 1981 Census)
5. Number of betel-vines: 30,000
6. Number of coconut trees: 1,50,000
7. Number of educational institutions:
134 (College 1;
H.E. Schools 13;
M.E. Schools 32;
Primary Schools 55;
Non-Formal Schools 30;
Basic School 1; and
Sanskrit Schools 2.)
8. Other Government Institutions:
Primary Health Centres 1;
Livestock Centres 3;
Ayurvedic Dispensaries 1;
Sub-Post Offices 1;
Public Call Office 1;
Branch Post Offices 16;
G.P. Offices 8;
V.L.W. Centres 12;
R.I. Offices 3;
State Bank Branches 1;
Gramya Bank Branches 4.
9. Places of worship: 120

Annual Income from Various Sources:

	(Rs. crore)
1. Paddy crops: 30,000 tonnes	3.25
2. Betel vines: 30,000 vines	30.00
3. Coconut and other fruit	5.00
4. Inland fishing	2.00
5. Groundnut, oilseeds & cashewnut	5.00
6. Sea fishing	32.00
7. Wood and bamboo	18.00
8. Bamboo baskets, mats & mattresses	2.00

Annual Income from Small and Cottage Industries:

	(Rs. crore)
1. Coir rope industry	0.25
2. Salt factories	1.00
3. Fish depots	0.25
4. Hauliers and oil mills	1.00
5. Fishing boats, nets and trawlers	5.00
6. Loss of labour due to closure of fishing, agriculture and betel vines	10.00

Note: The total loss of immovable properties such as land and houses and other construction would be about Rs. 300 crore. The loss of income and sources of employment would be about Rs. 150 crore per annum. This figure would be much higher if the production and distribution system is taken into account.

depth study be conducted to appraise the benefits, if any, of the proposed missile base before any decision is made and implemented by brute force and State terror. Elsewhere, we have posed the nature of sacrifice and losses to be suffered by the people of Baliapal; but nowhere have we got an authentic view of the benefits to be derived. A comprehensive project appraisal is essential in any democratic State. This is needed not only for Baliapal in Orissa but for any other such site in this peace-loving country.

The human problem

The fact finding mission were in Baliapal on 3rd and 4th March 1986. They visited 25 populous villages and met about 35,000 people—men, women and children—in small gatherings and in mammoth congregations. The typical 'Janata curfew' was responsible for bringing out all and sundry, young men and women from the fields, weeping old ladies, children with anxious faces, and

determined people trying to grapple with the situation. Thus the widest cross-section of people with different vocations and from different social classes could be met and consulted. Prior to this tour, village-survey parties combed the area in advance, made an inventory of productive and valuable things, and brought out a comprehensive and detailed report.

The mission was shocked at the brutal callousness of the authorities towards the difficulties and anxious questions of the people. First, the people were not told where they will be settled after they are uprooted. Secondly, there was no census of the various livelihoods on which the people depend. The day before the tour, the Collector of Balasore district had gone to the area for a routine matter. Tens of thousands of people—men, women and children—had anxiously enquired of him what their fate was to be in case of evacuation. They were told that the Collector had no answer to give, as he has no

instructions from the Government. The people, who are to leave their hearth and home for good, surely have a right to such information in advance. It is shameful that the people are currently victim to wild gossip and speculation.

It will be well-nigh impossible to rehabilitate the inhabitants of the 126 villages, with their widely divergent livelihoods and various trades peculiar to this area. This area has no agricultural labourers, but agricultural labourers from neighbouring districts come here for work. The 30,000 fishermen on the sea-coast here are not only from Baliapal but from the adjacent areas too. They will be a "problem" to any administration for generations to come.

Moreover, should there be a war, and India get dragged into it through super power rivalry, this area would be on the front-line of attack and all of Orissa will be in danger as a possible target. And even if there is no war with its attendant destruction (since the peace-loving people of the world are uniting against such wars) the displacement of such vast multitude of people (as of Baliapal) from comparative comfort into destitution, can only constitute the gravest crime. The question remains of their health, education, and other democratic rights—especially the right to live in peace.

Of course, the setting up of the missile testing centre at Baliapal will also disturb the ecological balance in the region and create a source of pollution. Useful birds and insects which are necessary for the plant kingdom will leave places near the testing centre. Agricultural yield may also decrease. And, if Baliapal is indeed turned into a nuclear missile base (inferring from the Chief Minister's pronouncements) negligence there would create a most dangerous radioactive zone.

The national significance

To agree to sacrifice such an affluent, densely populated, and highly productive zone, people must be able to weigh the corresponding benefits in the balance. Will the proposed sophisticated weaponry really be conducive to the security and safety of the Indian coast, and ultimately to the Government of India's avowed aim of keeping the Indian Ocean a war-free zone? Will we also be the

country that will manufacture the fuels needed for such operations? Would it be consistent with our much-touted leadership status in the "non-aligned world"?

In the course of our investigation it was revealed that, at a short distance from Baliapal and 20 km as the crow flies, an abandoned air base at Rasgovindpur, used during World War II, is being renovated with substantial budgetary allocation. There are, together with this, the following installations in the immediate vicinity: a radar station at Niligiri, the Proof and Establishment at Chandipur, the Charbatta Air Force base in Cuttack district, the naval base and training centre at Chilika Lake, the Gopalpur naval base, the Sunabeda MiG assembling plant in Koraput district, the ammunition industry at Saintala in Bolangir district, the rocket assembling plant in nearby Madhya Pradesh, and the Kalaikunda Air Force base in West Bengal. All of these forebode that the entire quadrangle will be converted into a militarised zone. If there is war, the entire state will be converted into a graveyard.

The Government cannot dismiss all these questions and demands for definite information as beyond reply because they concern the prohibited area of 'defence'. In our opinion, it is highly improper to keep people in the dark, for it is they who suffer the consequences.

At this moment when in Europe a vast human wall of resistance is being built around the missile bases, it will be unfortunate if the people of this country silently suffer an autocratic decision of the Government. It is a matter of shame that the Government is sponsoring such a project, while claiming to be sworn champion of nuclear disarmament and world peace.

We call upon the peace-loving working people, intellectuals, scientists, men of goodwill, and all patriotic and democratic forces to raise their voices—with the people of Baliapal and of such other places as are potential militarised zones—in the interests of peace and prosperity of entire mankind.

GANGADHAR PANIGRAHI
President, G.A.S.S. Orissa

Biju Patnaik's letter to the Prime Minister

BIJU PATNAIK
LEADER OF OPPOSITION
ORISSA LEGISLATURE
ASSEMBLY

D.O. NO. 583
BHUBANESWAR
Date 2nd June, 1986

Since it has appeared in the press that location of the Test Range is to be at Baliapal in Balasore District in Orissa, I

thought it proper to bring a few facts to your notice.

It was rather sad that Shri Arun Singh, Minister of State for Defence brushed aside proposals for alternate sites although it would have obviated large scale human displacements and concomitant problems.

Andaman-Nicobar island chain was dismissed by Shri Arun Singh with a sweeping and untenable observation

that the location of the Test Range at the islands would cost 100 times more. Obviously somewhere the computer had gone awry.

A far better site on the Gujarat coast at Dwaraka was not considered feasible merely because of its proximity to Karachi and likely telemetric intervention from Pakistan. If Pakistan were to intervene electronically, surely India could easily counter it especially when Pakistan is planning its own Test Range on the coast west of Karachi.

Sagar island was dismissed on the plea that the land was "soft". I mentioned to Shri Arun Singh that he should see the Paradeep harbour in Orissa which was constructed entirely on marshy land and similar land at Sagar would not present any problem for piling or construction. No reasoning seemed to appeal to Shri Arun Singh and his technical advisors, since they firmly fixed their sight on Baliapal, in spite of avoidable large scale displacement and misery that would follow. Obviously a large chunk of avoidable human misery was of consequence to our distinguished and democratic political and scientific leaders.

I am considerably disturbed about starting an exceedingly high-cost Test Range under the aegis of the Defence Ministry, military use of which can only be had by missiles with nuclear warheads. How can such a concept be compatible with your exemplary crusade against nuclear proliferation, if India engages itself in building the vehicles for nuclear strike. How would the Prime Minister of India defend himself as the saviour of human race while preparing for nuclear war. Can we honestly say that India

has to respond to and outbid Pakistan's efforts in this direction. What then is our response to the existing Chinese nuclear launchers across Tibet which could vapourise Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and a host of other human concentrations north of the Vindhyas, in less than five minutes. Why does the Defence Department feel that Baliapal site will not some day come under the spectrum of telemetric intervention from the soil of Bangladesh through the 'good offices' of China or U.S.A. What prevents nuclear devastation being let loose on India either from Tibet or Diego Garcia in the event of nuclear conflict in our sub-continent.

In the meantime, it is not beyond comprehension that continuous explosion of American or French satellites costing over Rs. 5,000 crores, all within one year, could easily be the outcome of laser-telemetric intervention from nuclear submarines or roving satellites, thus providing far more effective disincentive to the star-war programme than thousands of International nuclear scientists voicing their strong opposition to it.

May I appeal to the Prime Minister to review the entire matter afresh. One defective Russian reactor has created havoc. Must India also participate in the ultimate 'crime' of destroying life in this Planet.

When millions of men and women all over the World are on the march to protest against every form of tool and vehicle that may lead to nuclear holocaust, would your Government consider it amiss if tens of thousands of people of Orissa join their hapless brothers and sisters of Baliapal to prevent planting of seeds of nuclear war'.

Routroy's letter to the Prime Minister

Nilamoni Routroy
Ex-Chief Minister of Orissa. Old Station Bazar
Bhubaneswar-751 006
Dt. 16.6.86

Dear Prime Minister,

I believe you are aware of the tense situation that has been developing in Orissa specially in Balasore District due to the recent declaration of the Defence Department that the decision of the Union Government to locate the National Test Range for testing rockets, missiles and other long range weapons at Baliapal is final. I was shocked at such a declaration specially on the face of your promise for sympathetic consideration of the matter given to the delegation of the affected people that waited upon you under the leadership of Shri Madhu Dandavate, M.P. on 20th March '86. It is difficult to imagine how this could happen. I am led to believe that you are not fully apprised of the seriousness of the situation by the leader of the State Government who represent the interests of the people. It is

not a simple and ordinary question of acquisition of some lands on payment of due compensation for the location of a defence project but it is something more than that involving the life and hopes of over one hundred thousand self-employed farmers, fishermen and workers.

I have prepared a note on Test Range for testing Arms and Ammunitions in different countries and I am enclosing the same for your perusal. In it you will please find that nowhere in the World any country had shown such disregard and contempt for the interests and sufferings of masses of people as is being shown here by the Defence Department. There is no parallel instance to cite in the World. Under these circumstances we implore you to be sympathetic to the grievances and sufferings of the people. No decision is sacrosanct and more so when it adversely affects the interest of the masses of people. However tiresome, boring and vexatious their tale of grievances may be, these have to be heard and redressed.