

Where West Asian Policy of India is heading to ?

India's growing relations with Saudi Arabia, the political importance the Indian Prime Minister has given to his recent visit to Saudi Arabia and the agreements he signed, once again, brings the question to the fore: what is India's West Asian Policy?

There was a time when the Indian rulers were claiming that India is one among the developing countries of West Asia standing by the Palestinian people struggling for their Home land against the Israeli occupation. But, in practice, it became clear that these claims were empty and the Indian Govt's policy is one of remaining silent or supportive towards the imperialist policies of interference and domination. The West Asia is broadly divided into the countries which are in the camp or subservient to the imperialist powers; the countries in contradiction with the policies of plunder, interference and domination in one form or other by the imperialist powers and the countries and people faced with direct invasions by the imperialist powers. The Indian rulers are claiming to be maintaining the balanced relations with all these types of countries, while, at the same time, remaining pro-imperialist.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 1990s was the time when the imperialists, more particularly the US imperialists, introduced the policy of so called Globalisation as a tool of economic domination over the world. The Indian rulers had readily agreed to carry this policy on their back. This was a time when the imperialist exploitation and control had further intensified in our country. Quite naturally these developments have had its reflection in the foreign policy of Indian rulers.

The Indian rulers who were boasting of standing by the just cause of Palestinian people at one time are now developing good relations, with the Israeli rulers in the name of pursuing a "balanced" approach. These relations got strengthened and extended to economic and military spheres in the period of UPA regime and gained a further momentum in today's Modi led BJP regime. In a few days, for the first time, the Indian Prime Minister is scheduled to visit Israel.

The US imperialists invaded and occupied Afghanistan using the plane crash on September 11, 2001 into the WTC in the US as a plea. They had declared that they have every right to attack any country in the world if it threatens or supposed to threaten the interests of US. They called it as a 'War against global terrorism' and asked other countries to join this. This war, in the main, was directed against the Muslim countries. The Indian rulers did not feel ashamed to support the war cry and blatant war of invasion and occupation by the US imperialism. The US imperialists had resorted to armed invasion and occupation against Iraq on the false plea that Iraq was in possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction. They had illegally arrested, tried and brutally murdered the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The Indian Govt had not condemned these heinous acts. When the economic sanctions were imposed illegally against Iran by the US and other imperialist powers on the basis of false allegation that Iran was producing the nuclear weapons, the Indian rulers had only implemented them obediently. Indian rulers had withdrawn from the Iran-Pakistan-India oil pipe line project succumbing to the pressures from the US. The Indian rulers had never questioned the interventionist, hegemonic activities of US in the countries of West Asia like Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Libya, and Syria. They never condemned the attempts of US and other imperialist powers to use the terrorist groups to destabilise the regimes and again resort to military actions in the name of 'fighting terrorism' – all as a part of single design to topple the regimes and installing the regimes of their choice there. All this only show that the West Asian policy of Indian rulers is only guided by the interests and dictates of imperialist powers in general and the US imperialism in particular.

There is one more important development. The Indian rulers had become a part of the US strategy for hegemonism. It began in the period of Congress regime and assumed a dangerous form with India joining the US led US- Japan and Australia Alliance. The present BJP regime is moving fast and in many spheres to implement the strategic tasks of this alliance. It is co-ordinating its actions with US imperialism.

While maintaining relations with all countries of West Asia, the Indian rulers are focussing their special attention on developing the relations with the countries like Saudi Arabia, United Emirates and Israel. It is needless to say that these countries are a part of US camp.

The Indian rulers are continuing the economic relations with the Saudi Arabia for the last more than two decades. The Manmohan Singh regime had appointed a special Envoy for West Asia. King

Abdulla Abdulaziz's visit to India in 2006 gave an impetus to the relations between India and Saudi Arabia. In about 30 year's time, the Indian PM had visited Saudi Arabia in 2010. On this eve, the heads of both countries had signed the "Riyadh Declaration" setting the framework for enhanced co-operation in the security, defence and economic spheres. Since then, there has been a marked improvement in security co-operation and intelligence sharing between India and Saudi Arabia.

After the Sept.11, 2001 (WTC crash) incident, the Indian rulers had further deepened the security ties with the Sunni Muslim countries and called it as counter –terror co-operation. In the course of his visit to United Emirates and Saudi Arabia, the PM Narendra Modi had focussed on anti-terrorism, in the main.

In the context of Modi's visit to Saudi Arabia, the heads of two countries had declared their resolve to co-operate in the fight against terrorism. It is as curious as India joining the US in fighting global terrorism. The entire world knows that the US imperialists are the fountain-head of terrorism. They had created, funded and armed countless terrorist groups in the world and in several West Asian countries, including Syria and used them to realise their aim of domination. Al-Qaeda, Taliban's and even ISIS are only the off shoots of their policy. Using the terrorist groups to create anarchy and destabilisation and go in for military actions on the plea of saving the countries from terrorism are the two faces of single imperialist policy. The Saudi Arabia's rulers who are a part of US camp in West Asia are propping up the Wahhabi Islamic groups throughout the world. Many terrorist groups operating in several countries of the world, including the West Asia are inspired by the Wahhabi branch of Islam. The Saudi Arabian rulers are co-ordinating their activities in the direction of helping the strategic designs of US imperialism. Everyone knows that the Saudi-funded terrorist groups are active in Syria. The war coalition led by the Saudi Arabian rulers is engaged in bombing Yemen for the last one year in the name of fighting Iran backed Shia rebels. These attacks have created Chaos-humanitarian catastrophe and brought lakhs of protesting people into the streets in Yemen. So, it is not difficult to understand what sort of fight the Indian rulers can wage against terrorism by joining hands with the Saudi-Arabian rulers.

Of the 11 million Indians working in West Asia nearly 3 million are in Saudi Arabia. This provides a big source of foreign remittances for India. Some observers think that the desire to protect this source may be a reason for the special interest being shown by the Indian rulers in Saudi Arabia. But, the Saudi Arabia today is passing through a serious economic crisis owing to a serious fall in oil prices as well as sales. It is facing a serious budget deficit which was nearly 100 billion dollars in 2015, forcing the govt to cut the spending. The unemployment rate in the country is 11.5 percent and it may go up in the coming days. In a country of 30.8 million (2014) population the foreign workers now constitute 10.1 millions, ie, nearly third of Saudi Arabia's population. In the face of serious economic crisis, unemployment problem and growing layoffs the possibility of foreign workers losing jobs is greater. The construction sector where 45 workers are foreigners is now in crisis. Already, the foreign workers are affected by it. The Saudi govt is planning to gradually nationalise the sectors like taxis, tourism, real estate, jewellery and the vegetable markets to create nearly 130 lakh jobs for Saudis. It is planning to ban the sales of Mobile cell. This process is likely to push out or close the jobs for foreign workers forcing these workers to leave the country or opt for the low paid and hard working jobs. The Indian govt is neither in a position to provide jobs for the workers who may come back from Saudi Arabia nor to elicit guarantees from the Saudi govt to retain the Indian workers in jobs with proper security, wage and working conditions.

But the real problem is: How to develop or maintain its relations with other countries in a way that serves the strategy of imperialists in general and US imperialism for World domination has become the main concern of the Indian govt. Once the Indian rulers had imprisoned themselves in this framework of the policy there is little scope for the Indian rulers to think about the interests of our country and people. The West-Asian Policy of the Indian rulers will inevitably alienate India from the anti-imperialist, anti-hegemonic, pro-peace and democratic forces and people of the region. This is not the kind of development our people want. The masses of Indian people continue to stand by the Palestinian people fighting for their Home land against the Israeli Zionism and all the people of West Asia opposing the imperialist policies of intervention, domination and war.
