

Obama in Vietnam:

Part of Designs to Isolate China

The drum beaters of US imperialism have described the visit of US president Obama in May 2016 to Vietnam as “historic”. The US deputy National Security Advisor Benjamin Rhodes noted that “it does show how history can work in unpredictable ways”. Obama said that his visit has shown that “hearts can change”. The Vietnamese leaders saw in the visit “the arrival of a warm spring and a new chapter in the relations between the two countries”.

But there is nothing historic or unpredictable. This was the third visit of a US president to Vietnam since the restoration of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and USA.

Vietnam is known for its valiant protracted and victorious war for national liberation from the armed invasion and occupation of Vietnam by the French, Japanese and US imperialisms. For decades, the heroic people of Vietnam stood as a great inspiration for the working class, oppressed nations and people of the world. The decades-long national liberation struggle was led by the Vietnamese Workers Party and Ho Chi Minh.

However it took no much time for the independent, democratic Vietnam to take the road of capitalist transformation. The imperialists in general and US imperialism in particular have used thousand and one methods to give momentum and direction to this transformation in Vietnam. The collapse of Social imperialism, the capitalist road taken by China and unresolved disputes between Vietnam and China on the right over some islands in South China Sea provided favourable atmosphere for US imperialists to again enter the scene and fish in the troubled waters.

The US has established diplomatic relations with Vietnam in 1995. Bill Clinton, then the US president visited Vietnam in 2000. The US had partially lifted the embargo on the sale of arms to Vietnam in 2014. Now, when the US is going all out in its attempts to gain control over the Asia-Pacific region as well as seas and strategic sea routes, it proposes to raise its relations with Vietnam to further level. The present visit of Obama to Vietnam and the US decision to totally lift the embargo on the sale of lethal arms to Vietnam came as an outcome of several rounds of talks. It is also reported that Vietnam too is inclined to allow Pentagon some rotating access to key Vietnamese ports as a part of the deal.

The US president made the boosting of morale and the activities of dissidents, the so-called human rights activists or the ‘victims’ of human and civil rights abuses in Vietnam by meeting them as an important part of his programme in Vietnam. Obama said that “there are still areas of significant concerns in terms of free speech, freedom of assembly, accountability with respect to Government”. Co-ordinating with Obama, the human rights activists too have intensified their campaign. Human rights watch official said “Vietnam has demonstrated itself that it does not deserve the close ties the US is offering Detaining or preventing civil society from meeting president Obama is not just an insult to the president, it is also a human rights abuse in itself, a deprivation of right of freedom of expression and freedom of movement”.

The way Obama sought to conduct his visit to Vietnam is not all in keeping with the principle of equality between nations. It is not in the way the Head of one independent country visiting another independent country. The US embassy in Vietnam, pro-US elements, the US agents in Vietnam and a section of the media acted like the organisers and mouth-pieces of dissidence in Vietnam and projected Obama as the head of a big power. On one side, Obama sat in parleys, addressed the press and signed the statements with the Vietnamese leaders and on the other side, behaved like a big power and virtual leader of dissident and opposition forces in Vietnam.

Likewise, the US is using the lifting of ban on arms sales as an economic and political tool to pressurize the Vietnamese leaders to bend their knees before US imperialism. The US is also using the human rights card for the same purpose. It is clear from what Obama said: “Sale of arms would depend on Vietnam’s human rights commitments and would be made on a case – case basis”.

Obama assured that the lifting of ban on arms sales is not directed against China. But no one would be convinced by their claim. Obama said, “Big nations should not bully small ones”. These are sermons from

a monstrous ghost. Entire world knows that this sermon applies to US imperialism which is engaged in all sorts of heinous crimes against the nations, people and humanity as a whole in its attempts to impose its hegemony over the world.

Thus the human rights and arms sales are two important tools in the hands of US imperialists to mould the Vietnamese policies and actions in the interests of US hegemonic designs. No one need be under any illusion that the US is supporting the right of Vietnam over the island in the South China Sea. The US is not at all bothered about it. It is interested in widening the gulf and developing hostility between Vietnam and China and drive Vietnam into its own embrace. It is a part of the US policy to use every country, every dispute as tool to strengthen its own domination over the seas, strategic sea routes and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole including Vietnam. So, the Vietnamese leaders are only painting tar on and wiping out the glorious past of Vietnamese people by moving on the road of dependence and subservience to imperialism.
