

“Quad” – In the Service of US Imperialism

Australia, Japan, India and US held a high level official meeting at Philippine capital Manila on 13-11-2017. They pledged to maintain “rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific and respect the international law, freedom of navigation and over flight”. The foreign ministry of Australia added that the four countries promised to uphold “maritime security in the Pacific” and even “address threats” including North Korea’s “nuclear and missile programme”. This quadrilateral meeting has been colloquially called and the “quad”.

Though they have not mentioned china by name, this Indo-Pacific bloc is intended to counter China’s growing influence and isolate it. This formation of a military and strategic bloc was first proposed in 2007 by the US imperialism during the joint naval exercised called Exercise Malabar”, which was supported by Japan, Australia and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. As the China opposed the move in letter sent to the capitals of four countries asking who they were training to fight with, Australia withdrew. The proposal was kept in limbo.

By that time India and US formed a strategic partnership. It conducted joint naval exercises which were joined by Japan, Australia and Singapore. Since coming to power in 2014, Narendra Modi government unabashedly declare that Washington is a strategic ally of India. It allowed to use its military facilities and ports by the US military under the Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016. The US imperialism turned India into a frontline state in its hegemonic designs in Asia as a part of its policy of “pivot to Asia”.

Trump administration is for continuation of this policy. The Secretary of state Rex Tillerson in a lecture “defining relationship with India for the next century”, proposed addition of Australia to Indo-US-Japan initiatives to contain China. Now as the Australia asked for the formation of quad, it came into existence.

Obama administration coined the term “Indo-Pacific” in 2011 and launched pivot to Asia, which involved building up of military power in the region and use of arm-twisting to ensure that Japan, Australia and India collaborated with its aim to contain China.

The joint statement of quad used diplomatic jargon to disguise its confrontational stand to weaken China. The “rule-based order” means those dictated by the US dominated alliances and financial institutions. “Freedom of navigation and over flight” mea-ning challenging Chinese terri- torial claims in South China sea.

As regards South China Sea, there are untenable claims and counterclaims. It can only be resolved through dialogue between the concerned countries. The US has not ratified the UN Convention on the Law of Sea. Yet it talks of rule-based order. It only means that whatever it dictates are the rules.

Freedom of navigation is also spurious argument. At present the US navy can choke off the trade flows in sea lines to South China sea. It only hurts China. And for this very reason, China will not disrupt sea trade. The US wants its military intervention to masquerade as an act of protecting freedom.

The four countries also agreed “to work together to address the challenges of countering terrorism”. Countering terrorism is the justification for the US imperialism to intervene in the countries of this region.

The policy of the Indian government of tailing behind the US imperialism is fraught with dangers. India’s participation in the quad would deal a body blow to Sino-Indian relations. The bilateral issues that can be resolved through dialogue gets complicated and becomes bone of contention. Among the four, only India has land border with China and it is a long standing dispute between them. The other two members –Japan and Australia- have treaty relation with the US – that is in the event of any attack on them, the US have to stand with them. India has no such treaty. In contrast, India has to share the burden of defence of other three members.

The quad tied India to the hegemonic plans of the US imperialism and dragging India onto the side of US imperialism in the event of a conflict. This is detrimental to the interests of the country and people.

The Indian ministry of External Affairs said it had “agreed that free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region serves the long term interests of all the countries in the region and the world at large” This is nothing but self-deception and deceiving people. It only helps US imperialism to stabilise its military and economic empire in the region.

Every sane Indian should oppose the Indian participation in the “quad” and demand to withdraw from it.
