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Some Aspects of the International Situation

GREEK STRUGGLE

The power yielded by finance capital is on full display in Greece. The multinational creditor agencies, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Union (EU) are using the financial mire that Greece is in, a result of the capitalist structural crisis, to trample upon the sovereignty of that country. Leveraging financial controls, they are imposing ‘austerity’ measures, contrary to the anti-austerity platform on which the people of Greece had voted for Syriza to form the government.

In the elections held last year, Syriza convincingly defeated the established two ‘main’ political parties, PASOK and New Democracy (ND), who had alternately ruled the country since decades. Both the parties, though politically labeled as conservatives and social democrats, do not differ much in their economic policies. Their adherence to neo-liberal economic policies and kowtowing to the dictates of the EU, the ECB and the IMF, together called the troika, alienated them from the people of Greece. A reflection of the popular alienation and anger is found in the consistent working class struggles that had taken place in the country in the past few years. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE), and the trade union confederation PAME, led many militant struggles and had to face targeted attacks from the ruling classes. Withstanding all these attacks, the KKE was able to maintain its electoral strength, which in itself is no mean achievement. Running out of patience with the governments headed by both the parties, a considerable number of Greeks voted for Syriza, considered as a Left-wing party which advocated an anti-austerity platform.

Catapulted to power on an anti-austerity platform, Syriza, was unable to cope with the pressures exerted by the international finance capital, compromised to an extent and had accepted some of the bailout conditions. But the troika of the IMF European Central Bank and European Commission is unwilling to tolerate even this semblance of resistance.

The Troika gave an ultimatum to accept their harsh conditions for a bailout for five more months. Faced with this, the Syriza government decided to hold a referendum which will ask the people whether the bailout terms should be accepted or not. The Greek parliament has voted for the referendum to be held on July 5. Whatever the outcome, the Greek struggle is an important event in the ongoing struggle against austerity and neo-liberalism and in defence of popular sovereignty. This is a struggle which will require Greece coming out of the Euro if it is to defend national sovereignty.

The same features can be discerned even in the snap polls held in Denmark government on June 18, 2015. The unpopular economic policies pursued by the government, as a result of which the country could not decisively come out of recession had hurt the ruling party and had benefited the right-wing parties. Danish People’s Party, which contested the elections on an anti-immigration, anti-Islamic, anti-European Union platform, appealing to nationalist sentiments put up a good show in these elections.

Similar formula is being put to use by France’s right-wing National Front, which is running strongly in opinion polls, as well as by similar parties in Finland, Sweden and Britain. In the recently concluded elections in UK, the right-wing Independence Party got nearly 13 percent of the vote, while the

Conservatives were re-elected. The Scottish National Party (SNP) that contested the elections for independence to Scotland and against austerity measures swept the elections in Scotland, a traditional bastion of the Labour Party. *The New York Times*, in its report (June 19, 2015) quotes a political analyst: “National angst and economic crises, feed off one another in unpredictable ways”.

On the other hand, in the local body elections held in Spain, the Podemos, an anti-establishment party that had emerged from the anti-austerity struggle of the *indignados*, gained substantial votes and won the mayoralties of two of the most populous cities, Madrid and Barcelona. The two traditional parties conservative PP and social-democrat PSOE have suffered due to economic stagnation, record-high unemployment of almost 25 percent over the last two administrations and corruption allegations.

The political lessons that Europe offers are: (i) there is an increasing popular discontent against the austerity measures introduced by the ruling classes as a way out of the crisis; (ii) wherever the Left forces played an active role in leading this discontent, the people reposed their faith in them; (iii) wherever the Left was weak, the right-wing parties gained.

RACISM IN THE US

The economic crisis also fueled the *Occupy movements*, which caught popular imagination by bringing a host of issues, like, inequalities, immigration policies, racism, employment, out-sourcing, crises, capitalism/socialism, etc., for discussion in many of the developed countries. Though they had fizzled out from their initial heights, their contribution cannot be discarded.

While the Tea Party movement in the US, was a right-wing reaction against increased governmental spending as a way out of crisis, another extreme social expression is the spurt in racial attacks, the latest being the attack on a Afro-American church in Charleston, in which nine people were shot dead. *New York Times* (May 5, 2015) notes that sixty-one percent of Americans now say race relations in the US are bad. “That figure is up sharply from 44 percent after the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown and the unrest that followed in Ferguson in August (2014), and 43 percent in December (2014). 44 percent of Americans think race relations are worsening, up from 36 percent in December (2014)”.

The recent economic crisis more than ever proves that racial bias in the US is not just a social oppression, but also comes together packed with economic exploitation. A recent report in the *New York Times* (June 20, 2015) notes: “The Great Recession wiped out twice as much black wealth as it did white...There are 1.5 million black men ‘missing’ in America, because they are either dead or in prison. Black people were overwhelmingly excluded from the largest opportunities for wealth creation in the 20th century, from federally subsidised homeownership after World War II to the job training programs that created millions of middle-class livelihoods. Life expectancy rates for black Americans lag those of white Americans, and infant mortality rates are higher”. The wealth of white households was 13 times the median wealth of black households in 2013, compared with eight times the wealth in 2010, according to a study conducted by Pew Research Center. These inequalities made the Pew comment that “racial and ethnic wealth gaps in 2013 are at or about their highest levels observed in the 30 years for which we have data”. These growing inequalities are widening the hate lines already prevalent in the US society.

Indeed, growing income inequalities in the US and most of the developed world are not just visible across racial lines, but are also glaringly visible highlighting the class divisions. According to the OECD Report, (*In It Together: Why Less Inequality Benefits All*, May 21, 2015), income inequality in many developed countries has reached an all-time high, along with the growth of social inequality that has been accompanied by the growth of part-time and contract labour. For the OECD countries as a whole, the top 10 percent of the population owns 50 percent of the wealth, the middle 50 percent owns about 47 percent, and the bottom 40 percent owns just three percent. As the *Report* notes, a large portion of the increase in income inequality has occurred in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. The United States is the fourth most unequal country in the OECD. In the US, the top 10 percent controls 76 percent of all the

wealth, while the bottom 60 percent owns just 2.5 percent. The top five percent of households in the US have about 91 times more wealth than the average household.

It is in this background of growing inequalities, we find racial attacks and anti-immigration sentiments growing across the world, strengthening the right-wing, fundamentalist forces. The ruling classes, obviously do not intend to address the root cause of these problems, as that means encouraging an open challenge to their economic and political hegemony. Instead, to ensure their hegemony is preserved and to ward off the Left threat, they overtly and covertly encourage the growth of right-wing, fundamentalist forces, even terrorism.

PROMOTING FUNDAMENTALISM

Nowhere is this more glaringly visible than in the West Asian region (the Middle East as the US and other developed countries term it), where all the sectarian, terrorist organisations in the region owe their birth and growth to imperialism.

A cache of classified documents (DIA report, formerly classified ‘SECRET//NOFORN’ and dated August 12, 2012) obtained from the US Department of Defence and State Department by *Judicial Watch*, shows that as early as 2012, US intelligence predicted the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS), but instead of clearly delineating the group as an enemy, the report envisions the terror group as a US strategic asset. It makes the following summary points: “(i) Al-Qaeda drives the opposition in Syria; (ii) the West identifies with the opposition; (iii) the establishment of a nascent Islamic State became a reality only with the rise of the Syrian insurgency; (iv) the establishment of a ‘Salafist Principality’ in Eastern Syria is ‘exactly’ what the external powers supporting the opposition want (identified as ‘the West, Gulf Countries, and Turkey’) in order to weaken the Assad government; (v) ‘safe havens’ are suggested in areas conquered by Islamic insurgents along the lines of the Libyan model; (vi) Iraq is identified with ‘Shia expansion’”.

These documents re-establish the role of imperialism in promoting fundamentalism, and terrorist organisations. It is by now well established that organisations and groups like Al Qaeda, Taliban, Muslim Brotherhood and Jamat-i-Islami were all once funded by the Western powers, led by the US and its Saudi allies to serve their interests. These Frankensteins created by them are wreaking havoc in the entire region, fanning sectarian violence and dividing the countries on sectarian lines. In this background, the hollowness of ‘victory claims’ made by the US stands thoroughly exposed.

Obama rode to power in the US on a strong anti-war platform denouncing both the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He promised to end the wars and withdraw US forces from these two countries. Finding a flaw with the imperial strategy adopted by his predecessor, he had announced: “Indeed as we end today’s wars, we will focus on a broader range of challenges and opportunities, including the security and prosperity of the Asia Pacific” (Obama’s introductory note to Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, 2012). Tom Donilon, the National Security Advisor was more categorical: “It was clear that there was an imbalance in the projection and focus of US power...the president deemed US military power to be over-weighted in the Middle East, yet under-weighted in regions such as the Asia-Pacific” (speech at the Asia Society in New York, as reported by the American Forces Press Service, March 12, 2013). This view is in fact supported by many influential political commentators like Fareed Zakaria, who do not mince words: “The Obama administration needs to start believing in its own grand strategy. Let the Iraqis and Saudis feud, let Yemen continue in its five-decade-long civil war, let Iran waste resources in Syria. Washington should focus its energies, attention and efforts on Asia”. (“Whatever happened to Obama’s pivot to Asia?” April 16, 2015 *Washington Post*).

REBALANCING TO ASIA-PACIFIC

But with the situation in West Asia not turning out to the expectations of the US, there appears to be some dilemma and concern on how to prioritise their strategy of ‘rebalancing’ to Asia-Pacific, which is expressed in the Quadrennial Defence Review, 2014. “These priorities include rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region to preserve peace and stability in the region; maintaining a strong commitment to security and stability in Europe and the Middle East; sustaining a global approach to countering violent extremists and terrorist threats, with an emphasis on the Middle East and Africa...” (p. v). This points to the US inability to entirely leave the West Asian region, as envisaged earlier.

Many feel, as Fareed Zakaria had tellingly titled his above quoted article, that the present US administration is getting sucked into the quagmire of West Asia and hence not paying sufficient attention to synergise its ‘strategy’ of ‘Asia pivot’. They have an additional fear – the state of the US economy, which refuses to ‘take off’ from its prolonged recession. Even in the latest quarter, the US economy contrary to predictions contracted in the first quarter as the government slashed its GDP estimate to show it shrinking at a 0.7 percent annual rate instead of the estimated 0.2 percent growth. According to the Budget Control Act of the US, both defence and non-defence spendings will see cuts from 2013 to 2021 to balance its deficits, until the economy is truly on the path of growth. Along with the US Department of Defence, many ‘hawks’ and this includes lot many Republicans and conservatives, do not want the government to cut defence spendings at any cost. They feel that it compromises US positioning as a ‘superpower’. Together with the ‘rising China’, they are worried that this would shift the balance of power in global affairs away from the US and to its disadvantage. In order to prevent this from happening, they want the administration to concentrate on its strategic ‘rebalancing’ act, without bothering about cost cutting.

The conservative think-tank Center for Strategic and International Studies, (CSIS) Asia Program exhorts the administration in its report *“Pivot 2.0” How the Administration and Congress Can Work Together to Sustain American Engagement in Asia to 2016*: “Opinion surveys demonstrate that a majority of Americans consider Asia the most important region to U.S. interests and a majority of Asian experts support the Obama administration’s goal of a “pivot” or “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific region...Asia policy remains largely bipartisan – perhaps the most bipartisan foreign policy issue in Washington. It is therefore critical – and practical – to ask that the White House and the Republican leadership in the Congress chart a common course on policy toward Asia for the next two years” (p. v).

Obama readily ceded to these concerns stating that rebalancing to Asia-Pacific is his highest priority and “reductions in US defense spending will not – I repeat, will not – come at the expense of the Asia Pacific”.

Rebalancing to Asia-Pacific or Asia pivot is very important to the US interests to maintain its hegemony. The *Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, 2012 report clearly mentions: “US economic and security interests are inextricably linked to developments in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean region and South Asia, creating a mix of evolving challenges and opportunities. Accordingly, while the US military will continue to contribute to security globally, we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region...We will emphasize our existing alliances, which provide a vital foundation for Asia-Pacific security. We will also expand our networks of cooperation with emerging partners throughout the Asia-Pacific to ensure collective capability and capacity for securing common interests. The United States is also investing in a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor and provider of security in the broader Indian Ocean region”. Further, “The maintenance of peace, stability, the free flow of commerce, and of US influence in this dynamic region will depend in part on an underlying balance of military capability and presence. Over the long term, China’s emergence as a regional power will have the potential to affect the US economy and our security in a variety of ways (p. 2, emphasis added).

The *Quadrennial Defence Review of 2014* was more explicit: “The Asia-Pacific region is increasingly central to global commerce, politics, and security. Defense spending in this region continues to rise. As

nations in the region continue to develop their military and security capabilities, there is greater risk that tensions over long-standing sovereignty disputes or claims to natural resources will spur disruptive competition or erupt into conflict, reversing the trends of rising regional peace, stability, and prosperity. In particular, the rapid pace and comprehensive scope of China's military modernization continues, combined with a relative lack of transparency and openness from China's leaders regarding both military capabilities and intentions...Traditional anchors of regional security such as Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and growing powers such as India and Indonesia, are taking on additional leadership roles to foster increased communication and shared understanding. (Page 4) And: "Our economic strength is closely tied to a stable international order, underwritten by the US military's role and that of our allies and partners in ensuring freedom of access and the free flow of commerce globally" (p. 9).

The pre-eminence of military is made crystal clear by the *Review*: "Whenever possible, we seek to pursue these interests through diplomacy, economic development, cooperation and engagement, and through the power of our ideas...We will ensure that our military remains global, capable, and sustainable so that *our diplomacy can always be reinforced as needed by credible military force*" (p. 11, emphasis added).

DEFENCE BUDGET ENHANCED

The Department of Defence with this logic succeeded in getting its budget proposals accepted by the Congress with a 47-percent increase over 2013 for military training and education to "build our influence with the next generation of military leaders". Similarly USAID, notorious for financing destabilising activities in countries that are against the US interests also received a boost of \$810 million for this year to promote "stable free societies, create markets and trade partners for the United States and foster good will abroad" in this region (*Congress Hearings on Asia-Pacific Region, 2015*, pp. 7, 15).

Armed with necessary finances, the military is moving ahead with its rebalancing act. National Security Advisor Donilon stated: "Sixty percent of the U.S. naval fleet will be based in the Pacific by 2020 and US Pacific Command's modern capabilities focus will shift to submarines, fifth-generation fighter jets such as F-22s and F-35s, and reconnaissance platforms". The US Army is also supposed to realign its I Corps in Washington to this region. Further, the US has worked with its allies and partners to initiate a new 'Defense Guidelines review with Japan; revise plans for wartime Operational Command transition in South Korea; make a new Force Posture Agreement with Australia; and sign a new Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines'.

Donilon spills the beans when he explains the reasons for this enhanced military presence and alliances in this region: "Fostering alliances and continued military presence in the Asia-Pacific region has set the stage for the centerpiece of US economic rebalancing, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)". The TPP, as Donilon explains is a 'high-standard agreement with Asia-Pacific economies from Chile and Peru to New Zealand and Singapore', which now involves 12 countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, Canada and Mexico. These 12 countries represent an 'annual trading relationship of \$1.4 trillion' with the US. Obama explains the TPP as necessary to "lower barriers, open markets, export goods, and create good jobs for our people...and TPP is just one part of our overall focus on growing the global economy." (*Obama's address in University of Queensland November 15, 2014*). The phrase 'focus on growing the global economy', in reality means, 'focus on growing the US economy', as it eyes this region with a middle-class consisting of more than one billion and 40 percent of the global economy. The CSIS Report states: "TPP would help establish a modern set of commercial rules for the Asia Pacific, where US firms have a large and growing stake. And TPP reinforces the American presence in the region, 'embedding' the United States as a Pacific power (p. 1).

This TPP, which the US president considered to be a key element in his 'rebalancing' to Asia-Pacific received a setback in the Congress vote, when his own party representatives, the Democrats, refused to

endorse it. This had upset the entire timetable for its conclusion by this year end. Larry Summers, a former director of the National Economic Council in the White House, wrote that unless the trade legislation votes were successfully revisited, it would ‘doom’ the TPP. “It would leave the grand strategy of rebalancing US foreign policy toward Asia with no meaningful nonmilitary component”. This left a big question mark on what Obama had hoped to leave behind as his legacy in foreign policy. Ashton Carter, the current US Secretary of Defence, tells us what importance Obama had accorded to the TPP, “TPP is as important to him as a new aircraft carrier” (Interview to Voice of America, April 6, 2015).

INDIA: LINCHPIN

India was always considered a linchpin to this entire act of rebalancing. Former US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said as much in New Delhi on June 6, 2012 “After a decade of war, we are developing a new defence strategy – a central feature of which is ‘rebalancing’ toward the Asia-Pacific region...Cooperation with India is a linchpin in this strategy”. The *Sustaining Global Leadership* document details: “The United States is also investing in a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor and provider of security in the broader Indian Ocean region (p. 2)”. Joe Biden, the US Vice President, explains the reasons: “India is increasingly looking east as a force for security and growth in Southeast Asia and beyond. To us that’s welcome news. We encourage it. We welcome India’s engagement in the region, and we welcome its efforts to develop new trade and transportation links by land and by sea in the area” (Address to George Washington University, July 19, 2013).

Carter states how the Look East policy of India dovetails with the US policy of rebalancing to Asia-Pacific. “Act East policy, India will focus on improving relations with Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other East Asian countries. And the US rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region recognizes the increasing importance of Asian nations to the global economy. These two things come together when it comes to maritime security, maritime domain awareness”. And the *Sustaining Global Leadership* document states: “The United States is also investing in a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor and provider of security in the broader Indian Ocean region (p. 2)”.

The US business and ruling classes are more than happy with the victory of BJP in the 2014 general elections. The CSIS Report does not hide its glee: “After suffering through a rough patch in the last four years, the American and Indian governments *have moved quickly* in recent months to repair the relationship. The American development, business, and strategic communities are engaging India with renewed vigor and *finding a more receptive audience in India’s new government*. India’s new prime minister, Narendra Modi, had a successful visit to the United States in September 2014. As evidenced by the joint statement issued at the conclusion of the visit, India is more willing to engage with the United States on important strategic issues in Asia, including maritime security in the South China Sea and on North Korea’s nuclear program. This marks a new strategic direction from New Delhi that is aligned with America’s hopes for our growing partnership...There has been progress on a few economic issues. The Modi government has increased foreign investment limits in a few sectors including defense and railways. Foreign investment rules around construction projects have been relaxed. And there have been important, though by no means comprehensive, changes to the administration of cross-border taxation policies. As of this writing, another key foreign investment cap – in insurance – may also be lifted in the coming days. Even in the area of intellectual property rights (IPR), we are seeing some subtle moves...in late September (2014), the United States and India agreed to hold annual discussions on intellectual property rights, which were quickly followed by the first meeting of the US-India Trade Policy Forum (TPF), led by Ambassador Michael Froman and Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman, in several years. The TPF included a session focused on IPR (p. 11)”.

GROWING DEFENCE TIES

Further: “America has become one of India’s largest defense suppliers. We conduct numerous joint exercises. And we see India far more willing – particularly after Prime Minister Modi’s election – to enunciate a clearer delineation of her strategic regional interests. After a decade of slow, plodding progress, we sometimes forget how quickly US-India strategic ties can move forward when we have *political alignment*...Prime Minister Modi has also *engaged in effective outreach* to other key partners in Asia including Japan, Australia, and Vietnam. The United States already has an active Japan-US- India trilateral partnership, which may be elevated to minister level per the US-India joint statement issued following Modi’s visit to Washington in September 2014. We should also look for ways to support India’s growing relationship with these other Asian partners” (p. 13).

It is with these designs that India is embraced by the US in the name of strategic partnership. The ten-year Defence Framework Agreement signed by India and the US on June 4, 2015, highlights the growth of defence cooperation between the two countries. This agreement is an “outgrowth of a meeting that was held between President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January”, as the statement released by US Department of Defence mentions. And out of that meeting grew the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative.

Obama is clear when he states the necessity for rebalancing – to ensure the growth of US economy and benefit the big corporates. He thus unambiguously states that the US will “keep opposing the preferences for state-owned companies”. This is reflected in the Indo-US defence agreement too. In the words of Carter, “they are not things that can be dictated by the governments; we try to involve industry ... agreed to pursue co-development and co-production projects that will offer tangible opportunities for American defense industries to build defense partnership with the Indian industries”. With the Indian government now easing the norms for FDI in defence, it is taking an active interest in promoting private players in defence industries, to enter joint-ventures with foreign corporates. Already big Indian corporates like the Tatas, Reliance (both the Ambani brothers), Mahindra and L&T are showing keen interest in lapping up the opportunity. (For more details see *Aspects on Indian Economy, No. 61*)

As a result of the strengthening of Indo-US defense relationship, not only defence deals between the two countries had increased, but also the number of dialogues, military exercises, personnel exchanges, and armaments cooperation. The *Report to Congress on US-India Security Cooperation, November, 2011* notes: “Since 2002, India has signed more than 20 Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases for defense articles and services such as C-17 and C-130J aircraft, TPQ-37 radars, Self-Protection Suites (SPS) for VVIP aircraft, specialized tactical equipment, Harpoon missiles, Sensor-Fuzed Weapons, and carrier flight and test pilot school training. In less than a decade, and starting at zero, we have seen the FMS program grow to a combined total case value of approximately \$6 billion”.

“US-India military exercises have grown dramatically in size, scope and sophistication. We now have regular exercises across all services that help to deepen our military and defense relationships. In FY11, there were 56 cooperative events across all Services – *more than India conducted with any other country*. Our navies conduct four exercises annually: MALABAR, HABU NAG (naval aspects of amphibious operations), SPITTING COBRA (explosive ordnance destruction focus), and SALVEX (diving and salvage)...In alternate years, MALABAR has been a multinational exercise, in the past including the navies of Japan, Australia, and Singapore. Exercise SHATRUJEET is an annual, reciprocal, company-sized, ground field training exercise that could easily be expanded in size and scope”.

Alarmingly, cooperation between the defence forces even in the area of training too is increasing at a rapid pace. Many Indian military leaders are attending regular training at various defence colleges and institutions in the US, run by their defence forces. Apart from that, a host of US military leaders are invited to lecture in our defence institutes to train our cadets. Experience in Latin America, Egypt and many other countries show that the military personnel who were trained in the US, acted most of the times in the interests of that country, often against the popular feelings and movements of their native

countries. Moreover, they also exert internal pressure to further forge close bonds with the US and mould both our internal and external policies accordingly. Already the adverse effects of such a shift are being felt, and if these sort of exchanges are allowed to continue further, these are going to pose a serious threat to our sovereignty. The US has a clear sinister purpose in running these kind of exchange programmes. They had clearly stated it in their *Report to the Congress*: “we will work together to convert the skills attained during these exercises into *practical cooperation and action*” and more explicitly, “joining with key partners, like India, to *share the burdens of our common security goals*”. The ‘burdens of security goals’ of the US are by now clear, even to the worst doubters – unleash constructive chaos in West Asia, divide the countries on sectarian lines, ensure sectarian strife, control the resources of the region, through military presence. The US wants us to share these burdens.

CONTAINING CHINA

It is clear that containment of China is also one of the reasons for the shift in the strategic positioning of the US. The TPP is also pushed to reduce the economic dependence of these countries on China. The increased naval presence in the region is to ‘secure’ the maritime trade routes strictly under the control of the US and its allies, denying China or any other country that threatens their interests ‘free passage’. This is a clear prescription of the *Wolfowitz Doctrine*. “Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power”.

India, one of the larger countries in the region is sucked into this trap of fulfilling US designs and the present BJP government is willingly walking into it. Betraying non-alignment, giving up on the Palestinian cause, voting against Iran and increasing defence ties with another close ally to the US – Israel, are all policies pursued to please the US. These foreign policy shifts have maligned the reputation of our country as a champion of the rights of developing countries. No longer are the countries of the South looking at India as a leader in the fight against the exploitation of the North.

Fighting against imperialism, both its economic and military facets, is integral in our struggle for the protection of our livelihoods. The domestic and foreign policies are invariably connected and thus should be fought together. It is also this inter-relation that necessitates us to develop and strengthen our bonds of solidarity and internationalism. It is this struggle that will safeguard our sovereignty, help the majority in our country regain their rightful place and India, its place in the comity of nations.