

THE IRANIAN FACTOR

No political party is comfortable with an India dominated by America. And yet no party, left or right, is serious enough to oppose regular American interference in India's internal affairs. While Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh and American president George W Bush look too eager to salvage the controversial Indo-US nuclear deal, otherwise heavily biased against India, the latest move by some American Senators to curtail the deal on the pretext of 'growing' Indo-Iranian ties is anything but an extra-diplomatic exercise to keep New Delhi's advocates of American era in good humour. Strictly speaking India is not going to gain much from the Himalayan blunder called Indo-US cooperation in nuclear energy but Uncle Sam is very much in India's nuclear kitchen. Washington can always raise the bogey of Iran as an excuse to stop the supply of uranium which, however, is the main aspect of the nuclear agreement. Trapped by America's Iran policy New Delhi is all set to surrender whatever independent stance it still maintains in managing its fragile nuclear establishment. With the Iranian crisis drifting towards chaos, the Manmohan Singhs have no option but to become a part of Bush's Iranian gambit.

In a way they have already started a proxy war against Iran by arming and funding anti-Iran terrorist groups as they did in Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. With Bush and his men periodically issuing war threats against Iran, it is more than certain that another war in the Middle East is round the corner. The problem before the Bush administration is how to get out of Iraq without jeopardising American strategic and economic interests and Iran war seems to be the only solution.

For one thing the well-planned propaganda against Iran parallels what America did four years ago as they prepared some pretexts to invade Iraq. Back then the major pretext was Saddam Hussain's secret weapons of mass destruction. Now they are using identical methods by continually distorting the Iranian reality. They need an enemy, an enemy 'posing threat to American security', to keep the war economy going and in the absence of Korean 'red devil' and no possibility of further balkanisation of Yugoslavia, Iran foots the bill. But a major attack by the US (or Israel) on Iran would have terrible consequences for the people of the world for a long time. Such an attack including the possible use of nuclear weapons would be a horror for the people of the region.

Meanwhile, the Russians have revealed the horror scenario code-named 'Operation Bite' as scripted by the Pentagon. The Russian intelligence report identifies 28 Iranian targets including uranium enrichment facilities in the first wave of American war campaign. The US attack plan reportedly calls for the Iranian air defence system to be degraded, for numerous Iranian warships to be sunk in the Persian Gulf and for the most important headquarters of the Iranian armed forces to be wiped out completely. The Russian disclosure on an immediate American military action against Iran that got wide currency for some time in Italian and German electronic media, could not be anything but a high-level orchestrated leak from the Kremlin to frustrate American designs. Maybe, Moscow is more worried about Russian engineers working at Iranian nuclear facilities. Maybe not. Why the 'Operation Bite' has been delayed, notwithstanding Moscow's announcement of April timetable, is best known to the Bushes. But Putin's Russia is in no position to stop American march and avert another Middle East nightmare.

True, a nuclear Iran may curb the ability of America to enforce its domination over the Middle East oil resource and affect its monopoly power to exercise such

domination over much of the world. But Iran's nuclear programme is very much at incipient stage. And American claim that a nuclear Iran might attack Israel seems too hypothetical to be ignored. After all Israel has thousands of nukes targeted against Iran. It's pre-war Iraq drama all over again!

Without a powerful international solidarity movement for lasting peace and democracy America's global war on humanity cannot be thwarted. But the progressives throughout the world failed to do much during the Iraq war. As for Indian progressives and liberals the less said the better because they do not vigorously oppose Indo-US nuclear deal which tragically though can no longer be separated from America's 'contain Iran' policy. Nuclear energy is as dangerous as nuclear bomb but people on the left in India refuse to realise this danger.

It's too naive to expect anything positive from the United Nations Security Council. Being the extended arm of US State Department, it can at worst legalise America's illegal use of force against Iran and destroy the very basis of UN charter. At the time of writing American diplomats in Berlin were discussing with their counterparts from Russia, China, Britain, France—the other UN security council members—as well as Germany ways to react to Iran's continued defiance of UN security council demands to stop uranium enrichment. After the collapse of League of Nations, the worst thing that has happened to the people of the world is the creation of UN. □□□