

Bouquets, Boots and Bush

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During the press conference in Iraq an Iraqi journalist, Muntadhar al-Zaidi, in an act of protest, hurled his shoes at George Bush. (December 2008) One does not know how the American President took it but one knows that the Iraqi people, were very elated at this insult hurled on their aggressor. Since the second Gulf War, 2003 the condition in Iraq has been worsening rapidly to disastrous proportions. By the way, one must introspect and correct the terminology, war. It was not a war; it was an invasion by the US on Iraq.

Just to recapitulate US, in its dreaded role as the global imperial power has been attacking country after country in a reckless manner. After the collapse of USSR, the other super power, the US has pursued its ambition of controlling and exploiting oil of the gulf region nakedly, apart from its overall hegemonic behavior all around. The US governments irrespective of their being Republican or Democrat, have been keeping the US war machinery on the boil. Many countries in the gulf region have been the victims of US designs. Iraq in particular has come under the chopping block since the Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. Iraq as such had been supported strongly by US during its war against Iran. During that time Saddam Hussein not only waged the war with Ayatollah Khomeini's regime but also committed atrocities on the helpless Kurds in Iraq. These deeds of Iraq were staunchly and materially supported by US, as at that time for US, Iran was supposed to be the major problem in the region. This was more so after the Ayatollah overthrew the US puppet regime of Raza Shah Pehlvi.

After the Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988, US felt that the large army it had helped build in Iraq will be a threat to its domination in the gulf region and should be demolished. Iraq foolishly walked into the trap laid by the US. Through its allies in the region Saudi Arab and Kuwait, it put severe economic pressure on Iraq, which made Iraq think of invading Kuwait. When Saddam Hussein talked about his plans to US ambassador April Glaspie, she categorically stated that 'we have no opinion on your border dispute', meaning thereby, you are free to go ahead.

As soon as Iraq invaded Kuwait and declared that Kuwait is the 24th state of Iraq, US jumped to shout that Kuwait Sheikh's sovereignty has been violated and that Iraq will be taught a lesson. Iraq pledged to withdraw its troops. Ignoring that, US went for a decisive strike, blockading Iraqi soldiers, who were willing to withdraw, and stopping supplies to Iraq. Betraying the worst of imperialist greed Iraq was bombed by US, its electrical systems and sewerage plants were destroyed, with the result that millions of Iraqis perished due to war, the accompanying sanctions and spread of diseases. Blinded by its greed the US secretary of state Madeleine Albright affirmed that all this destruction was worth to save the sovereignty of Sheikh of Kuwait.

After the 9/11 2001 and the consequent attack on Afghanistan, US came back to old goal of expanding its hold on oil zone by occupying Iraq. It decided to build up its case of attacking Iraq by declaring that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. UN, though not a political force any more, deputed its inspectors to find if Iraq had such weapons. None could be found. That was not to deter the tyrannical empire. It went ahead with its preparations of the war. It went on to add the excuse that Iraq is supporting *AI Qaeda*. It was a common knowledge that Saddam had no link with this organization, which any way was the creation of US itself. As a prelude to war US leaders started saying that Iraqi people are fed up of the tyrannies of Saddam and they need to be liberated. Dick Cheney, the US Vice President went on to say that US troops will be welcomed as the liberating forces by Iraqis and will be greeted with bouquets. A good pretext was laid; a sense of mission was put on as the mask.

The invading US armies were resisted but the resistance fell through against the might of the formidable army. Still resistance was on through various forms till the

total occupation took place. The occupying army unleashed a reign of terror for which the US leaders need to face the court of human conscience. The tip of iceberg of atrocities was displayed to the horrified world when it saw the US army torturing Iraqi soldiers. In Abu Ghraib prison they were stripped naked and made to form a human pyramid! Arrogance of the occupying army of the most democratic and civilized state of US! An international jury, disturbed by the goings on in Iraq, put together a tribunal, International Tribunal on War Crimes in Iraq (2005). This Jury of Conscience from 10 different countries heard the testimonies of 54 members of the panel of Advocates who came from across the world, including Iraq, the United States and the United Kingdom. This global civil initiative came to an end with a press conference at the Hotel Armada where the Chair of the Jury of Conscience, Arundathi Roy, announced the Jury's conclusions. "The attack on Iraq is an attack on justice, on liberty, on our safety, on our future, on us all."

As per US claims that wherever it intervenes it brings in democracy, lesser said the better. Earlier when the Colonial powers came to plunder the colonies they wore the mask of 'civilizing mission', of carrying the burden of civilizing the colonies. Now US while pursuing its role of plundering the oil resources of the world is putting on the mask of 'exporting democracy'. Let's remember democracy or for that matter no social system can be exported. USSR in it's hey days was claiming to export socialism. Social systems can nurture themselves if they develop from within. What British colonial powers did in India was to plant the poisonous seeds of communalism and what US is doing in countries it invades is to bring in sectarianism.

Muntadhar al-Zaidi, who threw his boots, is rightly being hailed as a hero by Iraqis and many others. What US administration wanted to believe that it will get bouquets, was a make believe to invade. The boot it is getting now is what these invasions deserve. The crime against Iraq and humanity as a whole, is one of the serious tragedies of the recent decades. □□□