

NOTE

Wooing America Won't Work

Bharat Jhunjhunwala writes :

Government of India is seeking American help in forcing Pakistan to take action against the terror outfits responsible for Mumbai attacks. This approach will fail wholly because the roots of terror in that country lie in the pervasive economic inequality which is supported, among others, by America. That country is more interested in securing entry for its Multinational Corporations in welfare of people of Pakistan. American Government is not willing to understand that these Corporations are party to the inequality that lays the root of terror. Seeking intervention from America is like asking the senior partner in a partnership of thieves to take action against the junior thief.

The basic problem of Pakistan is exploitation of the common man by the landlord-industrialist lobby. Land reforms were implemented in India by Jawaharlal Nehru. He had also put leash on private businesses by declaring that the 'commanding heights' of the economy shall vest in the public sector. Such was not done in Pakistan. The landlords continued to rule the countryside. Bonded labour is reported to be prevalent even today. Industries and trade was controlled by a few families who charged exorbitant prices at will. A ruling class consisting of landlords, businessmen and government was thus created.

In this situation, it so happened that America needed a supporter in South Asia against India. America considered India as too independent for their liking. America supported the landlord-business-government alliance of Pakistan to contain India. Then came the Taliban. America again needed support of Pakistan Government to take action against this formation in Afghanistan. The focus of American policy in Pakistan was to make an outpost against India and Afghanistan. The Americans reached an agreement with rulers of Pakistan to secure this objective. They provided economic and military assistance in return for Pakistan following an anti-India and anti-Taliban policy. Thus America became the fourth member of the unholy alliance of landlords, businessmen and government. It mattered little to the Americans whether the Pakistan Government was just or unjust in her domestic policies. Rather, the injustice perpetrated by the ruling class was an asset for America. It made the Government of Pakistan more dependent on American assistance and more pliable for taking forward the anti-India and anti-Taliban agenda.

The terror outfits are raising voice against American meddling in Pakistan politics. They hold America responsible for propping up the alliance of landlords and businessmen. Proof of this is available from the bombing of Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. This hotel was the favoured destination of foreign investors. The Fiyadeen-e-Islam, taking responsibility for the bombing, said it was designed to kick out the American crusaders. It is clear, therefore, that Pakistan is split between two contending groups. On the one hand stands the alliance of landlords, businessmen and the government, supported by the Americans. On the opposite side stands the alliance of people and terror outfits.

The control of terror outfits will only be possible if the underlying causes are removed. It is necessary to implement land reforms and restrict the freedom of

business houses in favour of the common man. Such a policy is not liked by American companies though. They seek freedom to crush small businesses just as Hindustan Lever has killed small soap manufacturers in India. Thus the root cause of Pakistan terror cannot be removed by American intervention. It will make little difference if Pakistan Government acts against specific terror outfits that are involved in Mumbai attacks. The inequality and injustice pervasive in that society will bring forth more terror outfits.

India's policy towards Pakistan should be geared to winning the confidence and goodwill of the common man. India should promote trade with Pakistan in items that are connected with ordinary people such as that in paper; Hawaii chappals, medicines, bicycles, sugar and wheat; and not of items connected with the rich such as cosmetics, air-conditioners and cars. Efforts must be to reach goods made in India in every house in Pakistan as China is doing for the whole South Asian market. Every Pakistani must feel that India is his friend in need. Also India should provide markets for goods made by the common people of that country. □□□