

## Readying for Rough Weather

NO DOUBT THEY ENJOY THE IDEA OF BEING CALLED BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Last month Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Brazilian President Dilma Rouseff, Chinese President Hu Jintao and South African President Jacob Zuma gathered in New Delhi to talk about fairy tales, albeit the issue was not only about economics but also about politics. In truth they were reviewing their relative weight in international affairs, without being taken into account seriously by Uncle Sam. For decades America and the West questioned the Soviet and Chinese political systems and their self-proclaimed capacities to bring socio-economic progress to the people. And after paradigm shift in both the countries, when they are fighting for getting market economy status from the West controlled global financial institutions they could hardly influence international events much to their advantage. Uncle Sam refuses to recognise the Chinese idea that they live in a multi-polar world ; for them it is still a uni-polar world to be dominated by the lone super-power—the United States. Nor can BRICS create conditions for equilibrium in a globalised world system. They discussed some thorny issues of the Middle East only to avoid them while asking the contending parties to resort to dialogue to resolve bloody conflicts now sweeping Syria. As Syria may be another flash-point *a la* Libya, it got specifically focused. So did Iran, the future candidate of Israel-America adventure or misadventure. After Iraq and Afghanistan it is Syria that gets priority in Uncle Sam's agenda of regime change. True, Russia and China vetoed the US and Arab League-backed resolution on Syria in the UN Security Council but America won the day in UN General Assembly with India supporting the US, much to the dismay of its new found friends in BRICS forum. It is unlikely for America to change the course after its defeat in the Security Council. Their view still holds that Assad needs to step down, that he is not the man to lead his country into the future. Americans, not Syrians, will decide who will control Damascus! Despite Russia's anti-American stance, otherwise soft and China's fair weather diplomacy of peace and stability, a replay of Libyan drama cannot be ruled out. And in the event neither Russia nor China will come forward to rescue the beleaguered Assad. Not that Assad is staunchly anti-West. Nor does Syria possess liquid gold. But Syria is considered a problem in America's broader Middle East strategy because of its close relations with Iran and Lebanon which refuse to kowtow to Uncle Sam. As usual Washington continues to veil behind its lofty claims of protecting human rights in Syria. For Libya, NATO after their 'finish Gaddafi Mission' boasted of their arrogant declaration : "we came, we saw and he died". Given the complexity of Syrian crisis, war against Syria, could not be anything but bigger and bloodier than the battle against Gaddafi. The issue of human rights, rather violation of human rights by the Syrian army is getting louder with every passing day. For all practical purposes Syrians, ordinary Syrians, are dying in crossfire and it cannot be otherwise in a situation where America and its allies, not Russia and China, continue to call the shots. After the destruction of Iraq, Syria remains the only *bathist* regime that has secular credentials. And now Washington is all set to destroy Syria's secular fabric by way of instigating fundamentalist forces while trying to split the army on religious sectarian lines (namely against Syria's Alawite minority). At the time of writing UN-Arab League peace-broker Mr Kofi Annan, otherwise a known apologist of American cause, made an urgent appeal for ceasefire urging Assad to cease all hostilities. The time-tested American design of engineering civil war seems to be engulfing the Syrian society, slowly

but steadily. They are now trying to arm the Syrian opposition—Free Syrian Army (FSA). And Turkey is being allegedly assigned the job of creating a safe haven for FSA in north-western Syria, the way Kurdistan was formed in northern Iraq. The UN General Assembly resolution of February, though non-binding, is likely to put pressure on the Assad government and might prove to be the beginning of future outside intervention. Then a proposal for a joint UN-Arab League ‘peace keeping’ force, in reality an army of occupation, is already making rounds.

Interestingly enough, Iran’s right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy is being backed, somewhat naively though, by BRICS. In other words their stand is in direct conflicting position of the US and EU as only the other day US president Barack Obama vowed to go ahead with tough sanctions on Iran and assured India and China that they could easily reduce their dependence on Iranian oil because of availability of sufficient crude elsewhere in the world. Sanctions are primarily aimed at denying Iran the much needed money to continue its nuclear weapons programme. Come June, the deadline for imposing sanctions, both India and China, are likely to oblige Uncle Sam while throwing their BRICS spirit into the winds.

The American administration has been mobilising public opinion in favour of military intervention for quite sometime as they did it against Saddam’s Iraq before launching actual invasion. Tragically, American public opinion as per last month’s poll conducted by ‘Pew Research Center’ is backing the war efforts of Obama and his men—58 percent of those surveyed said the US should use military force, if necessary, to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Only 30 percent said ‘no to war’ or any kind of military intervention. It only signifies virtual non-existence of any left movement in America. What the people like Bob Avakian, the Chairman of Revolutionary Communist Party of USA, are saying—or not saying—in their stereotypes matters little in the end, to strengthen anti-war sentiments inside the US without which the American military machine cannot be thwarted. □□□