**The Expansionist Regime Next Door**

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Strong optics about India’s conversion into a ‘Hindu Rashter’ under BJP rule are now gaining deeper roots in the ground. Fanfare displayed in Ayodhya during the inauguration of ‘Ram Temple’ was nothing but reinforcement of politicized religio-nationalistic jingoism to charm the right-wing voters for upcoming elections. Saner quarters and flagbearers of Indian secularism are quite worried about such a rapid translation of BJP’s verbal claims which is obviously vice versa to the constitutional binding on the state of India.

This ultra-violent RSS-dominated transformation under BJP rule was predicted much earlier. Famous Indian intellectual AG Noorani warned about it in one of his articles published in Frontline magazine “Modi seeks to impose Hindutva on India. His foreign policy is crafted to that end. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s foreign policy is based on Hindutva, a strong bid to win domestic support, and a calculated projection of a massive ego which deserves to be punctured before it harms the country more than it has already”.

This prediction was made after Modi managed to reach in power corridors of New Delhi as PM for the first time. A crafty campaign equipped with a ‘Hindutva’ armoury finally enabled the BJP to defeat the old guard, Congress. RSS and its political arm BJP retested the same ammunition of religious and nationalistic sentimentalism for the second term electoral contest. Lethality was enhanced by adding the gunpowder of anti-Pakistan hatred, war hysteria, Pulwama drama and subsequent Balakot surgical strike rhetoric. Though, the whole drama later on proved a stage-managed flop episode, however, it worked well for the BJP in the election arena. Successful exploitation of Hindutva-driven religious sentiments twice in past elections is the real reason behind the projection of ‘Ram Temple’ fanfare with eyes on upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

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BJP and RSS top-tier leadership is least pushed about the impact of this volatile strategy on the global image of and socio-religious dynamics of India. Economic strength and enhanced diplomatic connectivity obtained on the global chess board during the BJP era are being used intensively to shroud the dark side of violent fascism spilling out across India. Conversion of India into a ‘Hindu Rashter’, elimination of religious minorities, demographic changes in IIOJK, annexation of AJK including GB and dismantling of Pakistan are the initial goals of a long-term phased plan to establish the ‘Akhand Bharat’. This expansionist design is not restricted only to the areas forming present-day Pakistan.

RSS has laid the cross-hair at larger targets as evident from the policy statements made publicly and reported by authentic Indian media. It is not amusing that Narendra Modi’s guru, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, said in Hyderabad almost three years back that “Akhand Bharat” is possible with Hindu dharma. “We consider countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan as ours. Once they are with us it does not matter what they practice or what they eat” (The Times of India, February 26, 2021). Around this time, he also declared in Hyderabad: “It is Bharat which can guide the world on the right path” (Organizer, March 14, 2021). Comments made by Ian Hall the author of a book titled “Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy” also provide accurate insights “I posit that Modi’s track record in foreign policy between 2014 and 2019 did not merely involve injecting energy into Indian diplomacy and shedding inherited ideological baggage in favour of mere pragmatism, as many argue.

Modi and his allies tried to go further than that. In foreign policy as in domestic policy, I argue, Modi sought to be a ‘transformational leader’, not simply a ‘transactional’ one. He aimed at more than merely delivering the spoils of government to his backers, instead seeking a broader transformation of Indian society-and, I argue, India’s international relations-underpinned by an ideologically inspired ‘vision’ Modi sought to reinvent Indian foreign policy by replacing an older vision with a new approach grounded not in pragmatism or even realism, but in Hindu nationalist ideology.”

Leaving aside the deeper diplomatic penetration and rapid economic strength gained by India during two terms of BJP, some hidden obvious, expansionist designs of RSS stalwarts pose a formidable threat to regional and global security. Keeping India in a tight check is important to safeguard regional peace. While trying to establish itself as a regional power, India under Modi is trying to punch beyond her weight as evidenced by her offensive horn-locking with China, jingoistic approach towards Pakistan and inhuman violent policies on the internal front.

Political disorder in Pakistan is playing in favour of India but a reversal of this phase any time soon would level the regional equation against the wishes of the Modi regime. Pakistan, being the immediate stakeholder, needs extra vigilance and a new government in Islamabad cannot afford a lacklustre approach on this account.

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