



All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation

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#RESISTTRUMP

10 REASONS TO OPPOSE THE US PRESIDENTS INDIA VISIT

The President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, will visit India from 24-25 February 2020. Prime Minister Modi claims that the US and India enjoy a special relationship and this visit will further bilateral ties to India's benefit. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, weeks before Trump's visit, India was removed from the Special and Preferential Status list of the countries that trade with the US.

The real intention of Trump's visit is to capture India's market and force the country to accept all the conditions that help further the interests of US corporates. Government of India too is yielding to the pressure and accepting those conditions. Privatisation of defence production and financial institutions like LIC are all some such recent examples.

Trump thrives on a politics of hate and bigotry that demonises minorities and migrants on the one hand and furthers the agenda of US corporations against the interests of workers and the environment on the other. India has nothing to gain and much to lose from this visit. Further, Trump's belligerent foreign policy has been an unmitigated disaster for several countries such as Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Venezuela and Bolivia to just name a few. Therefore, a broad coalition of democratic and progressive groups from across the country have decided to oppose and resist Trump for the following reasons

1. ADVERSE IMPACTS ON INDIAN AGRICULTURE

India is a large target market for US agribusiness companies; for products such as almonds, walnuts, cashews, apples, chickpeas, wheat, soybean, maize and peanuts. Huge budgetary allocations and subsidies provided by the US Government allow its agribusiness corporations to distort prices and out-compete local farmers in developing countries. The 2019 US Farm bill allocation was \$867 billion (INR 60, 69,000 crores). So far, India has used tariffs as a policy tool to protect its farmers from such an import glut. ***Trump is demanding that India remove these tariffs.*** He is also ***targeting India's dairy and poultry sector*** that together sustain the livelihoods of over 100 million households. Many peasant groups such as the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) and Indian Coordination Committee of Farmers Movements (ICCFM) have already written to the Indian Government to desist from further opening up agricultural markets to subsidised products from the US.

2. UNDERMINING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

India is a critical producer of affordable generic medicines. India's patent law safeguards play a key role in enabling its generic manufacturers to compete and produce medicines at affordable prices. Thanks to competition stemming from Indian generics, the price of medicines to treat diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and cancer are affordable. During Trump's visit, India

will once again face pressure to give into demands that protect the interests of US pharmaceutical corporations. Reports indicate that the *US is already exerting pressure on India to revise sections of the Indian Patent Act* that allow for compulsory licensing and prohibit frivolous patent applications through the tactic of ‘evergreening’. The *US has also targeted India’s progressive policy on price controls on medical devices such as cardiac stents and knee implants*. Acceding to this demand will allow US multinationals to fix high prices that would compromise access. The Indian government must not give into pressure that will undermine access to affordable generic medicines, devices and vaccines for people in India and across the world.

3. US CORPORATE AGENDA ON E-COMMERCE

There is immense pressure from the US on developing countries to sign on to an international digital trade regime at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). What are innocuously called ‘e-commerce’ negotiations would be a free-for-all for US Big Tech to continue to increase their control over the economy and the political process. Provisions such as free cross-border data flows without compensation, extension of US private law over e-signatures and e-authentication, and a ban on requiring local presence will limit our ability to ensure digital development in the public interest. These rules are based on principles designed by corporations such as *Amazon and Google* and are intended to help these firms dominate markets in the developing world. *Trump has been pushing India to allow unbridled access to these corporations which will enable the US to exercise power over digital technology. Such an agreement would be disastrous for the Indian economy for decades to come, and would push farmers, traders and workers* into further misery and compromise our digital industrialisation pathway.

4. SUBVERTING INDIA AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AT THE WTO

The US has targeted India at the WTO on multiple counts. It has challenged India’s policies on public stockholding and Minimum Support Prices (MSP). These policies are critical to implement the National Food Security Act to ensure that the poor have access to food and farmers receive adequate prices. The US has also taken India to the WTO Court for adopting policies focused on domestic solar cell producers and subsidies for export oriented units (EOU). Under Trump, the *US is leading the charge to ensure that India and other developing countries are no longer classified as developing countries in the WTO*. This will rob these countries of provisions such as Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT) that allow for flexible commitments and longer implementation periods keeping in mind their developmental status. The US is also the prime mover in shutting down the WTO’s appellate body that was critical in resolving trade disputes.

5. EXACERBATING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Trump is a climate change denier. True to his word, he has initiated the formal process of withdrawing the US from the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The US is the world’s biggest historical emitter of greenhouse gases. Therefore it has a multiple responsibility in taking on the largest emission reductions and at the same time addressing its burden of climate reparations by providing adequate finance and green technologies to developing countries that are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. Instead Trump has refused to pay the US’ due share to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and

attacked India for supposedly asking for billions of dollars in foreign aid for its climate efforts. Unfortunately, the Modi Government has refused to stand up to US bullying.

6. OFFENSIVE ON MANUFACTURING AND INVESTMENT POLICIES

In 2018, the *Trump administration applied unilateral tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from several developing countries, including India*. Reports indicate that India's exports of steel products fell by 46% in 12 months as a result of the US action. In January 2020, US tariffs were expanded to downstream products such as electrical wires and parts for automobiles and tractors. The May 2019 US withdrawal of India's Generalised System of Trade Preferences (GSP) benefits has also hit Indian manufacturing products, including textiles and auto components. The GSP entails duty free access to over 2000 products worth around \$6 billion. *The US has also targeted India's investment limits in a range of sectors such as insurance and banking where foreign ownership is capped at 49% and 74% respectively. Foreign investment limits in media are also an area of concern as are the 51 % limit on multi-brand retail* with local sourcing requirements. Removal of all these industrial policy tools will be a key target of the US delegation.

7. ATTACK ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Trump administration has worked to systematically undermine sexual and reproductive rights both in the US and around the world. It has dismantled funding to various organisations that work on the issue of sexual and reproductive care, including access to abortions, through an expansion of the 'global gag rule'. This rule bars any organisation that provides, or makes referrals, for abortions in its family planning from receiving federal funding. As a result of this, in the US, access to these health services are shrinking and especially poor women, women of colour and transgender people are deprived of the basic human right of healthcare. Trump also harbours patriarchal and misogynist views on women, which deny them their right to choice and take decisions on their future.

8. ATTACK ON PEACE AND SECURITY

US is exerting pressure on India to completely depend on it for all its defence requirements. It is under US pressure that Indian government has allowed 100 private investment in defence production. It has threatened sanctions when India intended to purchase advanced missile defence system S-400 from Russia. India-US nuclear deal initiated the process for strengthening the defence partnership between the two countries and a slew of defence deals were signed that severely compromise India's strategic, defence and security interests. COMCASA, LEMOSA are two such examples. Even during the present trip, Trump intends to *sell US weapons to India and increase India's dependency on the US*. All these measures are extremely dangerous to the security and sovereignty of our country. Under Trump, US imperialist aggression has intensified, bringing the world closer to nuclear holocaust. The US has withdrawn from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, one of the pillars of global disarmament. The doomsday clock indicating the proximity to man-made catastrophe is at its closest to midnight since its origin in 1947. Trump has also championed a space-based missile defense layer, setting the stage for a dangerous weaponisation of space. The US has brought West Asia to the brink of another catastrophic war by withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and assassinating Iranian General Qassem Soleimani. It continues to blatantly support Israeli aggression on Palestine and neighbouring countries and is the largest weapons supplier to Saudi

Arabia whose war on Yemen has led to one of the worst humanitarian crises of the century. In South East and East Asia, through initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific strategy and the QUAD, the US has been promoting a provocative encirclement of China alongside its trade and technological wars. In Latin America, it has supported and endorsed coups and coup attempts in Bolivia and Venezuela. Consequently, US defense spending has steadily increased since Trump came to power. Today, the US military budget is not only the highest in the world but is more than that of the next 11 countries combined.

9. SOLIDARITY WITH PEOPLE OF PALESTINE, CUBA, IRAN AND VENEZUELA

The Trump regime has intensified the US war against the people of countries such as Palestine, Cuba, Venezuela and Iran. Its primary weapon has been sanctions which have caused massive hardship. As part of US support for the coup attempt in Venezuela, the Trump administration has enacted a series of harsh unilateral measures. Research conducted in 2019 indicates that US sanctions may have caused over 40,000 deaths in the country between 2017 and 2018. As for Cuba, the invocation of Title III of Helms Burton Act by the Trump administration marks the latest chapter in the decades-long assault on the lives and livelihoods of the common people there. In Iran, wave after wave of crippling sanctions have led to a rise in unemployment and curtailed growth. Among the worst targets of the Trump regime's policies have been the people of Palestine. Under Trump, the US has backed Israel to the hilt which has in turn unleashed an unprecedented wave of repression against the Palestinian people, especially protesters at the Great March of Return. From shifting the US embassy to Jerusalem to announcing the 'deal of the century,' Trump has been an implacable enemy of the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

10. GLOBAL COMPACT OF RIGHT-WING AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

Trump has been in the forefront of a global resurgence of the right wing that has thrived on racism, attacks on minorities and ethnic and religious chauvinism. These forces, many of which are in power across the world – Israel, United Kingdom, India, Philippines, Brazil and Turkey – have established close links with each other, the recent Howdy Modi event being a classic example. India's invitation to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro who is infamous for his misogynist and racist statements is yet another instance of such cooperation. These regimes have championed building walls, segregating minorities, targeting migrants and attacking gender rights. They have unleashed and encouraged a wave of right-wing attacks in their respective countries too, targeting the most vulnerable sections of society.

With the national and global rise of the right-wing, we recognise that this is not a time for complacency. The signatories to this statement stand in solidarity with all sections of society in India and across the world who are struggling for justice and dignity in the face of repressive regimes. We reiterate our commitment to democracy, peace, justice and solidarity. This is the reason why we have joined our forces to oppose Trump's visit to India and also Indian government's subservience to the US imperial interests.