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"US/IRAN CLASH"



ANOTHER OIL CRISIS FOR INDIA?



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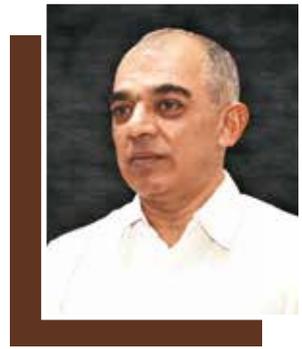


The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



After a long stand-off, the Iranian tanker, Grace 1, has set sail from Gibraltar, heading eastbound, allegedly for Syria. Which is where the root of this crisis lies! Washington tried to prevent the tanker from sailing and in fact asked for it to be handed over. The Gibraltar courts would have none of it, and let it free after weeks in detention. In the meantime it has been renamed Adrian Darya-1, why so is not such a mystery after all given the nature of the crisis.

The US and Iran were headed for a clash since the time President Trump won his elections in 2016. He had let it be known that the globally accepted US-Iran nuclear agreement signed by former President Obama was unacceptable and would be rescinded. He did just that, pleasing nobody other than Israel and Saudi Arabia. It hasn't helped him that Europe continues to stand by the agreement, and it certainly doesn't help him that Iran dodges and manoeuvres its way in and

out of crises, singed but dogged. All of this has enormous portends for the region, the Gulf, Western Asia and beyond.

This is even more so given that the US is now on the verge of negotiating a deal with the Taliban. What was once unthinkable is now an emerging reality, and what was once avoidable is also a reality. This poses a serious diplomatic and economic challenge for India, grappling as it is with a slowing economy and a high fuel import bill. When the economics of trade are based on getting the best value for money, and saving transportation costs, Iranian oil was always a good option for India. Distances involved were less and supplies hardly ever tampered with. And then there was history too.

India, Iran and Russia had sustained the erstwhile Northern Alliance in Afghanistan when the country was under the brutal rule of the Taliban. All three had interests in common when it came to Afghanistan, a country that can and does impact the

security of many in the world. But interests changed over the years, as India was increasingly drawn into developing commonalities with the US. And with that came the additional price of a slowing Indo-Iran relationship. Oil trade and Chahbahar port the primary issues that will pay a price as far as India is concerned in the long run.

Now that Jammu and Kashmir has seen dramatic administrative and political changes, Afghanistan is poised to see something similarly dramatic, and a calculating Pakistan in between India's long term ally in this game, Iran, is increasingly out of the picture. Which cannot be a good thing for India and its national security concerns. Even as the US becomes increasingly insular, there is no reason for India to do the same. For insularity is never good policy when the game is being played in the international arena. Chess moves have long term logic, and cannot be played with short-term agendas. Something that civilisational neighbours should be well aware of!

Manvendra Singh

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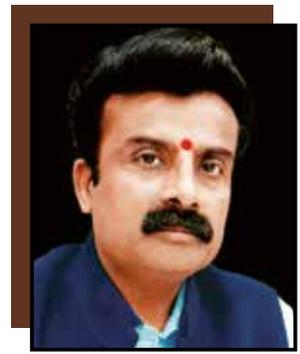
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Editor: Manvendra Singh

US-IRAN CLASH: ANOTHER OIL CRISIS FOR INDIA?



After the attainment of independence, India has been pursuing a multi-dimensional development game plan to bring happiness and prosperity to its people. For macro development, the most important was to provide the best roads and automobile industrialisation within the country. To keep the nation moving smoothly forward, it was necessary to explore for oil within the country all the while ensuring that demand for fuel was supplemented by supply by imports from extant oil-producing nations like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, USA, Iran, Iraq and Venezuela among others. The growth of the economy depended largely on how that demand-supply chain was managed when both pricing and supply were disrupted by geopolitical upheavals.

One such crisis is looming on the horizon caused by sanctions imposed by the US on Iran for pursuing a nuclear programme that has the potential of becoming a nuclear weapon project. The world heaved a sigh of relief when US President Barack Obama signed the agreement with Iran to restrict its capability of creating uranium that can be used to make nuclear warheads. But President Donald Trump kept his election promise to scrap the deal and is now insisting that all nations cut economic, especially oil, ties with Iran and force it into a unilateral nuclear disarmament which Iran is resisting. Tehran is adhering to the original agreement but is showing signs that its patience is depleting by a gradual escalation in the potency of the uranium it is producing in its centrifuges. It has threatened to block the passage of ships carrying oil out of the Persian Gulf and Britain's seizure of an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar in the Mediterranean has triggered an escalation that could tear the world apart.

India has long had to balance its unique centuries-old relations with Shia Iran and the US-supported Sunni phalanx that helped create the Al Qaeda, the Taliban and the ISIS at different points in contemporary history where Afghanistan and later Iraq has been the pivot.

The grant of the Chabahar Port project to India has opened a route for India to directly access Afghanistan and the Central Asia Republics of the former Soviet Union and avoid the trans-Pakistan route which has been blocked since the Kargil War. American belligerence will jeopardise this route and severely affect the Indian economy.

The demand for oil has increased in the past two decades mainly due to the boom in the automobile sector. The consumption of oil has gone very high and that is the reason that imports have been multiplying so much that a major portion of our foreign exchange is spent on the import of oil alone.

Unfortunately, in the past two to three decades, the world affairs have been such that for various reasons India has been in quite a struggle to procure oil for its requirements from its old friends on the globe like Iraq and Iran. The tussle going on between US and Iran is considered to be the biggest threat to the acquisition of oil by India.

Now India's situation is quite complicated by the need to balance its relations with the US, Iran and other countries and that is the reason that India has neither favoured nor opposed either the US or Iran on the current crises. But this situation is going to worsen in the coming weeks if both the countries do not sort it out amicably.

This edition is focused on the current situation between US and Iran and how it can adversely affect India's interests.

I am sure dear reader that you will like this edition.

Jai Hind!



Pawan Agrawal



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