

Modi's rise in India, visit to Nepal and the new challenges for revolutionaries

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Unlike the previous elections, the sixteenth Lok Sabha election in India had been a much talked hype in the national and international media hubs. The growing need of an adamant apologist of imperialism who can unhesitatingly and more forcefully than before put into practice the neo-liberal policies in India, on the one hand, and the UPA's corroding ground, on the other, created a favourable condition for Narendra Modi as a proper candidate for the Prime Minister of India. His rhetoric of Gujarat Model development and his chauvinist card of Hinduism among many others caused to sweep out the vote banks in his favour. Having attained victory in the election Modi seems to have attempted to woo the masses of the people from South Asian countries by posing himself as a good friend of theirs. The invitation he made to the head of the governments of the neighbouring countries in his swearing in ceremony and the speeches he delivered in his official visit to Bhutan and Nepal as well points towards the direction he is going in to exercise the foreign policy under his regime.

Publicity of Narendra Modi's visit to Nepal on August 2, 2014 was taking a momentum after Sushma Swaraj, the Foreign Minister of India, visited Nepal as a preparation for his schedule. Right at this time, a proposal for the bilateral treaty on Power Trade Agreement that Government of India had forwarded to the Government of Nepal reached to the people via public media. Mainly the Article III, clause B of the said proposal, which writes, "In particular, the Parties shall cooperate in effective harnessing of Nepal's hydro-power potential through facilitation and speedy construction of hydro-electric power projects in Nepal either with 100% Indian investment or joint ventures with Indian entities", ignited the public rage further, all across the country. In this situation, the Nepalese people, on the one hand, were inquisitive to hear what a powerful Prime Minister from India, who was coming to visit Nepal only after 17 years, would deal with various contentious issues vis-à-vis Nepal and India and the parliamentarian political parties of various shades were, on the other, working hard to make Modi's visit to Nepal go in their favour. In this **Modified** situation in Nepal, Modi's upcoming visit and his speech to the Nepalese parliament was a very much awaited event for Nepal, India and abroad as well.

The reception of Modi in the international airport could be perceived as a revealing example of how much crazy the Nepalese parliamentarian political leaders were towards their master, Mr. Narendra Modi. As against the international protocol, Sushil Koirala, the Prime Minister of Nepal, unfolded the red carpet by himself to receive his counterpart at the airport. A number of political leaders from other parties too bent down before him to register their submission. One of the cabinet ministers even dragged the Prime Minister Sushil Koirala back to make sure that Prime Minister Modi can see him easily at close. It created a big infuriation within the Nepali Congress and among the self-respected Nepalese people. But, he shrewdly fabricated the story and said that he had caught Prime Minister's arm by keeping his poor health in mind. There were a number of such incidents during Modi's trip to Nepal in which Nepalese political leaders deliberately sacrificed their both status and protocol in the cost of getting a nice photograph clicked with the Prime Minister Modi. Elaboration of all such events is not necessary and possible here. However, to put it briefly, their naked submission to Modi has caused to disparage the national dignity of Nepal and the glory of being a patriotic Nepalese citizen further.

Now comes the turn of much awaited speech by Modi in the Nepalese parliament. Along with many journalists and other distinguished people, the entire CA members were submissively waiting for him to enter into the parliament and to deliver his speech. No later than the Prime Minister Modi entered into the hall, the parliamentary process begun and after a brief proceeding he started delivering his speech. One of the impressive orators of India, Modi spoke for about 45 minutes. He tried to catch sentiment of the entire Nepalese people including the political party leaders by speaking in Nepali language for the first three minutes. Later, he made use of many sentimental questions like, Buddha was born in Nepal, Nepal is a sovereign nation, we want to see Nepal become a powerful nation, the cold breeze flown in Kathmandu makes our people search warm clothes in Delhi, the relation between Nepal and India is as old as the

relation between Himalaya and Ganga, there is no any liberation war in India in which there is no blood spilt from a Nepali Bahadur, India will extend Rs 10,000 crore to Nepal as line of credit etc. to entice the Nepalese people. Each and every of these sayings and the likes were followed by prolonged applause. It seemed as if a big number of people in the hall including many CA members were hired and they were brought there to applaud over every sentence irrespective of what he speaks about.

Modi's speech succeeded to hypnotise many listeners. Not only had the bourgeois leaders, mainly from the Nepali Congress and Madheshi parties, but also the 'communist' ones including Prachanda, KP Oli and Baburam Bhattarai admired his speech openly. In fact, the Indian Prime Minister Modi mesmerized the entire Nepalese parliamentarian leaders in the same way as does a Guru of Kashi Viswanath temple make his devotees spellbound with his spiritual speeches. Nepalese leaders' dependence upon Indian expansionist rulers could clearly be noticed in their subservient look and anointing posture. The UCPNM Chairman Prachanda said to Modi that he succeeded to win the heart and mind of the Nepalese people. But, as the proverb, *every cloud has a silver lining*, goes one of the senior leaders and also a CA member from the UCPNM who could not put up with the behaviour the Nepalese politicians had shown towards Modi's speech reacted harshly. He said that Nepalese bourgeois politicians will heartily applaud even if an Indian bureaucrat, let alone a politician, says that the Nepalese political leaders are still breathing.

Unlike before, Modi tried to woo the Nepalese people with soft power diplomacy. He succeeded to some extent to give an impression that he is in favour of resolving the entire bilateral problems in a political way. But, one must not lose sight from the fact that he did not even touch at any contentious issues of bilateral relation between India and Nepal. In his long speech he did not at all spell a single word on the border encroachment by India that has caused Nepal to lose about 64,000 Hectares of land along the Indo-Nepal border. In addition, he did not talk about any unequal treaties, including the friendship treaty of 1950; the Nepalese people are suffering from. When one of the participants in the banquet hosted by Prime Minister Sushil Koirala informally raised the border problem Modi outright reprimanded him and asked not to politicise the border issue. On the contrary, he did not miss this visit to Nepal to say everything he had to say to benefit the Indian interest, definitely in a fascinating way. The HIT (Highways, Information-ways and Transmission-ways) formula he suggested for the Nepalese people to take on is in fact a magic rod for the Indian expansionists to enable them grab the Nepalese market and cheap natural resources.

One of the most important ideological things he repeatedly emphasised in his speech was about the UCPNM coming to bourgeois democracy. It was in fact a great victory for imperialist and expansionist plunderers to bring a revolutionary force in their fold. Without taking the name of Maoists, he spent a lot of time and consumed a huge amount of energy to congratulate, admire and thank the UCPNM and its leadership, who pursued the path of class and national capitulation against the new democratic revolution in Nepal. Modi indirectly assured Prachanda that he will do all he can to frustrate the development of people's revolution in Nepal and expected the same from latter. Prachanda's reaction to Modi in which he said that you won the heart and mind of the Nepalese people is related right at this point. It was in fact not the heart and mind of the Nepalese people but of Prachanda that Modi had won.

Another point he emphasised in his speech was about the natural resources in Nepal. With the help of a proverbial expression – the hills cannot make use of water and youth; he hinted his intention to get hold of the entire water resources from the Nepalese hills. Along with this, he did not forget to talk about the herbal plants grown in the Himalayan region. He added that Nepal should become a leading exporter of herbal medicines and we are ready to support you in this. All this shows where the expansionist eyes are being focused in Nepal.

Ever since the British Indian era, the Indian ruling classes have been mainly exercising hard power diplomacy towards the neighbouring countries, particularly Nepal. As part of the resistance to this, the patriotic feeling of the Nepalese people against Indian ruling class hegemony has remained strong till date. It has at times resulted in strong mass protests against the Indian interventionist doings in Nepal. In

order not to put the expansionist interest at risk the present government led by Modi seems trying to make a conscious shift from the hard power to soft power diplomacy with our country. The previous sequence of threat, attack and conquest on the part of Indian expansionist rulers over Nepal seems now changing towards temptation, attraction and control. Although the former sequence seems to be more intolerable, but in essence, the later sequence is more dangerous than the former one.

One of the main but undisclosed agenda during Modi's visit to Nepal seemed to heal up the damages caused by the rude behaviour of his predecessors, mainly bureaucrats, vis-à-vis the bilateral relation between India and Nepal. To put sign on the Power Development Agreement (PDA) and the Power Trade Agreement (PTA) seemed to be his topmost priority in this visit. Notwithstanding this, the widespread public resentment caused by the leakage of proposed PTA to media hubs and the opposition that followed all across the country forced them to postpone it for the time being. However, they have agreed to finalise PDA within 45 days.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Nepal has resulted in further strengthening of the coalition between Indian expansionist rulers and their puppets in Nepal. Not only this, Modi has been able, to a certain extent, to attract a section of the masses towards him with his charismatic speech and friendly performance he showed in the streets. As a result of this, the days to come will be favourable for India to sneak into the internal affairs of Nepal and manoeuvre as needed. It will in fact make way for added intervention on the part of Indian rulers and further subordination of Nepalese coalition partners before their masters. It means that the national independence of Nepal will be further jeopardised in the days to come. This is a challenge before the patriotic people of Nepal.

But, on the contrary, Modi's visit to Nepal did not remain an unopposed event. In particular, the leakage to media of the PTA proposed by India fuelled this opposition. It made the Nepalese people stand in two poles, for or against it, irrespective of the party they were aligned to. It caused every political party to divide for or against the sovereign right of the Nepalese people over the natural resources of Nepal. Not only the ordinary voters but also the former cabinet ministers from various parties like for example Nepali Congress and RPP stood firmly against the PDA and PTA. Except for a few diehard pro-Indians, many political leaders were forced to say that it may be immature to put sign on the proposal without going in-depth study. It was in fact a positive scenario as regards the defence of national independence. When the government withheld their plan to table the PDA for signing, the entire protest programmes were stopped.

To sum up, the days ahead of us will be very much challenging for the struggle to defend national independence of our country. It will have to bear the attacks of comprador bourgeoisie protected by Indian expansionism. However, with the increasing intervention by the expansionist forces, it will sharpen the contradiction within and among the political parties and in the society as well. Not only this, because of its anti-national character it will create new and immense opportunities to unite with a broad section of the patriotic, leftist, progressive and revolutionary forces against anti-national reactionary coalition. All this will create an objective situation favourable for rallying a broader section of people against the comprador bourgeois subservient to the Indian expansionism. We the Maoists must strive hard for this to defend the national independence and take the new democratic revolution forward.

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