

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2014/12/19/modi-putin-and-the-world-order-ii.html>

Modi, Putin and the World Order (II)

Indian nationalism and world imperialism

Melkulangara BHADRAKUMAR

12/19/2014



The US President Barack Obama is visiting India as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on January 26. This is the first time that India has extended such an invitation to an American president and it happened during Prime Minister Modi's meeting with Obama at the White House in September.

The Indian pundits and media have variously described the forthcoming visit by Obama as a 'diplomatic coup' by the Modi government.

But not many would know that Obama's visit does not emanate out of any structured proposal in this regard by the foreign-policy establishment as such. The idea was born entirely in the privacy of Modi's mind, and he apparently chose to give expression to it even as his conversation with Obama took a warm personal note.

In some ways, this is symptomatic of the India-US partnership as far as the Indian side is concerned. The Indians do not have even ten percent of the 'killer instinct' that the American side has shown to extract the maximum advantage out of the relationship.

The Indian side often feels happy enough to settle for the trammels of the relationship with a superpower, and would hardly match the American-style relentless chase of 'deliverables'. The highlight of the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the White House in 2009, for instance, was that Obama held the first state banquet of his second term in honor of him. Ironically, the relationship as such began drifting soon thereafter as the Americans began losing interest in India's increasingly dysfunctional government.

Interestingly, Obama recently praised Modi as a «man of action». It is unclear to what extent Modi remains impervious to the invidious charms of American diplomacy. At any rate, so far at least, it is the American side which is seen to be actively setting the agenda of Obama's visit.

A new legislation by the Modi government that opens up the Indian market for American insurance companies; flexibility in the Indian stance on climate change; 'tweaking' of India's nuclear liability law to accommodate the demands of the American companies hoping to sell reactors to India worth tens of billions of dollars without being held accountable for 'nuclear accidents' – the big-ticket items in the American menu for the Obama visit to India have already sailed into view.

On the other hand, if the Indian side too has a wish list for Obama, that is not yet visible to the public eye. The hope is that there will be a 'Modi effect' on Obama's visit and on the India-US ties.

In principle, the hugely productive outcome of Modi's interaction so far with his counterparts among big powers – Japan, China and Russia – sets the bar of strategic partnership with India rather unusually high for Obama to clear.

Japan offered Modi a \$35 billion investment package, China announced a \$20 billion investment plan for India and the estimates are that the total value of the deals signed during President Vladimir Putin's visit to India last week could work out to a whopping amount of a hundred billion dollars.

Even assuming that only half of these \$100 billion deals with Russia may eventually get implemented – that is, making allowance for the inertia of the Indian and Russian bureaucracies – the India-Russia annual summit this year signifies without doubt a coming of age of Indian diplomacy under Modi's watch in terms of its purposiveness and result-oriented outcome.

However, this is not only a matter of the business volume transacted during a high-level visit,

but also calls attention to the nature of the deals that have been struck. Indeed, the Russian side has taken to Modi's 'Make in India' project seriously. Modi felt elated to mention this in his remarks to the media.

He singled out the Russian offer to «fully manufacture» in India one of its most advanced helicopters; Putin's positive response to his request to «locate manufacturing facilities in India» for spares and components for Russian defence equipment; and, the manufacture in India of equipment and components for «at least ten more» Russian-supplied nuclear reactors to be installed in India.

In fact, Russia's readiness to comply with the Indian nuclear liability laws while setting up nuclear power plants in India itself stands out in sharp contrast with the American insistence that the laws be «tweaked» to absolve the US companies of liability in case of nuclear accidents.

How far will Obama warm up to Modi's Make in India project? Will he also come up with concrete proposals attuned to Modi's so-called 'development agenda' aimed at creating jobs for the hundreds of millions of unemployed youth in the country? There are no clear answers yet.

Curiously, there is already a sub-soil campaign under way spearheaded by the 'pro-American' lobby to debunk the Make in India idea.

The plain truth is that in defence cooperation, the US has used one excuse or another not to transfer high technology to India. Instead, it focuses on selling products to India and on pressing for greater market access for the US arms manufacturers. The big question is, whether Modi will succeed in bending the Obama administration to conform to the parameters of his Make in India concept.

Indeed, Modi is not bogged down in ideology when it comes to India's relations with the world community. He views the world order almost exclusively through the prism of India's interests. In Modi's world view the prevailing international situation characterized by polycentrism works rather well for India's foreign policies. He is equally at ease with the West and the East and will look for advantages for India. Modi said, inter alia, to the media after his talks with Putin, «In today's world, vibrant economic relations constitute a key pillar of a strong strategic partnership».

However, in many ways, this is a simplistic world-view that may even appear to be naïve at times. Being a semi-developed capitalist country that is dependent on finance capital, stoking up of nationalism may not help ward off retribution if Modi refuses to submit to the major imperialist powers, leave alone cross their path of neo-colonial restructuring of the world order.

To be sure, Modi cannot be unaware of the ground rules of predatory capitalism. His cautious remarks to the media in Putin's presence suggest that while he may not take recourse to a path of strategic defiance, on the other hand, he seems acutely conscious that abject surrender would only set the stage for further demands and the ultimate outcome would be detrimental to his government's nationalist agenda and the protective system it promotes for India's economic and

cultural independence.

Suffice it to say, the historical context within which Russia is being ‘isolated’ by the Wall Street and its European counterparts by cutting it off from international credit holds profound lessons for Indian nationalism – although the Indian elites do not seem to pay commensurate attention to it.